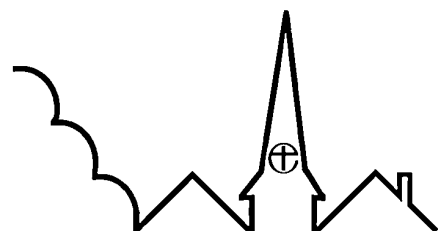


Steeple & People

October 2020

50p



St Michael's Boldmere

CHRISTMAS MARKET 2020

With regret we have been forced to cancel this year's event which would have been a celebration of 100 years.

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There have been many things that we have put a lot of work into pre-Covid 19 that have gone on hold, that have had to be abandoned, that have had to be re-thought, re-imagined, adapted. This could be individual and family plans, work plans, social plans, church plans. It's been a challenging time and in many ways we have had to make tough and challenging decisions with not many tried and test reference points. This is nothing new, humans

have faced these challenges throughout the centuries, all over the world. As John Steinbeck paraphrases Robbie Burns, the best laid plans 'Of Mice and Men'.

Agathon was a monk who lived in the Egyptian Desert in the 5th Century. He is one of the many Desert Fathers and Mothers from that era whose profound and enigmatic sayings and actions have been recorded and are still available today. This is one such story about Agathon which can be found in 'The Sayings of the Desert Fathers', translated and edited by Benedicta Ward, SLG.

It was said of Abba Agathon that he spent a long time building a cell with his disciples. At last, when it was finished, they came to live there. Seeing something during the first week which seemed to him harmful, he said to his disciples, 'Get up, let us leave this place.' But they were dismayed and replied, 'If you had already decided to move, why have we taken so much trouble building the cell?'

People will be scandalized at us, and will say, "Look at them, moving again; what unstable people!" He saw they were held back by timidity and so he said to them, 'If some are scandalized, others, on the contrary, will be much edified and will say, "How blessed are they who go away for God's sake, having no other care, come, as for me, I am going.' Then they prostrated themselves to the ground and besought him to allow them to go with him.

This has spoken to me about having to let go of things into which I and the people of the church have invested so much physical, emotional and spiritual energy. It can feel like a loss, like a bereavement. There is a prayer called the 'Anima Christi' (The Soul of Christ), in its contemporary translation that speaks in these words about loss; *'On each of my dyings shed your light and your love'*. This is a prayer that I have been using a lot recently as I recognise what we have lost individually, as a church, and on a national and international scale. I am praying for God's light and love to be shed that we will be able to see new life and embrace new hope for the days ahead of us.

Rev'd Gary Birchall

September 2020

Ladder rung distances have been enlarged by 5% due to a general increase in the height of the population. Experts have put this down to climb it change.

From the Snailbeach District News.



October Prayer Page



Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
John Keats

This is what autumn means to us and what, individually, does autumn mean to you?

David Adam writes –“One of my favourite autumn moments comes from Julian of Norwich. Standing with something like a hazelnut in her hand she says “he showed me in the palm a little thing as round as a ball about the size of a hazelnut. In this little thing I saw three truths. The first is that God made it. The second is that God loves it. The third is God looks after it.”

This year has been a very difficult year in the light of Covid 19, but still farmers are harvesting crops for us to eat. What sort of harvest will you yield to our blessings before God?

Harvest Moment.

The world has turned to gold
Barley fields with sensual hair
Holding the warmth of summer
And all the richness of days past
The sun and rain the soil and toil
In the seeds awaiting the harvest
Or yet another Lady of Shallot
To stand among the grain dreaming
Tears in her eyes, love in her heart
Sharing in a moment's beauty
Before the combine and tractor
Take the fruit of this year away.

Harvest is not just harvest of the land. We also have the harvest of the sea. It is God's bounty.

A Fisherman with Soul



Most of the time I make and mend
Whatever each day decides to send
A lobster pot or fishing net
A broken heart or wireless set
Nothing is cast aside or lost
Everything is precious beyond cost
The old cast out cleaned and
restored
The unwanted welcome and
adored.

Harvest is not an end-time. It is a time of renewal, a time to begin another cycle.

Autumn Dialectic

This is between world's time
The last rays of the sun fade
A day is coming to a close
Another is about to begin
One is almost gone for ever
The other is coming to birth
Where do I belong at sunset?
To the past and the dead leaves
Or to tomorrow and its seeds?
I belong to this very moment
I belong to heaven and earth
I need to choose to enjoy one or the other
For both are mine.



H hope
A and
R renewal
V variety
E everywhere
S seasons
T transform



Thank you God for everything.

Written by Margaret Wilkinson

Times have changed....

From The Daily Mirror 19th November 1925.

'We visited Birmingham's magnificent art gallery, approaching it via the statue of Peel, who appears to be wearing tights (tights it will be remembered, are compulsory on the Birmingham stage, as Pavlova found).

Presently we found that the spirit of Bumble had actually penetrated into the Greek statuary room.

At the threshold we were informed that children under sixteen were not admitted unless accompanied by an adult. The reason given was the lack of drapery on some of the statues!'

***Bumble**, fictional **character** in the novel *Oliver Twist* (1837–39) by Charles **Dickens**. Mr. **Bumble** is the cruel, pompous beadle of the poorhouse where the orphaned Oliver is raised. *Bumbledom*, named after him, characterizes the meddlesome self-importance of the petty bureaucrat.*

Moving into autumn

Despite so much of life being totally disrupted this year, the seasons have moved on apace. So now the days are shortening rapidly and plants and trees show definite signs of the arrival of autumn. Except our relatively newly planted magnolia which obviously believes it is spring and is flowering beautifully! To me, August is a month when everything seems to take a pause and a breath which is then followed by a flush of autumn flowers which sparkle in the changing September light.



Last year I wrote about the asters and actaea I had planted and how they were proving a great attraction to the bees and butterflies. This year the actaeas, which are graceful, tall plants, have doubled in size. Like so many plants loved by bees and butterflies, they are a mass of tiny flowers that attract insects. All asters can bear the name of Michaelmas daisy. Mine have excelled and grown to about 5'; much larger than the label said. Asters can bear that name because they are members of the daisy or compositae family and

bloom for some time both before and after Michaelmas at the end of September. I was put in mind of a rhyme which was recited to me as a child.

*The Michaelmas daisies have grown so tall,
They peep right over the garden wall,
I wonder, I wonder what they can see,
For the Michaelmas daisies are taller than me.*





Maybe it is the attention the plants have received or just that the weather has suited them, but certain plants have thrived and given great pleasure this year. One is the Eucomis. This plant has suddenly become more popular, with an item on Gardener's World a few weeks ago showing them in their natural habitat in S. Africa and an article in this month's RHS Garden magazine.

The variety I have in my

garden take up a large amount of room with long, strap leaves so mine were moved into pots a couple of years ago and have multiplied and flowered well this year. The pictures show Eucomis 'Sparkling Rosie'.



The flowers that really reward at this time and tell me that autumn is coming, are the nerines. The genus Nerine belongs to the Amaryllidaceae family of herbaceous perennials although it has similarities in looks to a lily. Their native home is South Africa where they bloom prolifically in the Drakensberg mountains. They were brought originally from S. Africa by Athelstan Cornish-Bowden for which this particular variety is named.

There are many species but only two which are reliably hardy in the UK, Nerine Bowdenii and Nerine Undulata. They flower from September to late October and last well in both the garden and when used as a cut flower. The stems are erect and without leaves and have umbels of between 5 and 10 flowers, which in the most common variety are bright pink and trumpet-shaped. There are now newer varieties in varying shades of pink and white.

Each flower has prominent stamens and 6 narrow, wavy-edged petals, which appear to have a sparkly luminescence. Cells on the surface of the petals capture and concentrate light creating this luminous effect in the weaker autumn sunshine, rather like a sprinkling of gold dust. They also have a slight scent.



The bulbs are quite large and resemble old-fashioned Chianti bottles. They flourish in a sunny, well-drained spot in the garden, particularly against a south-facing wall, where the sun can fall on the tops of the bulbs sitting on the surface of the soil. They thrive in hot summers, disliking cold, wet winters. When planted in pots, they require good drainage with the addition of grit. In the wild, they are at their best in poor soils. Most experts will recommend that the bulbs are planted with at least half of the bulb being visible above the soil so that they can enjoy the sun's heat and ripen and suggest that they do not

take kindly to being shaded by other plants. They prefer to be left undisturbed and flower best when left to grow into crowded clumps and should only be split, if necessary, after 4-5 years. After planting they may be reluctant to flower, but with patience they will reward. They are a quite untidy addition to the garden for part of the year, with the foliage dying back leaving a tatty patch of dry-looking bulbs. However, one moment the bulbs are all you see and then the next day there is a flower spike 4" tall; then suddenly there are numerous flower spikes. Some of my nerines were moved and have taken time to settle but this year I have flower spikes popping up all over the place where they were moved to 2 years ago.



Another plant which has just come into flower is *Tricyrtis Formosana* Pink Freckles. *Tricyrtis* are part of the lily family and are generally autumn flowering. However, this variety are slightly earlier flowering, from July through to September. The flowers of Pink Freckles are star shaped with 6 petals and are pale lilac with burgundy spots, a little like orchids. Bought as a small plant last year, our plant has made a good sized clump around 2' high with lots of flowers in this first flowering year. It is a hardy plant, tolerating low temperatures, ideal for a woodland garden, being happiest in partial shade in rich, moisture-retentive soil.



Its common name is toad lily which makes reference to the spotted nature of the flowers and the wart-like bumps at the base of the flowers, described by some as looking like the skin of a toad, but are actually the nectaries. The Japanese have a common name of 'hototogiso' translated as 'little cuckoo' which is a shy, attractive forest bird. This, I think, is a much nicer common name for a flower which, from a distance is not particularly noticeable, but close up is really stunning.



Last year I altered a piece of garden close to the house, replacing the taller plants with alpines and very small plants. A pretty plant which has been flowering for some time is *Scutellaria Texas Rose*, also known as 'upside down salvia' or 'skullcap' due to the shape of its seeds. It forms a mound of grey-green foliage about 6" high and is

covered with small, deep pink flowers which are not unlike a tiny snapdragon. It is drought tolerant, enjoying being in a sunny spot and is a target for bees and butterflies. It is part of the mint family and native to Mexico.



Whilst we humans may not be able to smell the flowers we have in our gardens, many nectar-bearing flowers use scent to attract insect pollinators such as bumblebees and butterflies. Butterflies use their antennae to detect scents and like bees, pick up pollen on their bodies as they feed on the nectar which is then deposited on other flowers as they move on to continue

feeding. So the cycle of reproduction is carried on.

Watching the insects go about their 'work' is a fascinating way to spend a few quiet minutes and marvel at the way nature has evolved these small but complex insects which play an essential



role in our lives. Creating an environment in which these vital insects and creatures can continue to, not only survive but thrive, has never been more important.



Angela Grudzinski

READERS LETTERS

Thank you Penny for your team's continued hard work and perseverance with such a lovely result in the magazine!!!!

I would love to see the magazine go wider.

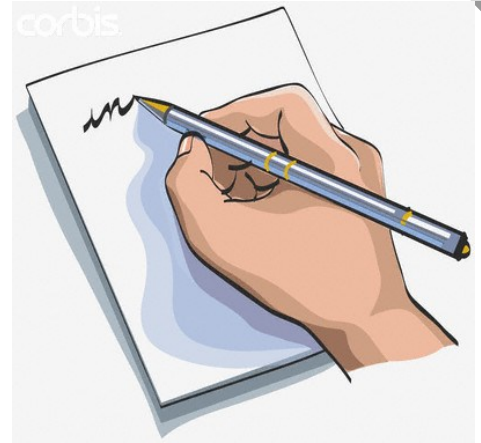
Thank you all for your faithfulness. Please add this to your feedback page - I'll have more to say no doubt!

Jan Peel

You can send letters to my email address: jenningspenny@aol.com until I get a new 'magazine address'.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Editor



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My favourite hymn.

In response to a request by Elaine Riley, I am letting you know what my favourite hymn is.

My favourite hymn is Praise my Soul the King of Heaven. This hymn is based on Psalm 103.

This hymn has seen me through the highs and lows of my life. A wise author said "When you are down, instead of feeling low, turn this around to think of things to be grateful for and say thank you to God in Praise."

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to chide and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
ye behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

This hymn has its roots in Fotheringhay. Elizabeth 1st was horrified to find that the tombs of two Dukes of York had been desecrated there. During Elizabeth's time it was Psalms that would be sung, not hymns. Moving through the centuries it needed a popular tune to make it well known.

It has been used at various Royal occasions including the wedding of George VI and the Queen Mother as well as that of our current Queen.

The words and the melody go hand in hand – one feeding off the other and it feeds my soul.

Written by Margaret Wilkinson.

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People need people

People need people,
To walk to
To talk to
To cry and rely on,
People will always need people.
To love and to miss
To hug and to kiss,
It's useful to have other people.
To whom to moan
If you're all alone,
It's so hard to share
When no one is there.
There's not much to do
When there's no one but you.
People will always need people.
To please
To tease
To put you at ease,
People will always need people.
To make life appealing
And give life some meaning,
It's useful to have other people.
If you need a change
To whom will you turn.
If you need a lesson
From whom will you learn.
If you need to play
You'll know why I say
People will always need people.

People will always need people -
To have friendly fights with
And share tasty bites with,
It's useful to have other people.
People live in families
Gangs, posses and packs,
It seems we need company
Before we relax,
So stop making enemies
And let's face the facts,
People will always need people,
Yes,
People will always need people.

—
Benjamin Zephaniah

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Take your work seriously, but
never yourself



Still with the spirit of Jim Carr.

Hello Jim,

It's so nice to talk with you. New words have crept into our vocabulary. Words like Lockdown, now Local Lockdown, Bubbles, Social Distancing, Shielding, Moonshot and Circuit break; apologies if you haven't heard them before said in the context of Coronavirus. Don't worry we are



struggling to understand them too.

Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, football in England is in a sorry state. All lower levels have asked the Premier League for financial assistance. The new season has just started but the matches are going ahead without fans inside the stadiums. For the top clubs this is fine. The TV money is still available for the high profile clubs. In fact the cost of transfers are as high as ever. However

one does not have to go very far down the leagues before the cracks start to show. Even some Championship sides are struggling financially without the income from fans. The smaller clubs are in desperate straits. Clubs like Boldmere St. Michael's will do well to survive.

Sutton Coldfield is subject at present to a local lockdown along with Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell and now Wolverhampton. Just when things were easing and there was a glimmer of hope that the fans would be admitted, everything came to a halt, in an effort to control the transmission of the virus.

A report has concluded that all small clubs (not just football) can only last without income, until Christmas 2020, just three months away. This weekend, 19th September, a small crowd of up to 1000 will be admitted to some EFL stadiums as a trial. Only seven clubs have agreed, three have turned it down. The 1st October for a return has been mentioned but in the current climate this may be put back. That is quite understandable, but this is putting more financial pressure on football clubs.

Meanwhile the madness goes on. Jack Grealish who scored for his Villa team the other night, has reputedly signed a new deal at £140,000 per week. By the way Jim, Villa beat your beloved Burton Albion 3-1 in the league cup. Some good news (and how we need that), Birmingham registered their first win since February. As I write, York City has yet to start their campaign. Cricket has carried on throughout the season and Rugby Union has recommenced, albeit without fans present. These are desperate times for sport. As in life the rich get richer and the poor get nothing.

Graham Jennings

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands???



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SIGNS (OUTSIDE CHURCH)

If you live as if God doesn't exist, you'd better be right!

**Professionals built the Titanic
Amateurs built the Ark.**

The Ten Commandments were NOT called
The Ten Suggestions.

Even through the storm, the Son still shines.

If you can't sleep, don't count sheep.
Talk to the Shepherd.

Wife: "Could you go and get 2 pints of milk and if they have eggs, get 6".

Short time later the husband walks in with 6 pints of milk.

Wife: "Why on earth did you buy 6 pints of milk?"

Husband: They had eggs.



MIRACULOUS STAIRCASE (2)



The 16th Avenue Steps, San Francisco

At the corner of Moraga Street and 16th Avenue, in the Golden Gate Heights neighbourhood of San Francisco, is the base of the most beautiful staircase in the entire city. A brightly-tiled panel caps the front of each of the staircase's

163 steps, and as the stairs stretch up the hill toward 15th Avenue, the individual panels blend together to form a single massive mosaic. Stunning in its entirety, yet intricate and detailed enough to offer bountiful rewards when viewed up close, the 16th Avenue steps are a treasure shared by the people living in the Sunset District.

Groups & Organisations

MONDAY

Cubs	6.45	Scout HQ
Choir	7.00	South Aisle
Contact	Angela Grudzinski	373 1899

WEDNESDAY

Luncheon Club	12.30pm	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Yates	354 4248
Rainbows	5.00 – 6.00	Church Hall
Brownies	6.15 – 7.30	Church Hall
Contact	Liz Claybrook	07906 958532
Email	liz.claybrook@yahoo.co.uk	
Guides	7.00 - 8.30	Church Hall
Contact	Hayley Bryer	07876 361952
Email	hayleydench@hotmail.co.uk	
Bellringers	7.45	Church Tower
Contact	Dave Reeves	354 6264
The Guild	See 'What's On' Page	
Contact	Angela Grudzinski – Chair	373 1899

THURSDAY

Little Lights	9.45	South Aisle
Knit & Natter	2.00—4.00	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Murray	608 3599
Scouts	7.30	Scout HQ

FRIDAY

Flower Guild	Friday Mornings	Church
Contact	Chris Reeves	354 6264
Beavers	6.15	Scout HQ
For Beavers, Cubs and Scouts		
Contact	Bob Moore	07930 543747
Email	moorera@blueyonder.co.uk	

CHURCHYARD TALES

The Churchyard has been in the history of this Parish for over 150 years, and has become the final resting place to generations.

Here is one of its stories.....

Reverend Matthew PARKER (1839 – 1898) – aged 59 years.

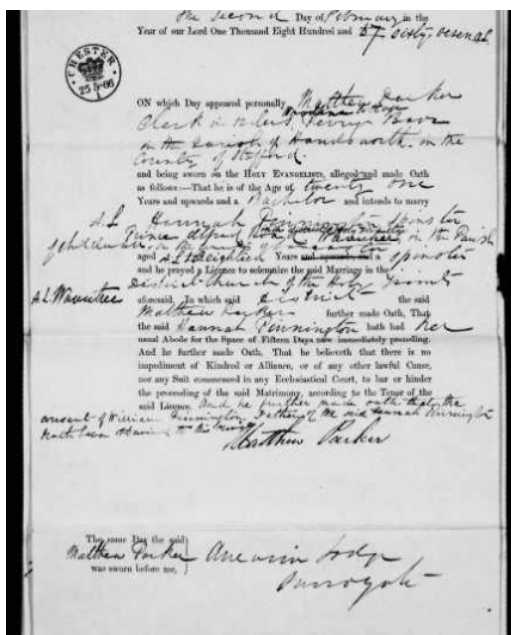
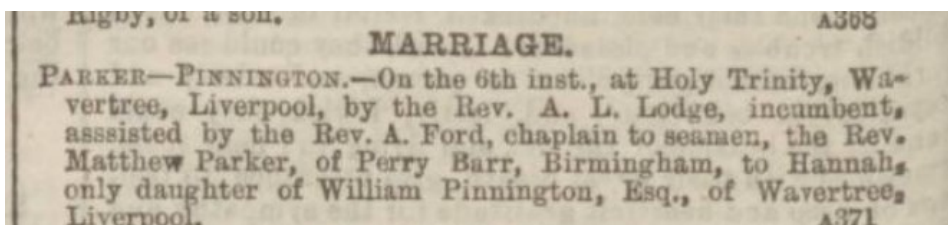
Hannah PARKER (1849 – 1895) – aged 46 years.

Matthew Parker was born in Ballykeel, (a small hamlet about 18 miles south of Belfast), County Down, Ireland in 1839. Matthew's birth came only a few years before the Irish Potato Famine between 1845 and 1849 which caused millions of Irish families to emigrate to England or in some cases to America.

It is likely that Matthew arrived in England as a young man and lived in or around the area of Liverpool.

Matthew became a Clerk in Holy Orders and by 1866 (aged 27) had met Hannah Pinnington, born 3rd February 1849, the daughter of William (a master painter and plumber) and Mary Ann who were living in Wavertree, a suburb of Liverpool.

Matthew married Hannah at Holy Trinity Church, Wavertree on 6th February 1867.



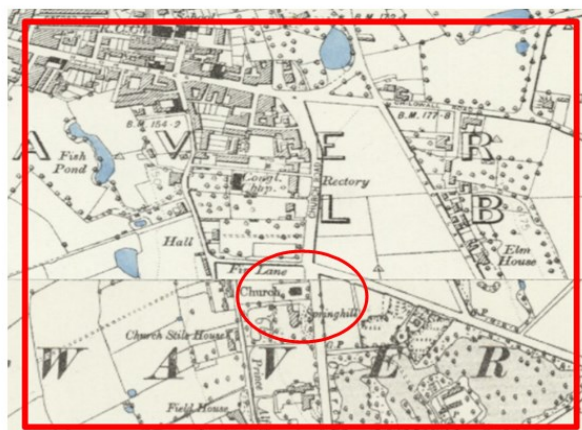
The church itself began life in 1793 with the purchase of some land by a group of local merchants and gentlemen. In 1794 with the agreement of the Bishop of Chester, the Wavertree Chapel of Ease to Childwell Church was built, which on 5th August 1794 was dedicated by the Bishop of Chester to 'The Holy Trinity'.



Holy Trinity Church in 1867



Holy Trinity Church in 2020

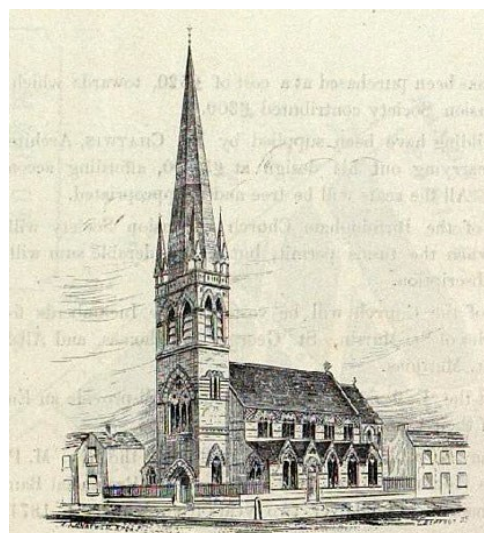
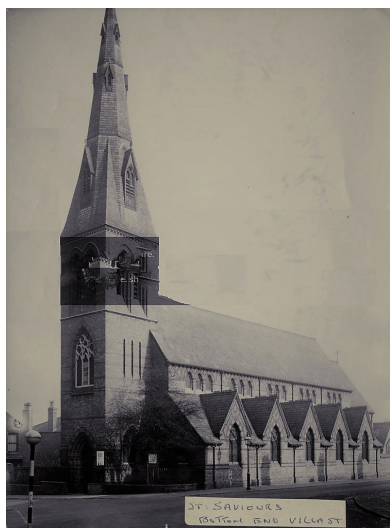


The couple almost immediately moved to Birmingham, where Matthew, already a priest, had taken up an incumbency within the parish of St Matthias, Hockley. Here, over the next 4 years, he concentrated on preaching at the St Matthias' school rooms, to the overspill of a congregation in this large and heavily populated parish.

Matthew and Hannah lived at Woodman Cottage, Perry Barr, Handsworth where in 1868 their daughter Emily was born.

The parish of St Matthias was unable to cope with the local population and in the early 1870's plans began to build a new church on Villa Road, Hockley (now Handsworth). Land was identified and purchased, and it was to be within the streets of the parish that the new build was to take place.

On Friday 1st May 1874, the Church of St Saviour was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Worcester. The church stood on the corner of Bridge Street and Villa Road and had seating for 600 persons 'all free'. The new church was not to be without a congregation as Reverend Parker brought his own from the school rooms, with many donations being made by the congregation to beautify the church.



The church was designed by Julius A. Chatwin who, in 1895, designed our own south aisle here at St Michael's. St Saviour's Church consisted of a 5 bay nave, north and south aisles, chancel, and a west end tower and spire, reaching to a height of 120 feet. The church could accommodate 600 persons. St Saviour's Church however had no churchyard. The church was to remain until it closed in 1962. The church was amalgamated with St Silas' Church, Lozells, and in 1967 was demolished.



**CURATE WANTED, for St. Saviour's,
Hockley, Birmingham. Liberal Evangelical. Earnest,
active, and efficient. Under thirty-two preferred. Good
stipend. Apply to Rev. M. Parker, Chain-walk, Lozells, Bir-
mingham.**

The family's final move was to 20 South Road, Handsworth.

On 14th May 1895 Hannah died. There being no churchyard at St Saviour's, it is most likely that a place was offered by our own vicar who at that time was Reverend Albert Bedford.

Reverend Matthew Parker served for 24 years at St Saviour's church and died on 2nd May 1898 aged just 59 years. He was buried with Hannah here at St Michael's.

In his estate he left the sum of £624 (£81,640 today). His daughter Emily continued to live at South Road for some years after.



Peter Knight

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Tailing Off....

Hello,

We should have been away this week but had to cancel due to the 'mixed households' rule. Typically, the weather has so far been wonderful!

I'm still hoping to publish a 'hard copy' of the magazine in November. If you have paid your subscription for 2020 but would prefer to have the magazine by email please let me know. My address is below.

Editor

Magazine articles please for the

NOVEMBER

magazine to:

jenningspenny@aol.com

By 10th October 2020

WHO'S WHO AT ST MICHAEL'S

<p>Vicar: Rev. Gary Birchall Tel: 354 4501 Email: revgary@stmichaels.org.uk (off Tuesdays)</p>	<p>209 Station Road Sutton Coldfield B73 5EL</p>
<p>Curate: Simon Cocks Email: simon@wildgoose.me.uk</p>	
<p>Churchwardens: Pete Swaine Tel: 07846 401334 Email: peter@swaine.plus.com</p>	<p>Jude Leonard Tel: 0121 373 0012 Email: judinator1@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Readers: Elaine Riley Tel: 354 4157 Gary Connell 07963 510623</p>	
<p>Lay Pastoral Ministers: Val Bryon 07886 397945 Liz Carr 354 3769 Kevin Hunt 313 2376 Margaret Smoldon 355 4226 Trudy Walsh 355 4128</p>	<p>Peter Edmonds 354 3200 Lin Benson 373 1227 Edwina Connell 682 9119 Fran Lumley 354 5490 Mick Walsh 355 4128 Helen Menniss 07814 911129</p>
<p>Stewardship Secretary Edwina Connell</p>	<p>Tel: 07717 239904 Email: edwinaconnell@yahoo.co.uk</p>
<p>Church Administrator Liz Claybrook Tel: 373 0207 Email: liz.claybrook@stmichaels.org.uk Mon, Wed & Fri 9.30 -2.30pm</p>	<p>Church Office St Michael's Church Church Road, Boldmere Sutton Coldfield B73 5RX</p>

St Martin's Nursing Home



St Martin's is a family run nursing home managed by brother and sister David Underhill (Home Manager) and Lorraine Holt (Nurse Manager). We provide modern facilities for twenty four residents in a comfortable and caring environment. Our small size means individual attention and a homely atmosphere.

Accommodation consists of 24 spacious single bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities, HD television and free Wi-Fi.

We offer a range of enjoyable activities to stimulate cognitive awareness. This includes animal visits, music recitals, puzzles, outings, hobbies and visiting entertainers.

Our professional training is rigorous and our C.Q.C. rating is good. We welcome enquiries and visits should you seek quality nursing care with family values.

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