



Ledbury and Eastnor Parish Magazine September 2017

MAYOR OF LEDBURY'S CIVIC SERVICE SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER 2017 - 3.00pm

The theme for this year's Civic Service is thankfulness. I feel that Ledbury is a wonderful town in which to live and work, with a marvellous sense of community. I am sure that we are all very thankful to live in such a lovely place.

I am very pleased to be having my Civic Service at St Michael and All Angel's Parish Church, to enable residents of Ledbury and representatives of our local voluntary and community groups to gather together. It is important for us to celebrate all that is around us, our families, friendships and all things positive.

I look forward to meeting you.

Councillor Elaine Fieldhouse – Mayor of Ledbury

*The Civic service is the one annual occasion at which we welcome the Mayor, the Town Council and officials officially to our church. We therefore invite **all** Ledbury people, members of whatever faith or denomination or non-believers, to come and join with us in showing our backing for our council. The town is at a critical period in its history with big decisions which will affect its future for decades to come. We are aware of the problems that exist among the Council and we will be praying for unity and cooperation in working together for the good of the town. Please come and greet our guests and show our support for them as they work for our benefit.*

Dean's Delight

It is not too late to come to an evening of song, music and reminiscence by the Dean of Hereford. Those who have gone to a previous performance say that it is an experience not to be missed.

Friday 1st September at 7.30pm at St Michael's & All Angels
In support of The Friends of Ledbury Parish Church

Tickets £10.00 to include a glass of wine available from
Ann Davies 01531 631873 or the Parish Office 01531 631531

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is upon us once more. A time to enjoy, appreciate and be thankful for the beauty around us, for the harvest of fruit and grain and all the effort put in by many for us to benefit from.

A time to let the beauty of the mists, turn even ugly views into gentle visions that delight.

A time to thank God afresh and apply the balmy effect of mist to our lives and those who we feel have hurt us.

A time to create a harvest of gentleness, goodness, encouragement and joy.

¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5: 15 – 18

The Revd Keith Hilton-Turvey

Sermon series on Romans Chapter 8.

A number of people have asked for copies of these sermons. They are now available on the church web site (for address see back cover). They are in the July section and the link to the page can be found on 'The Recent Notice Sheets' page.

**St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury and St John the Baptist, Eastnor
Services during September**

Sunday 3rd September

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion with Guest Speaker from
The Leprosy Mission

6.30pm BCP Evensong

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity**Sunday 10th September****Trinity**

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Communion with Prayer Ministry

11.15am Eastnor Parish Communion

Thirteenth Sunday after**Sunday 17th September****Trinity**

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Communion with Prayer Ministry

6.30pm Evensong

Fourteenth Sunday after**Sunday 24th September****Trinity**

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

9.30am St Michael and All Angel's Patronal Festival Service

11.15am Eastnor Parish Communion

4.00pm Worship Service

Fifteenth Sunday after

Friday Morning Communion. St Katherine's Chapel is now back in use and this service is held there at 10.30am each Friday. All are welcome.

Wednesday Evening Worship

On the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6.45 for 7.00pm in St Anne's Chapel, I have for the last three years led a short service of worship. This often takes the form of Compline although we have also used a form of Evensong from the Anglican Church of New Zealand, an Iona Evening prayer service and a Northumbria Community night prayer service. A small but regular congregation of between three and nine attend and we have found it an oasis of calm in an otherwise stressful life. We would be delighted if you felt able to join us, either occasionally or on a regular basis.

Revd William Simmonds

Leprosy Mission events in Ledbury for September

Sunday 3rd September: Leprosy Mission Sunday

Tony Hodder will be taking the 10.30 service with Trevor Grant, our regional manager for The Leprosy Mission, preaching on the relevance to Christ's teaching to the work of the Leprosy Mission. We expect Trevor to illustrate his talk and mention his recent trip with a group of supporters to India, who saw the start of major work to improve facilities at Purulia hospital. This hospital, in West Bengal north of Calcutta, treats around 30-40,000 people every year (of which approximately 1,000 are people directly affected by leprosy).

Thursday 21st September: afternoon reception at the Bishops Palace in Hereford

By kind permission of Bishop Richard, we will be holding a reception for TLM regional supporters – with invitations extended to anyone else who is interested in being a supporter. You will remember Victor Parisipogula of Brighter Future visited Ledbury from Andhra Pradesh a couple of years ago – he will be here again with his lovely wife Mary and taking part in this opportunity to find out more about the wonderful work the Leprosy Mission supports. The outline programme commences with coffee/tea on arrival from 1.30, with a welcome by Bishop Richard at 2.00 pm. The event will draw to a close from 4.15 in a very English fashion with tea and cakes on the lawns.

We would love you to come, but we need an idea of numbers, so please RSVP to Ian and Jan, as below. It would also be most helpful if the (more-or-less) able bodied local supporters could be at the Palace from 12.30 to help set up and put out the refreshments, and to clear up after our guests have gone. Please contact Ian & Jan James: ianj39@talktalk.net 01531 637376 or Trevor Grant at the Leprosy Mission (01733 516093 or 07940 192140).

Ian James

CMS Coffee Morning

The total raised at this event is currently £850. Thank you to all those who came, and who helped in any way and particularly to all of you who gave so generously towards the costs of our CMS mission partners in Asia. If anyone still wishes to give, it is not too late. Please see me.

Christabel Panter

St. John the Baptist Church, Eastnor

We have had a lovely summer at Eastnor and have been enjoying the company of many Wedding couples and their families. Some travel long distances to attend our Services and it is always a privilege to be a part of their Wedding plans.

The village has been looking beautiful throughout the summer and although our church is 'feeling her age' she still stands as a proud testimony of faith in the heart of the village. There has been a church on the site at Eastnor since the 12th Century, the Tower was remodelled during the 14th Century and the main body of the Church was re-built in 1852 so it is hardly surprising that the stones and mortar are feeling weary. But the life within the church is still glowing and we are determined and working hard to raise the funds we need for essential repairs. We had a special PCC meeting in July when we were joined by Simon Whaley from the Diocese who has just taken on the role of Church Project and Funding Support Assistant. He was very helpful and supportive with advice on raising the necessary funds for repairing the Church Tower. Our PCC Secretary, James Hervey-Bathurst, is putting together a professional team to lead the long and unenviable process of costings, planning and applications.

Eastnor Primary School celebrated their Leavers Service in the Church at the end of term in July and we look forward to welcoming them back for their assemblies, Open the Book and special services in September.

As always, our warm welcome remains open to you all should you wish to visit us one Sunday. Our services are every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 11:15am. We look forward to seeing you.

**Beverly Jones — Churchwarden
(01531 636378)**

Drivers we need you!

You may have seen this appeal for drivers for the monthly Coffee Stop held in the Chapter House in the weekly pew sheet, but at the time of writing. Apart from the organisers, only one driver has offered. We need more. Yes, we need some able to manoeuvre wheelchairs into their boot, but not all the passengers need that facility. Please note *you do not have to be available every month - just the first Friday morning of any month that you are free*. Also note, *you do not have to stay at the Coffee Stop, only drop off around mid-morning and pick up again around late morning, timings to suit yourself*.

Please think what it must be like for people who are not able to go places without a lift and how much a trip out to meet and talk with others means to them. You can volunteer to be on the driver's call list by telephoning Ruth Wragg on 01531 670196 or by emailing her at ruthwragg@hotmail.com.

Many thanks

Summoned by Bells

It is over now but what a week it was. Around 500 people came to listen to over 400 poems being beautifully read. They ranged from Shakespeare to Music Hall songs, from love songs to hymns of hate. The team of readers was excellent and the audience were held spellbound and, although they were encouraged to do so, few of them either left or went to fetch refreshments while the readings were taking place. It was noticeable that people, who had originally come to see what was going on, came back for more later in the week. I think some of us had doubts whether we would be able to sustain the momentum over ten individually themed ninety minute sessions but, often we ran over time and nobody minded. This was a very worthwhile addition to the normal festival programme.

There are so many people to thank. The event was launched with a Quarter Peal on the bells which was much appreciated. The floral arrangements in the church were magnificent. The stewards welcomed all who came with friendliness and enthusiasm. The catering was first class and the variety of cakes, all provided by members of the church, was incredible. Only the strong willed went home with their waist line intact. The readers introduced their items with care and sensitivity and the standard of their performance was outstanding. The sound system was such that every word could be heard anywhere in the church. We were privileged to have contributions from the children of The Chase School and Eastnor Primary School which added much to the occasion. The concert on Saturday morning by Philip Holland, and the two soloists he had asked to help, was delightful. We should also mention Peter and Rosemary Diamond, both former teachers and Heads of English, and now living in Ledbury, who gave very useful help and advice in choosing poems around the ten themes.

Above all we should thank Tim and Mary Anne, not only for coming up with the original proposal but for their extraordinary effort in mounting the event. It was not only choosing the poems and the readers although this was work enough. They also managed to persuade over 150 individuals and businesses to be sponsors whilst Ian Beer negotiated generous funding from John Goodwin (to whom much thanks) to help with publicity and printing the programme. Many of us were enthused by the thought of our favourite poems being read out aloud. We owe a vast debt of gratitude to those who validated the poems and checked the words.

This was a great event in the life of the church. Many people, those who had come for the Poetry Festival and locals, came into our church for the first time, were warmly welcomed and well looked after and went away delighted that they had been there. There was a financial side to the event and over £2,000 was raised before Gift Aid is claimed to help with the future upkeep of the church but in a sense this was unimportant. What mattered was that we, as a church, had worked together to put on an event which drew outsiders into the building. Who knows to where this will lead? We showed we could work together for the benefit of the community in putting on an event of this size. And we all thoroughly enjoyed doing it and getting to know other members of the congregation and people from outside the church better.

The Bells of St Michael's

I have a 'bucket list' of things that I would like to do and amongst them was to experience ringing a church bell. So I emailed the Ledbury Bell Ringers with a request to 'have a go' at ringing a bell and received a lovely welcoming message back. Frank, 'Captain of the Bells', arranged to meet me at 7.15 one Tuesday evening, 15 minutes before bell practice, to explain the bells to me and to show me around. He asked me if I would like to see the bells, which was a surprise and sounded very exciting. So Frank led the way that involved climbing a flight of steep, narrow and stony winding steps, that seemed never ending, and it was slightly scary. (I began to wonder if I was doing the right thing!) It was worth it though; to see the large bells was quite an experience. Back down on the bell-ringing platform I was given the opportunity to ring a bell after a little instruction. It was so exciting hearing the bell ring knowing that I myself was pulling on the rope. Initially, I could feel that it would be quite easy to be taken right up into the tower by the weight on the rope, but once I got going it was fine. I stayed with them until they finished practice at 9pm.

While watching the bell ringers practising I realised that bell ringing was much more complicated than I had first thought.

I've been invited to join them if I wish - and I may well do so. I shall certainly be paying another visit. I found it all very enjoyable, including the company.

Maureen M Browning

Secretary's Scratchings from Ledbury PCC 26th July 2017

The meeting was attended by 15 members and opened with a reading and prayer. In correspondence, the undercroft will be tidied and an inventory of the contents drawn up. The minutes of the last PCC and the standing committee were accepted. The Church Silver now resides in the Cathedral. The Treasurer had circulated his report before the meeting and the finances are running to budget. The treasurer announced that he will stand down at the next Annual Meeting. ***(Wanted Replacements for Treasurer and PCC Secretary!)*** Mrs Diana Veasey gave a detailed report of the progress towards advertising for the Children's and Families Worker. This should now happen before the end of September 2017 with a view to the person being appointed by January 2018. The Team were thanked for their hard and detailed work. During this discussion, a lively debate on Baptism Policy took place. A report from the Local Ministry Development Group had been received. This reported on the Mission Action plan and reprioritised some of the actions. The PCC accepted the report. The quinquennial report actions have been prioritised and £10,000 earmarked for the most urgent items. Mr Peter Veasey reported that the new lay co-chair of Deanery synod is Sheila Mullaney. Mr Veasey was appointed to be St. Michael's lay representative on the Standing and Business Committee.

The formation of a 'Social and Catering Group' headed by Sue Simpson and a 'Buildings and Fabric Working Group' headed by Ian Stainburn was agreed. An experimental (6 months) reorganisation of St Anne's Chapel was also agreed. The Bible Cases will be moved into the Sanctuary. It is thought that these changes will make the area more user attractive.

The Christmas fair will be held in St Katherine's Hall. Sue Simpson asked for help in moving items from and to the undercroft. New ideas for stalls and attractions will be welcome. The meeting closed at about 9.45pm.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) - The next course will be held on Saturdays, 14th and 21st October from 3.30 - 5.30pm in The Chapter House. **All** are welcome to participate in this excellent, free course to learn more about how to manage finances in the modern world to ensure that present outgoings are provided for and future ones planned for. It does not matter whether your income is meagre or generous, it will be of benefit to you. To find out more or to register contact: ledbury.ministry@talktalk.net or telephone Ruth Wragg on 01531 670196.

Mums and Toddlers Group

The Baptist Church invites you to pray for our popular Tots & Toddlers group, which operates weekly during term time on Friday mornings. We are a small but committed band of volunteers and would love to welcome others to join us - as an occasional baker maybe, as an occasional Friday morning helper, or as a person committed to praying for our precious young mums and babes. These families are our core Messy Church families, and we long to bring them into a relationship with Jesus. They really appreciate our warm friendship, our grandparent wisdom, our safe and warm family 'home', to say nothing of the unlimited hot drinks and home baked cakes all for £1 per family! What a witness of God's unconditional and lavish love. We've heard it said that at 3.00am on a Friday with a crying baby, the thought of homemade cake and a smiling face at 9.00am is all that keeps a young mum going! Friday mornings are a lifeline for new mums, some of whom have no local family support, and who may have put careers on hold and be looking for new friends and a new 'help' network. Even if it's not for you, you may know someone who has a little time on their hands and would like to be involved in some way; we would love to hear from them. Praise God for the faithful volunteers he has always provided for this group over SO many years, and for the generous, loving, gracious, caring heritage that we have inherited from them. Contact Gill Blows gillblows@btinternet.com

Home Groups

David Price writes: Barbara and I downsized to Ledbury, a town which we have grown to love, from Malvern Wells in 2007. A year later, after much thought and prayer and with the blessing of Paul, our then Rector, we began a twice monthly fellowship group in our home at 16 Masefield Avenue.

Nine years later, at the age of 90, well into injury time and with plenty of spare parts, I realise that the time has come to stand down from overall leadership. Two of our founding members were Janet Round, now with the Lord and the person who first welcomed us into St Michael's Church, and Heather Lucas who told us something of her pilgrimage in last month's magazine. Much loved and respected in the church, we have seen her grow in the Lord as we travelled God's word together. Our smallish, diverse, Bible loving group have kindly agreed that she take over the leadership from me. We shall continue to meet in Masefield Avenue and, as members of the group, we shall give Heather our full support. Her leadership style will, I am sure, be very different from mine as she looks on others to share in the leadership with her. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month and, this autumn, our first meeting will be on September 12th... We may be able to squeeze one or two new members in so if you would like to know more about us, please ring Heather on 634948 or me on 634831.

If anyone wishes to join one of the other church Home Groups, please contact the Rector on 634735 or the church office on 631531

YOUNG CHURCH ACTIVITIES SUMMER 2017

Young Church had a busy programme before they finished for the summer holidays. Sessions included learning about working together and being stronger, being disciples, the Good Samaritan. We also planted out the Church containers both at the front of the Church and in the Garden of Remembrance; they are looking lovely and they have been much admired.

On the final Sunday of term, we had a Bible Fun and Games Session, including puzzles, relays, Twister, cake decorating and other activities which the children enjoyed immensely.

Sadly, we have said goodbye to Victoria, Gareth, Emily, Thomas and Luke as they begin a new life in Cornwall. We plan to keep in touch and hope to build up links with the Young Church they become involved with.

Our numbers continue to fluctuate, which makes planning and delivering challenging but we continue on with optimism and enthusiasm. The sessions are a pleasure to run whether we have three children or ten.

Next terms begins on Sunday 10 September 2017; we look forward to a new year and welcoming old and new faces, including at some stage, we hope, in the next few months, a Children and Families Worker.

Music in Church - Organ recitals on 3rd Monday of each month at 12.30pm:

18th September - Charles Pavey- (Holy Trinity, Malvern)

16th October Philip Holland - 'not by arrangement!'

(St Michael's, Ledbury)

20th November - Robert Milan

18th December - Christmas Selection -

(A medley of organists, each playing a Christmas themed piece).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Men's Breakfast - The next men's breakfast will be held on **Saturday 23rd September** at the Seven Stars Hotel at 9.15am. Price £8. Speaker to be advised

Week of Accompanied Prayer. This event has had to be postponed and will be reorganised shortly

Macmillan Coffee Morning - Wednesday 13th September between 10.30am and 1.00pm in St Katherine's Hall. Further details from Sue Simpson (632989).

St Michael's Patronal Festival; Sunday 24th September There will be a 'Bring and Share lunch. It will also be an opportunity to put a name to a face as all members of the congregation will be asked to wear a badge saying who they are.

Quiz Night Come along to The Burgage Hall for a fun way to support the fund raising efforts for the Flower Festival. **Friday 13th. October** at 7:00p.m; Teams of 4; Hot Supper included. More details will be available on the weekly pew sheet nearer the time but **put the date in your diary now.**

LOOKING BACK AT MALAWI

(Recollections by Elizabeth and John Crossley)

Malawi is a mainly Christian country with various denominations represented. But it was the Anglican Church that first brought the Gospel to the country. This was in 1861 when David Livingstone escorted the newly consecrated bishop, Charles Mackenzie, to Magomero in the apparently healthy highlands in the south of the country. Mackenzie had four companions, two clergy and two laymen. Their objective was to found a Christian settlement to counter the depredations of the slave trade which was destroying the peace of the country. But within two years, Mackenzie and two of his company were dead. The survivors were withdrawn. However this heroic enterprise had not been useless – as we shall see.

It was in Malawi – then known as Nyasaland – that Elizabeth and John met in 1961. We found each other again in London two years later and married in 1964, with the understanding that we would return to Africa – with Malawi particularly in mind – when we could. So three years later we found ourselves back in the newly-independent Republic of Malawi accompanied by our first-born son. What should we do to justify our presence in the country – and even earn a living?

As it happened, the fishing industry on the inland sea known as Lake Malawi was flourishing and the local fishermen needed boats more capacious than their dugout canoes to carry their abundant catches. So John set up a boatyard at Kachilenge on the shores of the lake to design and build boats. The boatyard flourished, even building a boat for the President himself. Elizabeth ensured that our growing family were well fed, and started a small clinic where babies from the village (and there were plenty of them!) were weighed, and those in need were referred to the medical assistant in Salima or the German nurse from the neighbouring German project. She also regularly administered the necessary immunizations.

For worship, we attended the local Anglican Church dedicated to Christ the King. This was built of mud bricks by Christians from the area under the leadership of Richard Mchakama, a fisheries inspector employed by the Government. Although the Parish Priest from neighbouring Salima would visit from time to time and lead the service, such was the loyalty of those of the fishermen and their families along the lakeshore who had been brought up in the Church, that they felt the need to be reminded of the Good News regularly. The little church answered that need: surely there could not have been a more real vindication of the sacrifice made by Mackenzie and his followers than that little church! This idyllic existence came to an end after eight years when we felt we should return to England and get our three sons through school there.

Back in England, we both qualified as teachers and concentrated on the education of the family. This took longer than we had expected. But in 1996 Elizabeth joined VSO and was sent to work at the Malawi College of Distant Education in Blantyre. John took early retirement and joined her, soon finding himself secretary to Samaritan Fund, a purely Malawian initiative aimed at improving the lives of the street children, the offspring of broken homes who roamed the streets of the city living by begging, crime and scavenging. In both these organisations, we were confronted by the riddle: why was it that, for all the good intentions of the well-meaning and God-fearing people whose work we shared, Malawi remained among the poorest countries in the world? It appeared that institutions intended to promote development were failing as the immediate (and urgent) needs of the people operating them took over: drugs vanished from the hospitals, cement from the building sites and development went into reverse.

Ending her stint with VSO, Elizabeth received an invitation which could not be refused: would she serve as Education Advisor for the newly formed Diocese of North Malawi? This led, not only to our moving to the north of the country, but to being posted to Likoma an Island lying off the east coast of Lake Malawi close to the shores of Mozambique. Likoma is the Iona of Malawi where the Anglican Church re-established itself after the tragedy of Magomero. A beautiful cathedral, consecrated in 1905 stands there and the cemetery contains the graves of many of the early missionaries. Elizabeth's duties extended to the five primary schools on the island

as well as to the secondary school at Makulawi where she also did some science teaching. Young people frequently called at our house and, as their usual request was for something to read, Elizabeth determined that a resource centre should be built. She obtained the necessary funds from the Beit Trust based in South Africa and in due course a hall, library and stationary shop were added to the facilities available to the people living on the island. John, meanwhile, was drawn into building boats again and replacing the twin diesel engines on the launch Emanuel which linked the island with the eastern shore of the lake.

In 2001 disaster in the form of a food shortage verging on famine hit the country as a poor rainy season coincided with a failure by Government to protect the emergency supply of maize from theft. People were selling their last possessions to buy what food was left. Some dug roots of banana trees for food. Others died of hunger. Both of us were appointed to the Famine Relief Committee of the diocese which distributed food where it could. But this only scratched the surface of the need. The next thing was to find out why the food supply had failed. Having toured the country and heard everywhere the complaint, "The land is not yielding crops as it used to" we were authorised to set up a demonstration farm where a method of soil care which prevented erosion and restored the lost fertility of the soil would be displayed and promoted.

John spent most of his time latterly at the Diocese on the soil care project while Elizabeth and her Malawian counterpart at the Diocese formed a partnership with Fr. Magangani, then a parish priest now Bishop of the northern Malawi diocese, to build a secondary school. This started with Form 1 and each year accommodation for another form was added. Now boarding facilities for girls are being planned.

In the year 2004 our time with the Diocese was up. However we remained in Malawi. From her time as Education Advisor, Elizabeth had become increasingly aware of the tragedy and waste which occurs when promising students have to give up their studies and miss their qualifications because funding for them to complete their education has dried up. This can happen if parents die, lose their job, desert the family or the family's harvest fails. She has therefore committed herself to raising and administering fees for students in need. There seems to be a continuous flow of young people who know that "Eliza" is the person to go to for help in completing their education! She, in return, finds fulfilment in seeing young people reaching their full potential through the sponsorships she obtains for them.

Meanwhile, John has continued to work on what has become his passion – care for the soil. He worked at first by supporting a Malawian NGO which had a visionary programme for empowering village people by learning and applying skills such as brick laying, carpentry and vehicle maintenance to improve their standard of life. With another expatriate, Frances Sinker, he set up the charity Tiyeni Fund, registered with the Charity Commission, through which to channel funds for this enterprise. This worked well until in 2007 when it became clear that visionary leadership was no

substitute for administrative integrity and Tiyeni Fund parted company with the local organisation and found itself taking on the running of the network of village groups which had come together under its aegis.

By this time, the centres which Tiyeni inherited consisted of nursery schools run by caring members of local communities where orphan children assembled for feeding, socializing and learning some letters. The assistance of an organisation from outside the village was needed to provide assets –building materials, additional money for feeding the children and an allowance for the teachers – which were beyond the means of the community. A vital asset was a food garden on a piece of land to help support the children.

It was in the food garden that a significant development took place. Discussing the decline in fertility which had been the cause of the 2001 to 2003 near-famine – with an old friend who had once been Land Husbandry officer for Malawi before working in India and Brazil, John learned that the basic cause of declining fertility was compaction of the soil. Erosion, shallow rooting of crops and loss of moisture were the result of impenetrable, compacted soils. A solution would be to construct deep beds following the contour of the land, where crops would root deeply in the loosened soil and all rainfall would infiltrate keeping the soil moist at depth. It took a few years to get this method of cultivation, which was new to Malawi, adopted. But when the results were seen the farmers were quick to appreciate the advantages. The field staff of Tiyeni now monitor the “gardens” of several thousand farmers who have taken up the improved method of caring for the land. Tiyeni trustees in England see this development as a possible means of abolishing the fear of hunger once and for all throughout Malawi.

Based in England for the time-being, we return to Malawi as often as we can, and always receive a greeting from our kind friends there, “Welcome Home!”

John and Elizabeth Crossley

My Journey to Faith

Many of the recent personal accounts in the magazine have been couched in terms of a journey. It’s a good analogy. Mine has been ramshackle.

I was born into the most exclusive branch of the Plymouth brethren, and brought up to be, not so much a Christian, as good exclusive brethren. Being brought up in a cocoon like that which took it absolutely for granted that one would stay in it, still rankles.

Having been flung, as it were, from one end of the dogmatic spectrum to the other, I don’t know that I’ve proceeded much further. At base, I hold only the fundamentals of belief and faith in the saving power of Jesus in the crucifixion. Colin Oldroyd helped

me greatly, not in anything he said exactly, but in demonstrating that you didn't have to suppress your intellect in order to remain a Christian beyond childhood. More recently, the credentials of doubt became firmly established, that doubt is a necessary aspect of faith; faith is in fact greatly strengthened thereby.

[Patrick Leigh Fermor's definition of the Greeks (in Roumeli): "eight million one man splinter groups reluctantly forced into a series of temporary coalitions".]

One thing I did bring out of this early conditioning is that there can be only one Church, even though divided into Orthodox, Catholic and a million strands of Protestant. The Bishop made this point in his sermon to us sometime last year. While disinclined to make an issue of differences in theology or liturgy, I settled into the C of E because the Anglican Church seems to be able successfully to keep a wide span of the spectrum under its broad roof. It better represents the tolerance of God toward all of us than any other division of the Church. I've come to appreciate the Anglican Liturgy, the ordered dignified framework so flexible in its content; and the measured and beautiful English of the BCP. Because those words have been said week in week out, in our Church and all over England for hundreds of years, they engender a feeling of continuity and connection with all those who have said them. Many over the years may not have been able to bring much in the way of words and music, but exercised their skill in building the Church and furnishing it, so that the building itself brings something to the worship of God, all the time, not just in the service.

Muslims say that there is only one God, but many ways to Him -as many ways as there are Muslims probably. There are as many different perceptions of God as there have been human beings capable of observation and thinking. Probably. In Christianity, we have been vouchsafed a view of God as perceived in the three persons of the Trinity. My own perception includes a view of God as the Creator of the Universe, not only having ordered the laws of physics to suit the biochemistry of the carbon atom, but bringing into being the actuality, breathing life and leaving it to develop over aeons of time. I might align myself with John Masefield's *Vagabond*: "Dunno a heap about the what an' why, Can't say 's I ever knowed". Or, to put it another way, the more you do know, the more you realise what more there is yet to know. Personally, I think it's exponential.

Three phrases from Scripture, taken out of context: 'In the beginning was the Word'; 'and God said, "Let there be light", [*big bang*], and there was light'; 'Come, let us reason together'.

I find no tension between the Biblical view of creation, whether you read it literally or poetically, and the scientific hypothesis of the way the Universe started and developed.

Chris Noel

God Guides Us

I have been asked to write something for the magazine, and I do not want to tell my whole life story!

I was brought up in a Rectory and was taught about Jesus and believed in Him from an early age. But it was when I was 16 years old, at a Christian Summer Camp for Girls in the Lake District that I committed my life to Jesus.

In 1965 I was working as a Staff Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at the Accident Hospital in Birmingham, and, due to various changes in staffing; I became unsettled about my future. Eventually I gave in my notice and knew it was the right thing to do, although I had no idea what my next plans were to be.

I had always felt a yearning to work in East Africa, but my brother was in Kenya and his fiancée had gone out to join him and they married in Machakos (40 miles south of Nairobi). I did not therefore feel at ease about going to East Africa. My brother and his wife were newly married and they had decided to move away from home.

So back to my story, I wrote a letter to my brother in Machakos to say I had resigned from my job and did not know what I was going to do next, and, within a couple of days, I received a letter from him. Our letters had crossed. His said 'Give up your job and come out to Kenya. We would love to have you near us'. Imagine how I felt: **God was in this**. It was so unexpected and I was so blessed. It was August and I arrived in Nairobi in mid December.

I was allocated to a post at the Kenyatta National Hospital, a large and very busy place. I was in charge of the Casualty Department (now known as A&E). I enjoyed every moment of my 4 years in Nairobi and during that time my sister-in-law came to the Nairobi Hospital (not far from my flat) 3 times to give birth to my niece and nephews. What a privilege to be there at the beginning of their lives and to be able to spend many weekends at my brothers home a mere 40 miles away.

Thank you, God, for my time in Kenya.

Christabel Panter

TAKE DELIGHT IN THE LORD AND HE WILL GIVE YOU THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART (Ps 37: v4)

As with many other Christians I have been very greatly blessed by the LORD throughout my life. From my working as a biochemist in pathology at University College Hospital in London, sharing with Christian medical students in Bible study to my calling as a Methodist lay preacher and meeting David at a Christian conference, it's been so delightful knowing the LORD.

When we were expecting our first baby we moved to Luton, where we met so many wonderful people of different cultures and faiths and shared with them trying to make Luton a better place through the Council of Faiths. Our family was growing and we were making friends in this multi-cultural multi-ethnic community with Baha'is living next door and a Moslem lecturer opposite. As the family grew David was lecturing and I was teaching chemistry in a High School in Luton. In the school we had a small group of staff who met for prayer every week and about ten girls in my form asked to meet for prayer in the laboratory during break times, BRILLIANT!

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We also helped on the prayer team in Billy Graham's last mission in Wembley as well as in other missions in Luton.

The children were off to university by now and we were still working with many different faiths in Luton. At this point I retired from teaching and went into the university to work in the Chaplaincy Centre with the students there; this was a great privilege. In the years that I was there I shared with many born again Christian students, counselled gay men and lesbians and made friends with a cross-dresser. There were also three Moslem girls who came to the Centre every week and shared scripture.

We then left the Methodist Church and were baptised into the congregation of a Charismatic Anglican Church in Luton town centre, next to the university. My work in the Chaplaincy continued and David became a warden of the church.

While I was at the university chaplaincy I took a part time masters degree in Evangelism Studies at Cliff College, where I studied with several experts and shared with Christians from many denominations. My thesis, "The New Celts" looked at the way the Celtic Church communicated with its local communities and compared this with modern cell churches. Friends at St Mary's in Luton provided many insights into this and I felt my understanding of evangelism increased greatly. The whole experience was a delight in God.

The LORD shared with us very much through difficult times too, for example when David was given contaminated blood products and we didn't know whether he would develop Aids and when the friend of our Baha'i neighbours' daughter was stabbed to death in their house and they were covered in blood when we cared for them in our home.

And so the LORD brought us to Ledbury! Over the past seven years we have grown to be part of the community at St Michael's and the other churches in the town. We have shared with Christian brothers and sisters from many different congregations and have been blessed by their fellowship.

In the past year I have developed macular degeneration which is still being treated and I have only peripheral vision in one eye and very much reduced vision in the other. My frustration at not being able to read sometimes overflows. Gosh, what a lot of adjustment for David and me and all our loving friends and family!

I have been blessed with remembering all sorts of hymns and songs as well as big chunks of scripture and poetry. I appreciate music much more and people's presence, touch and feel. But the LORD is still the LORD; he is still our creator and Father and gives us Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We are very precious to him; my spiritual awareness has grown and I am delighting in his presence and the desires of our hearts are to know him and enjoy him forever, AMEN.

Gwen Kirkham

Sue Cosker (1935-2017)

(Sue Cosker was only a member of St Michael's for a short time but she made a big impact. This is a tribute by Elizabeth Neal who worked with her at St Michael's hospice and was a close personal friend.)

I met Sue Cosker 25 years ago when we both worked in St Michael's Day Hospice, Bartestree. She'd trained as a nurse in London in the 50s and worked there until she married and came to Herefordshire. She worked in Ledbury Cottage Hospital while her children were small and then later as a district nurse.

She began working in the Day Hospice because of a back injury and both the patients and I were ever thankful for our luck! I was her auxiliary (assistant nurse). Her strong faith and wacky sense of fun kept the Day Hospice full for ten years until she retired.

Never one to stay at home she volunteered for 2 years making coffee for the patients until she found the Littleton Well in Malvern and combined her faith with serving coffee and her own brand of counselling.

Always her focus was people. She visited and supported the sick friends and family of many and, after going to Africa for 6 weeks some 20 years ago and visiting the Muhaiza Hospice, she supported many people from that hospice who had no family, paying for their care and food.

She was church warden at Hollybush for many years, helping with the marriage prep weekends with support and cakes. She was a great and enthusiastic cook and ran the cake stall at the Hollybush fete, making money with her amazing Rocky Road and meringues!

When she became ill with polymyalgia she moved to St Katherine's Alms Houses and began a new life at 81! She decided she'd landed in heaven when she found a new church that welcomed her and was soon using her talents.

She could not bear to be idle or of no use. She loved people. To combine meeting them with her faith was her greatest joy. She had her own kind of ministry. So showing people round the church gave her a new lease of life.

Unfortunately her new life was only to last a short time and when pain forced her to her bed she returned to St Michael's to die. She lived only 5 weeks after her diagnosis of liver cancer. For me her loss is immeasurable, and for many others – we can't quite believe she will no longer be in our lives. But we rejoice that she chose to allow us to share as much as we did.

Mary Anne Keyes was licensed as a Lay Reader on 6th August. She tells her story

It seems a little strange to be writing this as a 'newcomer' when we have been homeowners in Ledbury for 7 years and actually living here since our retirement in 2014, but it is a privilege to introduce myself as I start a ministry as a Reader in the Hereford Diocese.

We moved here on our retirement after sixteen somewhat frenetic years in Worcester. My husband Tim was the Headmaster of a large independent school and I combined the roles of Headmaster's wife and prep school teacher with quite a busy involvement at the parish church of Hallow, just outside Worcester. We 'church hopped' for a while as when we moved from Surrey in 1998 our two sons were quite young: our priority was to find a church which would suit them, as we had previously been involved in lively evangelical churches and they found the Cathedral a little daunting! When we retired, however, we were committed to finding somewhere where we could live within our own parish, and preferably within walking distance of our church. If there were bells which we could ring, that would be a bonus! Friends had wisely advised us that we should decide whether to 'walk to shops or walk to walks' when choosing where to retire and so, when we looked at Bank Crescent and discovered its proximity to the church, the town and the beauties of Doghill and Frith Wood we felt certain we had found 'home'. And there **are** bells! After letting the house for a few years, we had a lot of building work done before our move – many people have commented 'Oh, are you the house with all the scaffolding?' Now we are tackling the garden with the hindrance of our dog, Tom.

I was a school teacher for all my working life, taking a long break when my children were small and then going part-time for the rest of my career. Brought up in a Christian family, I made my own personal commitment to Christ while at University, where I met Tim. We have always been involved in church life, as much as other commitments allowed. In Hallow, after a few years serving on the Local Ministry Team (Worcester's version of the LMDG), I offered to train as a Reader in the Diocese and enjoyed preaching and leading services as well as teaching Sunday School and looking after Baptism families. I am very excited by the work God is doing in Ledbury, particularly in drawing the different churches together and I am looking forward to finding out what part He has for me to play here.

Mary Anne Keyes

Church Officers

Clergy - Rector:	Revd. Keith Hilton-Turvey	(07796 585407)
Others:	Revd. William Simmonds	(01531 635796)
	Revd. Tony Hodder	(01531 636840)
Lay Readers:	Brian Bowers	(01531 631306)
	Mary Anne Keyes	(01531 579021)
Churchwardens:	Lois Pratt (01531 636849), Christine Bainton (01531 636036)	
PCC Secretary:	Alan Pratt (01531 636849)	
Treasurer:	Bruce Wragg (01531 670196)	
Office Secretary:	Sarah Williams (Tel. 01531 631531, Email: ledbury.ministry@talktalk.net)	

For further information ring the church office or look on the church web site (www.ledburyparishchurch.org.uk)

We were pleased to welcome Cherleen Florence and her daughters, Angel and Holly Brooke, as members of the church family when they were baptised in church on July 2nd. We congratulate Mary Anne Keyes on being licensed as a Lay Reader on 6th August

Contributions.. If any one has an item for inclusion in a future issue of the magazine, please contact John Lindeck (01531 631329, johnmlindeck@gmail.com). A magazine like this can only serve its readers if the members of the congregation contribute. If you have some activity you want to publicise or an experience you feel might help other members, please let me know. Even things like saying what is your favourite hymn and why, would be helpful.

Circulation. The editor has been thanked by several people, both members of the congregation and others for the magazine which keeps them up to date with what is happening in the church. If you know of anyone who you think might be interested in what we are doing, particularly if for some reason they are unable to get to church, please take a copy of the magazine for them.

The October issue of the magazine, due for publication on September 24th will be compiled by Ian Beer. Please send contributions to him by 13th September to him at ankerline1@btinternet.com