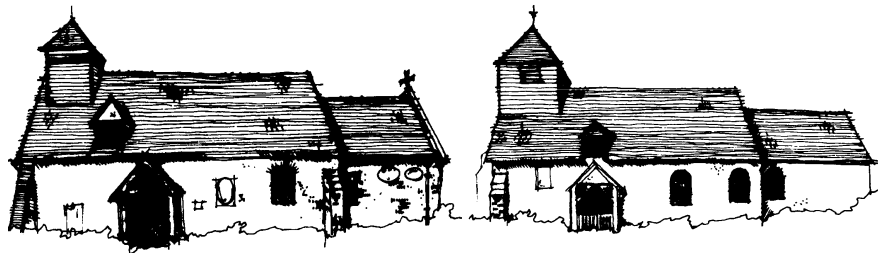


Five Alive!



A Monthly Magazine

for the parishes of Michelmersh, Awbridge, Braishfield
Timsbury and Farley Chamberlayne

February 2021

THE UNITED BENEFICE OF BRAISHFIELD

including the parishes of Michelmersh, Awbridge, Braishfield,
Timsbury and Farley Chamberlayne

Rector: Vacant

Associate Priest: Revd Jane Thompson 01794 502035
Jane.Thompson@me.com

Hon. Assistant Priest: The Very Revd. Trevor Beeson

Church Wardens

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Awbridge | Mr Fred Tucker | 01794 340709 |
| | Mrs. Mary Savage | 01794 367908 |
| Braishfield | Mr. Andrew Brooks | 01794 523928 |
| | Miss Sarah Boothman | 01794 368143 |
| Farley Chamberlayne | Mr. Iain Chisholm | 01794 368250 |
| | Miss Hannah Boothman | 01794 368143 |
| Michelmersh | Mrs. Clare Harvey | 01794 368789 |
| | Mr. Peter Hill | 01794 523364 |
| Timsbury | Mrs. Catherine Baker | 01794 368364 |
| | Dr. John Glasspool | 01794 368017 |

Benefice Office Tel: 01794 878020

Email: braishfieldbenefice@gmail.com

Address:

Braishfield Benefice Office
Elm Grove Farm
Dummers Road
Braishfield
Romsey
SO51 0QG

Benefice Administrator: Sarah Boothman

Items for 5 Alive

may be sent to Sarah at the
Benefice Office by post or
email.

**Deadline for
next edition**

Monday 22nd February

next edition
of Five Alive
will be available by
Sunday 28th February

Looking back, looking forward, looking up Revd Jane Thompson writes:

Wow! What a year 2020 was! At the start of the year I heard the phrase “20-20 vision” and people wondered where that would lead us... little did we know!

After the flurry of 2019 Christmas activity, where Covid-19 was still something happening far, far away, on the 19th January Bishop Debbie conducted my licensing at All Saints, Braishfield - a moving service with the most amazing feast afterwards. What a great start to the year -
THANK YOU!

February saw us start the exciting Lent course *Saying Yes to Life* by Ruth Valerio. It didn't disappoint; the theology of the created order and our responsibility was mind-spinningly brilliant! Sadly we only managed three weeks together before the March lockdown started, meetings stopped and our churches were completely closed.

Towards the end of March we started our email reflections, which quickly became daily. They developed to include art and music and over time a growing number of people have engaged and many responded by email or phone. Hopefully these reflections have helped us feel less isolated, part of something local, yet united to a wider benefice community, and have encouraged us to broaden our reflection on God - I know they have for me!

We were sad that we couldn't be together for the most important festival, Easter, and although no substitute at all, short mini services were recorded for Easter and Pentecost. Gradually we started experimenting with house groups and prayers groups online...

Then, with huge enthusiasm, on July 5th we returned to worship in our buildings. With no ability to invite others from outside to help take services, over the summer our churches paired up, alternating as hosts: Michelmersh and Timsbury, Braishfield and Farley Chamberlayne, while Awbridge was able to worship weekly. By mid-August Revd Andrew Ashdown and Revd Kelvin Taylor had offered to help us, and their leadership, particularly with communion, has become invaluable. Although very understandably many were still staying away, the pattern of worship began to feel a bit more like normal.

In November the start of lockdown 2 came with an assurance of restrictions being lifted after a month, so it was with hopeful optimism that we started making tentative plans for our Christmas celebrations. An enormous amount of creative thought and careful planning meant that church Christmas celebrations DID happen... and in what style! [See pages

8,9,and 10] After our United Benefice Holy Communion at Michelmersh on 27th December it became increasingly apparent how contagious the new strain was, and the church wardens decided that we should again close our churches.

So here we are in February, in our second month of Lockdown 3, but we're not complacent! We are learning and enjoying different ways of being together. Zoom has opened up a new virtual world to us - from fun things for Shrove Tuesday, a gentle service on Ash Wednesday, opportunities to think about faith on Wednesdays in Lent and enjoying our worship together on Sundays!

Where is God in all this? Well I believe God is here with us, alongside us in the pain, the loneliness, the worry, the fear and minutiae of our day-to-day lockdown life. God is in the revitalisation of the creation around us, in the friends whose friendships sustain us, in our pets who provide company for us, on our walks that cheer us, in the lengthening days and the signs of spring that bring hope of a brighter future. God is with us, even when it doesn't feel like it, God is with us when things are tough, when grief hits, when things are lonely, when we have cabin-fever, when we long for real person contact. God is with us in our weariness, when all our strength seems sapped out and, if honest, we're feeling really quite low, God is there. We have read from Isaiah 40 a few times recently and the last four verses offer us the hope we need, the promise of his presence and his renewing strength, for he never gets tired or weary or weak: Isaiah 40: 28-31

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.
He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

May we find a renewed strength as we continue together.



They will soar on wings like eagles Isaiah 40.31

Our first Benefice virtual social gathering



**Come and join us for a
Bring-your-own Pancake
Party on Zoom!**

Shrove Tuesday 16th February

6.30pm Everyone is welcome

Zoom link on back page

Ash Wednesday, 17th February at 7.30pm

A quiet service on Zoom at the beginning of Lent,
with times of silence and reflection,
led by Revd Jane Thompson

Zoom link on back page

From Saturday 13th Feb there will be a tub of little pebbles in the porch of each church. Each pebble will have an ash cross on it, made from the crosses used in 2019. If people would like to collect one, our pebbles will be incorporated into our Ash Wednesday service.

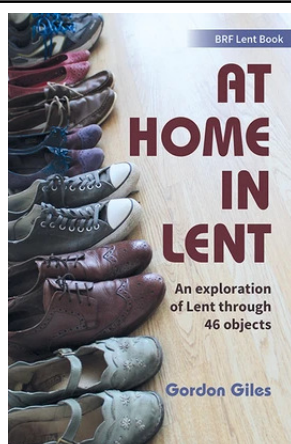
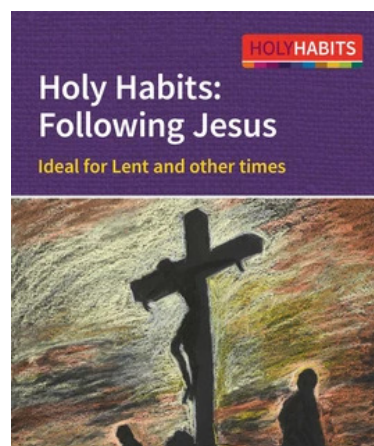
We'll be having a weekly Zoom Lent Course

beginning on Wednesday 24th February at 7.30pm - in the comfort of your home! Do come along

Each session will last around an hour

The content will be based on **'Holy Habits: Following Jesus'** material prepared by Andrew Roberts

Revd Jane Thompson will lead the sessions



If you would like to read a special book this Lent there are many to choose from. Details of two are given below.

At Home in Lent: An exploration of Lent through 46 objects

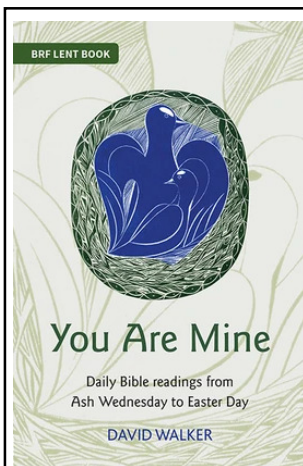
Author : Gordon Giles

Publisher : BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship)

£8.99 *Order from BRF or any bookseller*

Daily readings and reflections for Lent
Here is an original way of approaching Lent, one that will encourage you to consider your

own faith journey in the light of the Easter story. Inspired by Neil MacGregor's Radio 4 programme, 'A History of the World in 100 Objects', Gordon Giles spends each week in a different room gleaning spiritual lessons from everyday household objects. As a result, you might discover that finding God in the normal pattern of life - even in the mundane - transforms how you approach each day. Running as a thread through it all are the seven Rs of Lent: regret, repentance, resolution, recognition, reconciliation, renewal and resurrection.



You Are Mine: Daily Bible readings from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day

Author : David Walker

£8.99 Publisher : BRF

How do we belong to God and with Jesus?

The author says: 'Again and again, as I have sought to look into both the scriptures and my own life, I have heard in the silence the one who assures me, ever more strongly, 'You are mine'. My hope and prayer is that you who read it will hear something of the same.'

These books can be ordered from the BRF website or from most booksellers [NB OASIS bookshop, Romsey, 512194]

What is Lent ?

Lent is the time of the Christian religion that reflects the 40 days that Jesus was in the desert fasting before the beginning of his ministry.



A prayer for Lent

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

What is Lent?

- one of the five seasons of the church year
- a time when people who want to follow Christ reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross
- an invitation to renew baptismal promises: to reject evil and turn to Christ as Saviour and Lord
- the three pillars of Lent are traditionally prayer, fasting (self-denial as a spiritual exercise to express repentance) and charity/works of love (self-denial to free us from attachment to material goods)
- 'Lent is about becoming, doing and changing whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now. Lent is a summons to live anew.' *Henri J. M. Nouwen*



And that was Christmas 2020!

Jane Thompson comments: "An enormous amount of creative thought and careful planning meant that church Christmas celebrations DID happen... and in what style! Each church worked resourcefully and creatively: Awbridge with family and evening carol services, a midnight and Christmas Day service; Braishfield with two evening carol services, a Christingle-to-go and a Christmas morning service; Farley with a carol service followed by fire-pit carols and a Christmas morning communion, Michelmersh with a carol and Christingle service and a Christmas Eve communion; Timsbury with Carols in the Car Park and communion on Christmas morning. Thank you to everyone for their work and effort in planning. It was great to try new things."

The wardens have provided descriptions and photos that capture the spirit of Christmas 2020 around the benefice:

Timsbury We had a Carol Service in the car park at 6pm on Christmas Eve. A wonderful evening! Billy rang the bells for 30 mins beforehand. More than 70 people came, having parked elsewhere. We followed the usual format but with fewer readings and carols. All were able to sing accompanied by John on the keyboard. It was a magical experience on a beautiful evening, and we may do it again. On Christmas morning we had a 9am Holy Communion. Sixteen were there which is full for Timsbury at present. There was a glass of champagne for everyone after the service! Our Christmas celebrations were condensed but marvellous.

Awbridge We had two Christmas services on 20th December; at 10am we showed the Christmas Nativity by Neil Maddock as part of the service. At 7pm we held a Candlelit Carol Service. Our Christmas Eve Holy Communion at 11.15pm was a lovely service. All services had to be prior-booked, and all who wanted to come could be accommodated, with good attendances, including on Christmas morning. On the Wednesday before Christmas we opened the church for everyone to visit and view the decorations. This proved a great idea and we will do it again.

Michelmersh After our Christingle on 20th December we went outside so we could sing a carol in the fresh air. We so missed the Band! We had a quiet communion service on Christmas Eve at 9.30pm, which a dozen people attended. A few more came to the United Benefice service on



Above: decorations in All Saints' Awbridge, the masked carol singing at the war memorial, and one of the Nativity scarecrows in the village.

Photos on this page from Lynda Tucker, Sue Stephens, Sue McClachlan, Jason Woodland, Andrew Brooks



Left and above: St John's, Farley Chamberlayne before and after the Carol Service.

Right: nightlights mark a path on Christmas Eve at All Saints' Braishfield

Sunday 27th. We decided to focus on putting decorations in the porch rather than in the church building. This was much appreciated by passers by, especially having permanent Christmas lights on. We will remember this for next year and do it again.

Braishfield: To accommodate all who wished to come, we held two candle-lit Carol services on Sunday 20th, the first at 5pm and the second at 7pm. We followed our usual format, slightly shortened, and of course unfortunately only the choir could sing. But there was a lovely worshipful atmosphere and hearing live music was much appreciated by those who came. 5pm proved a popular time, and is worth considering next year. For Christmas Eve we planned a 'Walk Through' Christingle. Families were invited to come into the church through the porch, look at the Christmas Crib and decorations and be given a lighted Christingle, leaving by the rear door. The path was lined with nightlights both in front of and behind church. There was less take up than anticipated but it was worth doing and gave us ideas to build on in the future. On Christmas Day there was a fair attendance for our service led by Andy and Sarah. Instead of the Children's Christmas Tree Festival everyone was invited to post pictures of their trees and decorations on-line - not a real substitute, but it did keep the idea alive!

Farley Chamberlayne Leading up to Christmas a huge effort led by Chris Chisholm led to the preparation of a record breaking number of Shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse. Chris writes: 'We did 76 boxes and I'm still amazed what you all, in our tiny parish, achieved. Whether it was completed boxes, providing or wrapping boxes, donations of fillers or money we couldn't have done it without you. I received £430 which was more than needed at £5 each box so the extra paid for more fillers. Thank you to everyone involved.'

A booking system for the Carol Service and Christmas Day worked well. It was possible to accommodate all who asked to come – 30 - 40 at each service. Having chairs which could be re-positioned was very useful. The Carol Service began at 3.30pm so all could arrive in the light, and we will consider repeating this. We had our usual service but with just a few verses of each carol on CD. Afterwards there was some carol singing outside as everyone stood around 2 firepits, in the church yard and car park area, sharing mulled wine and mincepies. It was a beautiful evening. The Christmas tree was outside the church for all to enjoy; we will put it there next year too. The Christmas Day communion service was enjoyed by all who came.

NOW & THEN VIDEOS



Hello good people of the Braishfield Benefice!

I hope this finds you well and that you were able to enjoy the Christmas season. I wanted to let you know about the latest project I am working on throughout this next year in case it can be of use to you in any way and so you may be able to share it with people who may be interested.

It is called '**Now & Then**' and is a video based daily thought, based on a moment in time. There will be a short video clip (max 3mins) for each day that takes an historical event from that day and then has an inspirational, motivational scripture based thought off the back of it.

The videos are available each day on our YouTube channel (**MARTIS Productions**), where you can subscribe to ensure you don't miss out, or on our Facebook page (@**MARTISProductions**). The videos are free to use and share, so please spread the word!

If you'd like to know anything more, please let me know

God bless
Neil

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Neil Maddock

Artistic Director

w: www.martis.org.uk

t: 07737 287 152

a: 9 Branksome Avenue, Southampton, SO15 5NX

Jane has shared some of Neil's video clips in her daily messages - you may like to sign up to receive one each day from Neil.

Please save your used

POSTAGE STAMPS

and send them to

Bone Cancer Research Trust

PO Box 6198

Leighton Buzzard LU7 9XT.

Their sale will help that charity's funds

Michelmersh Prize Draw

December 2020 Winners

1st Prize Bob Tyler £53.20

2nd Prize Liz Hill £26.60

3rd Prize Sue Taylor £15.20

Christmas Bonus Paul Baldieri £25.00

January 2021 Winners

1st Prize Mrs M Duguid £53.20

2nd Prize John Hunt £26.60

3rd Prize Stuart Sachs £15.20

Contact Mr Peter Hill 01794 523364 or the Benefice Office if you would like to join in the monthly draw which raises funds for St Mary's PCC.

Update on filling our Vacancy and appointing a new Rector

Our post was advertised in mid-November but did not attract the calibre of candidate which we anticipated so no interviews took place. The Wardens are in close touch with Bishop Debbie, who has assured us that we are offering a good post and there are good candidates looking for posts. She encouraged us to highlight our financial stability and the way in which we work together well as parishes, and to re-advertise soon. So please keep praying that we will have keen applicants and that we can make an appointment.

Braishfield PCC thanks a long-time helper - Roy White

Braishfield Church Council (PCC) wished to express their thanks for Roy's outstanding contribution as a voluntary worker in the Church grounds. In recognition of this a garden bench was presented to him at his home in December, see below.



Roy has spent time, during most weeks of the year, helping to maintain the up-keep of the Church grounds. Almost 18 years ago Roy started the regular task of trimming, pruning and keeping the hedges in good order. Last year Roy decided, understandably, that it was time to step down from this. It is pleasing to note that another volunteer has agreed to take over.

Happily, for all who come to the church and its grounds Roy continues to do some voluntary work, including the ongoing work of grave repairs and restoration.

The PCC continues to be very thankful for the many volunteers who give some of their time to keep the Church and its grounds in such good order.

Sarah Boothman
Andy Brooks
Churchwardens

Do you usually pick up a copy of CWR Word for Today daily notes from your church? The new booklets for February - April are available now, and a few will be in the porch of each church. If you would like to have a copy posted or delivered to you, please contact the Benefice Office.



As we aren't currently printing regular Sunday Notice Sheets, we are including some items for prayer here:

- **The Pandemic**

Most merciful and Triune God,
We come to you in our weakness.
We come to you in our fear.
We come to you with trust.
For you alone are our hope.

We place before you the disease present in our world.
We turn to you in our time of need.

Bring wisdom to doctors.
Give understanding to scientists.
Endow caregivers with compassion and generosity.
Bring healing to those who are ill.
Protect those who are most at risk.
Give comfort to those who have lost a loved one.
Welcome those who have died into your eternal home.

Stabilize our communities.
Unite us in our compassion.
Remove all fear from our hearts.
Fill us with confidence in your care.
Jesus, I trust in you.
Jesus, I trust in you.
Amen.

- **For our benefice**

Lord, we thank you for the way you are building your church in us.
We pray for our benefice as we appoint a new Rector.
We ask that your Holy Spirit will lead and guide us.
We thank you that you will bring the right person to us.
We pray that our five churches, filled with God's love,
will come fully alive, reaching out into our communities.
We look forward with faith, hope and love.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Bible readings for Sunday 31st Jan to Sunday 7th March

This information was previously included in the weekly Notice Sheet

Sunday 31st January

Candlemas - Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Old Testament Malachi 3.1-5

Epistle Hebrews 2.14-end

Gospel Luke 2.22 - 40

Psalm 24. [1-6] 7 - end

Sunday 7th February - 2nd Sunday before Lent

Old Testament Proverbs 8.1, 22 - 31

Epistle Colossians 1.15-20

Gospel John 1.1-14

Psalm 104.26 - end

Sunday 14th February - Sunday next before Lent

Old Testament 2 Kings 2.1-12

Epistle 2 Corinthians 4.3-6

Gospel Mark 9.2-9

Psalm 50.1-6

Ash Wednesday 17th February

Readings to be announced

Sunday 21st February - 1st Sunday of Lent

Old Testament Genesis 9.8-17

Epistle 1 Peter 3.18-end

Gospel Mark 1.9-15

Psalm 25.1-9

Sunday 28th February - 2nd Sunday of Lent

Old Testament Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16

Epistle Romans 4.13-end

Gospel Mark 8.31-end

Psalm 22.23-end

Sunday 7th March - 3rd Sunday of Lent

Old Testament Exodus 20.1-17

Epistle 1 Corinthians 1.18-25

Gospel John 2.13-22

Psalm 19

Services in the Benefice

The PCCs have agreed to suspend in-person worship until the infection rate decreases.

**There will be Worship on Zoom at 10.00am
each Sunday morning
Join the service from 9.45am**

**There will be an opportunity after the service
to stay and chat with friends in a parish group**

The link for all our Zoom services and events
is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85324759142?pwd=R25Da1V3Wm1LL2dvT3RudXJGdIFEdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 2475 9142

Passcode: 712111

Each of our churches has an entry on 'A Church Near You'

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

You can find some extra information and see photos of the churches

Also check asbchurch.org for up to date information