



Church Matters

The Parish Magazine of the Strettons : October 2011

Growing together in Faith, Hope & Love; sharing the Good News of Jesus with all.

AS AUTUMN FALLS

With the summer well and truly over, the children back at school, the leaves slowly collecting on the pavements and the wet roads becoming congested with tractors pulling trailers full of potatoes, my thoughts turn inevitably to harvest.

Sadly, in our post-modern, western society we all too readily take for granted the food that appears on our plates. Most varieties of fruit and vegetables are now available all the year round even if they have to be flown vast distances before making it to our kitchens.

At this harvest time it would be good for us pause and consider the food we eat on a daily basis. Where does it come from? How did it get here? Would seasonal, local produce be a better option? I'm not advocating that we all grow our own vegetables and fruit and only buy local produce, although undoubtedly for those who can it's a great idea. No, instead, I suggest that we remember that this is not *our* world, but that God has given it to us so that we might be caretakers of it for Him.

As Christians we have a responsibility to look after this planet

and all its resources, and that includes the food on our plates as well as the fuel in our cars and the forests of the Amazon.

Harvest is a time to remember the wonders of creation, be they edible or not, and ask ourselves if we are being responsible caretakers of this wonderful world and its abundant riches that God has provided for us.

Simon Cleaton

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HEALING OUR LAND

Laurence's, seeking to do this in Shrewsbury.

CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

During our recent holiday in London, we saw convoys of police vans and heard sirens incessantly from my brother's flat opposite Baker Street station on the Marylebone Road. Visiting All Souls', Langham Place, and receiving e-mails from many vicars in the troubled areas has left me with the following suggestions as to how we in the Strettons can make a difference:

Pray! Scripture speaks of a spirit of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:7). There are now several examples of concerted prayer making a real difference to the crime rate in certain difficult areas. Lack of prayer can open doors to the evil one, hence the injunction in the Lord's Prayer!

Bring back loving fatherhood. Society is reaping what it has sown with its experimentation with the institution of the family. It is now widely agreed that lack of father figures in certain communities has caused many youngsters to gravitate to gangs. Upholding the family as the basic building block in society and supporting families where there is brokenness is vital. I am pleased that we now have our first street pastor from within St.

What happened bore witness to the Scriptural truth of original sin. "But for the grace of God there go I", said Wesley. Many otherwise law-abiding people got sucked into riotous behaviour because the opportunity was there. Many others had previous criminal convictions; just putting them in prison and releasing them out into the world without inner transformation and helping them integrate back into the community leaves them very open to returning to their old ways. Also, see the video games and listen to the songs many imbibe today and it is not surprising that they have an adverse influence. Our culture needs redeeming through the transformation of our minds by receiving the grace of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

Preach the Gospel to the nation. The emptiness caused by materialism can be filled by Jesus (Lord, God, Saviour and Life-giver)! This surely is the antidote to greed plus drink and drugs: the One who brings life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It is by getting right with God by confessing our sins and asking Jesus into our lives that we experience the accepting love of God which so many lack in their lives today. The more people who know Him and are serving Him the more our country can be renewed. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks pointed out that our

society has been here before and recovered, namely at the beginning of the 19th century. What he failed to say was that that occurred as the result of the evangelical revival, which brought all sorts of initiatives and projects in its wake from the Bible society to improvements in factory conditions to the modern education system.

Receiving the Holy Spirit into our lives makes us want to do the will of God and empowers us to do so. Teaching the Ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount etc. will change lives only with God's inner working to incline us to keep his law! We will want to do those things which please Him, because now we have come into that relationship with Him which is so precious that we shall not want to spoil it. If we have been entering into these things ourselves in fullness then we shall be able to transmit them to others. *Growing leaders who will go into the most troubled places to make a difference must be something we make a priority.*

As was said after the terrorist atrocities in Beslan, many are drawn to Christians because they have hope. Many solutions I see being suggested may make some difference but they are only on the surface. Surely it is applying the grace of God in all its facets that is

going to bring lasting change, as has happened before!

Richard Hill

CARE FOR THE FAMILY

Care for the Family are holding another event at the Centennial Centre in Edgbaston on Weds 19th of October from 7.30-10pm called 'Mum's the Word: Discover the secrets of surviving and thriving as a mum'.

The two main speakers are Katherine Hill and Cathy Madavan. It's for all mums and its aim is to encourage people with children of all ages and stages. Covering all sorts of topics from Does Supermum Exist?; juggling work, life and children,; discovering your child's love language; choosing your battles and letting go - giving your children roots and wings.

Tickets cost £7.50, or if we order four or more we can get them for £6.50 each. Please contact Suzan for details.

BIBLE SOCIETY LUNCH

October 18th at 12:30pm in the URC hall. The speaker Hazel Ratcliffe will talk about 'Pets as therapy'. Tickets are £5 and available from Tony Peck. All are welcome.

Sheila Smith

THE ROAD TO MATURITY

A six-week personal growth course

I thought it might be helpful to give you a bit more detail into what the course, which started on 22nd September, is about and why I'm so passionate about it.

The course has been written and put together by Mary Pytches, wife of well-known speaker, author and senior leader of the New wine movement, David Pytches. Mary has real heart to see people set free from the things that hold them back, that prevent them from being the people that God has called them to be.

The course is split into six weeks and covers the following topics:-

1. What would true maturity look like
2. Blockages to growth
3. Renewal of the mind
4. Belief about one's self
5. Identifying the consequences
6. Important aids to growth

The purpose of the course as a whole is to encourage each individual to engage with the material in a way that is appropriate for them, and ultimately for each person to deepen their understanding of what it means to be transformed by the grace of God. It is very much grounded in biblical principles and in its content seeks to aid participants to engage

with the truth and to allow the Holy Spirit to highlight things that may be causing blockages in their lives. My hope is that as more people grasp hold of the truth they will be set free to be the men and women that God has called them to be.

Please contact Suzan Williams on (01694) 722588 for more details.

STAY-AT-HOME CHRISTMAS?

Are you staying at home for Christmas? Would you open your home and share Christmas with a student from China, India, or some other part of the world, who would otherwise be stuck at an almost deserted UK university? HOST invites you to give Christmas, perhaps for the first time in their life, to someone who is a guest in this country, who would love to experience your way of life and make your stay-at-home Christmas special. HOST will match you with one or two guests to suit your household. More volunteer hosts are urgently needed for 1-3 days at Christmas, and weekends all year round. Please see www.hostuk.org or call your local voluntary organiser for a chat: Lynette Chappin 02920 693903



CHURCH FLOWERS



The group of flower arrangers for St Lawrence take great joy in celebrating their faith through flowers. There are ten regular arrangers taking turns fortnightly to arrange flowers in their own style.

Special festivals are a joint effort, Harvest, Easter and Christmas. It is such a privilege to get together at these times, when the church is a hive of concentrated activity.

It would be such a help if more people could assist. You do not have to be an expert. If you enjoy arranging flowers at home maybe you would consider joining us.

We hope that an arrangement will always welcome you at the entrance to Church. This often takes the form of a memorial to departed love ones. These are either arranged by us with flowers of your choice, or a dedicated arrangement by the local florist John Thomas. There is also usually

a smaller arrangement at the Chancel altar.

We try to use greenery from our gardens, flowers (some from our gardens) or purchased locally in order to keep the cost down. Arranging flowers in church is to show in some small way the beauty of God who made all creation. We hope they give you as much comfort as we feel in arranging them.

Harvest Festival takes place on Sunday 2nd October – we would be very grateful for any greenery or suitable material / vegetable / fruit to help with the decorating, which we plan to do on the morning of Saturday the 1st October.

Valerie Campbell
Tel: 01694 722563

A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

On Tuesday October 4th at 2:30pm in the Parish Centre, Robin Oake (ex Chief Constable of the Isle of Man) will be talking about 'A Force to be reckoned with'.

Robin is a committed Christian and an entertaining speaker and comes at the invitation of the Mothers Union.

Please do come along and listen to what Robin has to say.

Sheila Smith

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

At a couple of meetings during the past year, the issue of what motivates people to respond to climate change has arisen. What is it that makes a difference so that people are motivated to act and make significant changes? Why are some people so exercised about the issue, whilst others regard it as just one of many issues that might be of concern?

Following lively discussions, agreement has always centred on a turning point, a kind of 'epiphany'. An event that changes people's thinking. This can arise from an event, from reading a book, from conversations, work experiences and many other turning points. I can point very clearly to my own 'epiphany' and its results. I was already concerned about the seriousness of climate change when I attended a talk by Sir John Houghton in March 2007. He delivered a very matter of fact presentation of the scientific facts. Several things hit home; one that the average difference in global temperatures during an ice age and the in-between (interglacial) period was just 4 or 5 degrees. That really shocked me; how such a small difference could have such massive effects, when I am pushed to tell the difference between say 20 and 24 °C on a sunny day. He also said he thought the world had just 10 years

in which to make sweeping changes, otherwise it would be too late. Help! With those words ringing in my ears, I felt God challenging me to respond.

I left the work I loved at Tearfund a few months later; not just because of this - I was also under huge pressure to move to London, and aware that funding for my international publications team was soon to be cut. But it played a significant part in my thinking. Mike and I looked for a house that we could make as 'low-carbon' as possible, given that our draughty Victorian terraced house in Bridgnorth presented a major challenge. Our aim was to try and begin living within the limits the Government has set for all of us by 2050 (when carbon emissions will be reduced to 80% of the 1995 levels). Achieving this, after moving to Church Stretton, has been an interesting journey of discovery; learning a great deal in the process and meeting many interesting people. No regrets there!

But as to raising awareness of the seriousness of climate change; well that has been much more of a challenge. I still struggle to understand why this serious issue is such a turn off to so many, when all our futures are at stake. I long for key figures in the Church to show real leadership, given that few politicians are speaking out. I've

gained considerable insights and support from working alongside board members of the charity Operation Noah. The 8th day group in the church has also been a huge encouragement; bringing a welcome opportunity to chew over issues. New people are always welcomed.

aim was to 'get under your skin'; to encourage reflection around these issues. We hope that through the various inputs provided, some of you have found helpful information. We'd love to hear your responses.

And do come and join us for a picnic and nature walk after our harvest services on the 3rd Oct.

In planning the various events for the 'Time of creation' in church, our

Isabel Carter

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ARE WE IN DANGER OF THROWING THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATH WATER?

The Christian Church has an amazing heritage, but sometimes, as evangelicals particularly, I think we are in danger of either ignoring it or considering it too 'Catholic'.

But when you read the lives of some of the 'Saints' there is much that can be learned from their lives and spirituality. I would like to share something of two of my favourite mystics (A person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to get closer to the truth of God) – both women, one very gentle and one very feisty.

This month - the gentle one.

Julian of Norwich

Julian was born in Norwich in 1342. Poverty and wealth both played a part in Medieval Norwich but what affected more lives than anything else was the Bubonic plague which arrived in the city when Julian was about seven years old. The plague left scarcely any family complete and would certainly have left an indelible mark on Julian.

Nothing is known about her parents or her baptismal name. She is only known by her adopted name – Julian, from the church where she later had her anchorage. She makes no

reference to convent living in her writings and it is now assumed that she followed the general custom and married, probably at about the age of fifteen. When she was nineteen the plague returned to Norwich and possibly by the end of that year Julian was husbandless and childless.

Julian was a deeply religious woman who had firsthand experience of suffering and death. She begged God for three gifts: a recollection of the Passion, an illness at the age of thirty, and three wounds – contrition, compassion, and a longing for God. God took her at her word and during a severe illness she received sixteen 'Revelations' and it is on these that her spirituality is based.

The unifying theme of these Revelations was LOVE. She writes:

'From the time I first had these Revelations I often longed to know what our Lord meant. ... I was told ... 'Know it well: Love was his meaning.'

Julian acknowledges the power of SIN in the world and in herself but she refuses to use fear to respond to it. Julian's God does not wait to punish – he loves rather than condemns. Sin is only a part of a picture where grace and forgiveness are predominant. Sin will not have the final word because Christ has defeated it. It should be avoided

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through motives of love, not fear. For Julian, 'All things work together for good for those who love God' (Romans 8.28).

many people find her supremely relevant. Sister Elizabeth Ruth Obbard said in the 2000 Annual Julian Lecture:

Another recurring theme in Julian's spirituality is the picture she gives of God as a caring mother. God's relationship with us is courteous and kindly. Julian was not a scholar or a trained theologian but she was full of native wit and sound common sense. There is nothing forced about her relationship with God. When we fail and sin we are not blamed or punished because there is no anger or vengefulness in God. We cannot understand now why there is evil, sin and suffering, but we can know that in the end 'all will be well.'

There is something very attractive about Julian's spirituality and Julian's God. She concentrates on the positives and plays down the negatives. In many ways Julian's God seems 'too good to be true', and perhaps she chooses to ignore the darker side of the consequences of sin.

Julian's writings have come to light at a time when people are growing to trust and articulate their own particular insights. She is a good model because she seems to be able to integrate her own experience with traditional Christianity.

The fact that there are Julian Prayer Groups all over the world and an annual Julian Lecture indicate that

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'So often I have heard in a group meeting to study Julian's writings, "That's what I've always felt about God." "That really rings true with me but I've never heard it in church." "Julian's really hit the nail on the head. She's saying what I have thought deep down."'

There are many questions which puzzle us today as much as they did in Julian's time: our relationship to God; how do we reconcile a loving God with evil and suffering? How do we cope with persistent sin, suffering and failure? What Julian has to say is so relevant because she talks about God's unconditional love and the response that love requires from us. Julian's message is one of hope, trust and consolation in the middle of everyday struggles and suffering.

Julian speaks to today's world every bit as effectively and relevantly as she did to her own. This is what one biographer wrote of her:

'Julian is not only a great lady of the past; she is also a great woman in our future.'

I would certainly second that!

Nancy Cleaton

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RICHARD BECOMES OUR RURAL DEAN

Richard has been invited by the Bishop of Hereford to become rural dean. He will be commissioned at the next Deanery Synod, which happens to be at St. Laurence's Parish centre at 7.45pm on Tuesday Oct. 4th by the Bishop of Ludlow, Alistair Magowan. Richard succeeds Canon Stephen Lowe, who has worked very hard, not least with the vacancy at Dorrington, so it will be a hard act to follow!

"I look forwards to supporting Bishops Anthony and Alistair in the vision they have been pursuing for our diocese with the senior staff," Richard wrote in his letter of acceptance.

Many in the Strettons have had a vision for renewal across this region and we are very well resourced as a parish, so we ought to be looking for non-patronising ways of equipping and encouraging those churches which are struggling. One step might be to fill our vacant places on the Deanery Synod, especially as the next Synod is on the subject of Mission Action Plans, of which Richard has experience from when he was a Diocesan Advisor in Evangelism for the York Diocese and did much to resource other churches in their Alpha courses. Indeed many who came to his church for Alpha courses or for

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refreshment went to the parishes where they lived, in due course, to take on leadership and run Alpha and other courses, something Archbishop Sentamu paid tribute to when Richard left.

This post will demand a certain amount of time, but we have an excellent staff team supported by our retired clergy and many others, including the pastoral team. With the growth of the elements of in-depth care and support for people in their ministries in the church and in the world emerging, we expect everyone to be cared for and gifts and ministries to continue to be developed.

ALL SAINTS

All Saints Church thanks all those who supported and who helped in any way to make 'Teas to Please' such a success. The splendid sum of £3722 was raised, which is mainly to be for the benefit of All Saints. Donations will also be made to Mayfair, whose friends gave so generously of their time and energy, to Air Ambulance and to the Shropshire Gateway Club, who also helped us at the event. An added attraction this year was the chance to view Manor House gardens, kindly made possible by Mr and Mrs Smithers. Donations from people taking this opportunity also went to the church. We were most pleased that Mr Martin Price, the builder, managed to complete his excellent

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work on our new kitchen and toilet facilities in time for the event. There have been many favourable comments made about the pleasing appearance of the building that was designed by Mr Simon Brown of Craven Arms. The kitchen will be in use on 2nd October, when tea and cakes will be served after the Harvest Festival Service at 3:00pm.

Hilary Bullock

STREET PASTORS

Shrewsbury will soon be seeing something new on the streets, as the first cohort of Street Pastors are trained and prepared for this exciting new role. The launch is planned for Sat 12th November following the commissioning service taking place at St Chads at 6:30 pm. The Police approached the Churches in Shrewsbury to start this scheme and funding has been made available by the Local Authority for setting up the scheme. This may be new for Shrewsbury but the idea for Street Pastors started in Jamaica in 2001, and was launched in Britain in 2003 in Brixton then Hackney, both areas of high crime rates. Since then 250 towns and cities have seen and experienced the benefits of having teams of Street Pastors out on their streets. The Ascension Trust was started in 1993 by Revd Les Isaac to operate the Street Pastors initiative. This Trust "has a desire to see Christians working effectively

with their local churches, community and society."

Some benefits of having Street Pastors out on the streets:

- Reduction in street crime, anti-social behaviour and crime reduces (police statistics)
- Churches welcomed, accepted and expected on the streets.
- "The Church seen in action on the streets" bringing churches together (united front).

A Street Pastor can be any member of a church who is willing to be a help and support to vulnerable people. You will need a letter of support from your church leader. A Street Pastor will do one night a month out on the streets, in teams of four. Information leaflets which include costs and training will be available in church shortly.

The trend in the 21st century is for teenagers, young adults and not so young adults to go out on the streets in the evening until the small hours, enjoying the pubs and clubs scene and having a good time with their friends. Sometimes things get out of hand and people can become vulnerable by having too much drink, becoming separated from friends, losing their money etc. If they don't fall into the category of needing police or paramedic assistance, or the door security staff are otherwise engaged, who can these vulnerable people turn to, to

help them in their distress? That is why the Street Pastors role is needed. Would you be happier knowing that there is a caring supportive team on the streets at night who your son, daughter or grandchild could turn to if they became vulnerable?

Well, that is why I joined this first cohort and am being trained now. There are just 18 of us at present; we need many more volunteers to go out on the streets between 10:00pm and 3:00am to cover the busy nights in Shrewsbury. A number of churches have signed up to support this initiative through prayer, assisting volunteers and offering support.

Pat Stone

UNITED NATIONS SERVICE

**Sunday 23rd October.
3:30 at the United Reformed
Church.**

Once a year the local United Nations Association arranges a Service of Worship on the Sunday which falls nearest to the date of the United Nations founding in 1945. It is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the achievements of the local branch during the previous year and to make a commitment for the future. And also to pray for the world wide work which the United Nations and its agencies is uniquely able to attempt.

Since August 2010 the local branch has raised £4250 towards buying equipment for the Pazapa project, which will help an earthquake affected school in Jacmel, Haiti with equipment to teach special needs children. The branch is very grateful for help given by Churches Together in the Strettons. The October Service will include a brief report on the project, along with prayers.

The preacher the Revd Ken Chippindale. He is a retired United Reformed Church minister who after being a solicitor in inner London has had ministries in two London churches and one at Sutton Coldfield over a 35 year period. Two of his churches had strong twinning arrangements with churches in Germany, and he has long been interested in 'third world' people and fair trade. He is well known at St Michael's, All Stretton as the minister with pastoral responsibility for its URC members.

Ward Davies

BRING AND BUY

On October 22nd from 10-11:30am in the Parish Centre there will be a bring and buy in aid of Mothers' Union Literacy & Development & Parenting Courses. Coffee, Tea and Cakes will be available. All are welcome.

Sheila Smith

OCTOBER SERVICES

St. Laurence's			St. Michael's			All Saints'	
	8:00am	9:30am	11:05am	6:00pm	10:30am	11:00am	3:00pm
2nd Oct	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order Two) Rector	Holy Communion (Common Worship) Harvest Suzan Williams Mike Bourke	All Age Harvest Service All Age Team Valerie Morris		Harvest tba		Harvest Rector
9th Oct	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order Two) Rector Suzan Williams	Holy Communion (Common Worship) Rector Suzan Williams	11:05 Special Suzan Williams		Holy Communion (Common Worship) Nancy Cleaton	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order Two) Paul James	
16th Oct	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order Two) Nancy Cleaton	Holy Communion (Common Worship) Suzan Williams Nancy Cleaton	11:05 Special Nancy Cleaton		Morning Worship Rector Louise Magowan	Morning Prayer (BCP) Robert Rayner	
23rd Oct	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order One) Rector	Morning Worship Suzan Williams Rector	11:05 Special with Communion Suzan Williams Rector	Communion - Celebrating Wholeness and Healing Valerie Morris Rector	Holy Communion (URC)	Holy Communion (Common Worship - Order Two) Nancy Cleaton	
30th Oct	Holy Communion (Common Worship – Order Two) Rector	Holy Communion (Common Worship) John Hughes Rector	11:05 Special Rector		Holy Communion (BCP) David Morris	Holy Communion (Common Worship - Order Two) John Holden	

Did you know?

- ✚ Avoid riding in cars because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.
- ✚ Do not stay at home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.
- ✚ Avoid walking on the street or pavements because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.
- ✚ Avoid travelling by air, rail or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.
- ✚ Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals. So, above all else, avoid hospitals.

But you will be pleased to learn that only 0.001% of all deaths occur in worship services in church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at church!

Moreover, Bible study is safe too. The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less!

So, please, for safety's sake, attend church and read the Bible. It could save your life!



I thought that this month I'd start a new feature, a cartoon taken from www.reverendfun.com. I hope it tickles your funny bone!



HE LATER ADMITTED THAT THE SERMON DIDN'T SEEM QUITE AS INTERESTING AS IT DID WHEN HE WAS CREATING IT

Editor : Simon Cleaton
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Deadline:
The deadline for submissions for the next edition of Church Matters is **Sunday 23rd October**. If possible, can all articles be emailed to simon.cleaton@talk21.com preferably in the form of **unformatted** Word Documents. Alternatively, drop them in to the Parish Office as hard copies.

Note:
The editor reserves the right to amend, curtail or expand, and to select appropriate headings and subsidiary headings, for all articles submitted for inclusion in Church Matters.

DATES OF INTEREST FOR OCTOBER

Date	Time	Event	Location
1st	5:30pm	St. Michael's Harvest Tea	All Stretton Village Hall
2nd	12.15pm	Harvest Picnic & family walk	Rectory Field
4th	2:30pm	Robin Oake, ex chief constable of Isle of Man 'A Force to be reckoned with'	Parish Centre
4th	7:45pm	Deanery Synod	Parish Centre
10th	7pm	St. Michael's Church Council	St. Michael's
13th	7pm	Diocesan Synod	Ludlow School
15th	7:30pm	Garage Praise	Burway Garage
19th	12:30pm	Bible Society Lunch	Parish Centre
19th	7pm	Churches Together AGM	URC
21st	10:30am	Save the Children Soup and Apple Pie Lunch	Parish Centre
21st	7:30pm	Autumn Choral Concert - Proceeds for Church Funds	St. Laurence's
22nd	10am	Mothers' Union Bring and Buy	Parish Centre
23rd	3:30pm	United Nations Service	URC
26th	9am - 1pm	COGS Club	Parish Centre
26th	7pm	ALPHA Supper - Neville Willerton - 'Does faith have relevance today?' Free admission by ticket only	Parish Centre
31st	4pm-6pm	Angels and Super Heroes - Games, craft, food and lots of fun	Parish Centre

Also on in October :

- Church Prayer meeting every Wednesday, 7:30pm Owen Room
- Holy Communion every Thursday, 11:30am at St. Laurence's
- Parents and Toddlers every Thursday, 10:00am, St. Laurence's
- Worship Choir every Wednesday, 7:30pm, Parish Centre

The weekly diary is viewable in Contact and please remember that details of all recurring events are also on the church website at www.strettonparish.org.uk.