



Stretton Parish

Contact will now be fortnightly, the next one will be for week beginning Friday 21st January

CONTACT

News for weekend beginning Friday 7th January 2022

Parish Website: www.strettonparish.org.uk

Parish office: 01694 724224 office@strettonparish.org.uk

Our verses for the year Ephesians 3.14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

As we begin 2022 and dream of all that it could hold, we pray that things begin to settle down where Covid is concerned, but we must recognise that Covid has left a mark on us individually, as a Parish and as a nation and world.

Our verses for 2022, which is also our prayer for the year, gets to the heart of our lives, walking with Christ, you could say it is our discipleship. This prayer, which was Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Church, is unusual in that it's both theological and practical. Paul recognising here that there's nothing more practical than good theology. But this prayer is steeped in theology, and yet is all about real change, change that will affect us in the deepest parts of our lives. But what is Paul saying about how we pray and what are we praying with these verses?

Firstly in verses 16 & 17, we are to pray that God strengthens us with power: We need to be praying that God gives us power, so that we're changed from the inside out. This is not general power, but power for a specific purpose: power that we would be changed deep down or deep within, our 'inner being'.

Paul's praying that our inner beings will be strengthened so that Christ may really dwell within us. And if Christ lives at the very centre of our beings, it's going to mean transformation. We'll never be the same.

But we also **pray that we will understand the vastness of Jesus' love** (3:17b-19): Paul is praying that we will not just know about Christ's love but really grasp it, holding on to it. So that as we read in v19 "*that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*"

In other words, if we're to grow spiritually into the people God wants us to be, it begins with grasping the limitless dimensions of God's love.

And we pray in this way because God is able and God is worthy (3:20-21): *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen*

The amazing thing that we always need to remember is that God is able to do this and is able to make this kind of change in our lives.

So, what is our prayer for 2022? For us as a parish and as individuals?

Well my prayer is that we grow in our knowledge of God, that we would want to grow in our worship of God — that we would see and value him more and more. But also that we grow in our obedience to God.

And amazingly, all of this happens as God brings this change about in our lives, so that we can Make Jesus Known here in the Strettons, as a Parish, but also in our own lives.

Steve Johnson, Rector

Thank you to all those who helped in so many ways to help make our Christmas services in all our churches so special. We have received lots of messages of thanks, this one sums them up: *"I just wanted to say how lovely the Carol Service was last night. The church looked beautiful with the flowers and candles. I enjoyed the selection of traditional carols and readings. Please commend the choir on their excellent singing and those doing the lessons on their reading of the text. As Steve said it was very special being able to meet together to celebrate Christmas. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation to all concerned."*



Noisy Nativity: We had a wonderful time at the Noisy Nativity on Christmas Eve. Eighty people came along, many dressed as characters from the Nativity to re-enact the story. Great fun!

Newcomers' Lunch: Sunday 16th January, 12.30pm in the Parish

Centre: We are hosting a lunch for those who have joined the Parish in the last couple of years. This will be a chance for Steve, our Rector to welcome you properly and for you to meet some of the ministry team. If you would like to come, please either sign up via the home page of the website, or call the office on 724224. Welcomers at all the churches on Sunday have invitation cards, so please do ask for one if you'd like to come.



New Year's Day walk up Caer Caradoc

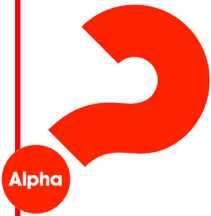
Leaving St Milburga's car park just after 10am, around 25 of us set off on our walk up Caer Caradoc. Taking the easier route to the top, we made new friends on the way as we chatted together in the sunshine. At the top, as we looked over the town, we prayed a short prayer of blessing on it. Taking a different route back, we walked past the dramatic Three Fingers Rock before arriving, tired but triumphant, at St Milburga's beautiful garden where delicious hot mince pies awaited. Central in the garden was an awe-inspiring crib scene which reminded us that Jesus is always with us. A thoroughly enjoyable walk, great company, lovely views and God with us.



The Well: The Well is an opportunity for the ladies of Stretton Parish to get together to meet informally and support each other. This month's meeting will be on Zoom, on Friday 14th January from 2pm to 3pm. Please visit the website for the Zoom link.

Live streaming of services: We need to expand the number of people able to live stream services. We are asked for this for some funerals and weddings, but we hope to be ready to provide this for other services if needs be. If you would be prepared to be trained in how to do this, please let Jo know. Many thanks.

Lost property: There are a number of items on the pegs in the lobby in the Parish Centre. If you think you may have left something here, please come along one morning next week to take a look. Anything unclaimed will be taken to a charity shop on 17th January. Thank you.



Alpha - The Call...

As we approach running an Alpha course in the Parish, starting on Thursday 20th January, please be praying for it and all the preparations.

Why not join in with the following;

- 1: Write down the names of **three people** you would like to explore faith
- 2: Set a daily alarm for say, **11am** and pray for your three people and the UK for the next month
- 3: **Be open and expectant** to see how God will use you.

We will need to practical help with running Alpha. Could you offer to help set up the hall, wash up or provide a cake? Any offers of help to the office please. Thank you!

For more information on Alpha, do contact the office.

Thank you for your generosity at Christmas:

Our retiring collections at our Christmas services totalling £350 were sent to the Church Missionary Society's Christmas Appeal, to help bring healing to those whose lives have been wrecked by war.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Christmas collection for The Ark. We were able to take a car load of toiletries, clothing and food which were very gratefully received.



Thank you to everyone in the Parish who supported the Christmas gifts collection for Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service in December. Church Stretton Rotary Club also very kindly donated £221.00 for me to buy gifts with, and I was overwhelmed by the generosity of people from the wider community too, who bought and delivered many gifts to my doorstep. Over 80 presents were passed on to SDAS to distribute to their clients, and they were very gratefully received.

Sally Cooke

Sunday 9th January, 1st Sunday of Epiphany Readings Isaiah 43.1-7, Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

St. Laurence's	8.00	Holy Communion, Order 2
	10.30	Morning Prayer
St. Michael's	10.30	Holy Communion, Common Worship
All Saints	11.00	Holy Communion, Order 2
Online Service	10.00	Online via website, or by phone 01694 631066

Tuesday 11th

- 2.30pm—Mothers' Union, Parish Centre
- 7.00pm—Bellringing practice, St Laurence's

Wednesday 12th

- 10.30am—Holy Communion, St Laurence's
- 11.00am—Banner Group, Parish Centre

Thursday 13th

- 10.00am—Parents & Toddlers, Parish Centre
- 3.30pm—Messy Church, Parish Centre

Friday 14th

- 8.30am—Prayer meeting, St Michael's
- 3.00pm—The Well, on Zoom—book in via the website to get the Zoom link
- 5.00pm—Choir practice, St Laurence's

Sunday 16th, 2nd Sunday of Epiphany Readings Isaiah 62.1-5, John 2.1-11

- 12.30pm—Newcomers' Lunch, Parish Centre

St. Laurence's	8.00	Holy Communion, Order 2
	10.30	Holy Communion
St. Michael's	10.30	Morning Worship
All Saints	11.00	Morning Prayer
Online Service	10.00	Online via website, or by phone 01694 631066

Tuesday 18th

- 10.00am—Ministry Team meeting, on Zoom
- 7.00pm—Bellringing practice, St Laurence's
- 7.30pm—PCC, Parish Centre

Wednesday 19th

- 10.30am—Holy Communion, St Laurence's
- 7.30pm—Meeting for Life Group Coordinators, Parish Centre

Thursday 20th

- 10.00am—Parents & Toddlers, Parish Centre
- 7.30pm—Alpha, Parish Centre

Friday 21st

- 8.30am—Prayer meeting, St Michael's
- 5.00pm—Choir practice, St Laurence's

NB The Parish prayer meeting normally held on Tuesdays is cancelled until the end of January as we try to keep each other safe. Please pray at home for the work of the Parish and for those who are unwell at the moment.

Prayer for New Year:

Father, as we look over our Town:

Bless those who live here,
that they may be Faithful and Loving to their families.

Bless those who work here,
that they may be Honest and Fair in all they do.

Bless those who minister in our Medical Centre,
that they may bring Healing and Comfort to those in need.

Bless those who volunteer in Mayfair and other organisations,
that they may bring Comfort and Happiness to those they help.

Bless those who work in our Police and Fire Services,
that you would keep them and us safe.

Bless those who serve on our Council,
that they would administer with Justice and Fairness.

Bless the Ministers of our churches,
that they would boldly proclaim your love and your will for us,

Through Jesus our Lord. Amen.



We pray for those who are sick or are unable to leave their homes: Haigh E, Anne Y, Rob H, Paul J, Ewan, Rosemary F, Eileen B, Jeannie, Margaret B, Margaret E, Doreen H, Sue H-M, Di P, Roger W, Ray E..

Residential Homes: We pray for all our nursing homes, this week particularly remembering Field House.

Memorial Book: We give thanks for the lives of those in our memorial book in January: Herbert Scott, George Jones, Leslie Harrison, Millie Reece, Ann Morris, Christopher Haycock, Alice Oddie, Ronald Proctor, Stella Dickenson, Kathleen Hill, Rose Jarrett, Elizabeth Morris, Esther Plant, James Reeves, William Owen, Douglas Small, Thomas Worthing, John Boundy, Terence Hills, Albert Lewis, Ann Hamlyn, Reginald Morris, Edith Sowden, Pamela Williams, Derrick Gregory, Brian Adamson, David Yapp, Gladys Pitman, Belton Tipton, John Edwards.

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Pioneer Community Mission Enabler	Romaine Thompson	romaine.thompson@strettonparish.org.uk	
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Rector's Day Off	Fridays	Church office hours: 9am-12.30pm Monday to Friday	