



Stretton Parish

CONTACT

News for weekend beginning Friday 9th February 2024

Parish Website: www.strettonparish.org.uk

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

The next Contact will be issued on Friday 23rd February 2024

News from our CMS Mission Partners, Anna and Chris Hembury, working in Hull

Anna and Chris's latest newsletter can be found [here](#) or paper copies are available in all three churches. Here is an excerpt:

DNA

You are probably familiar with a quote attributed to St Francis of Assisi, which goes like this: "Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words". There is some dispute as to whether or not he actually said those words, but they certainly seem in keeping with the way in which he lived out his faith. We are inspired by that deep commitment to authenticity, to "walk the talk", and we are challenged to let all that we do, both in terms of the way we live and our activities, be an embodiment of the gospel. We sit well with that Franciscan tradition of being a living expression of what following The Way of Jesus might look like. It challenges us to live with integrity (wholeness, our actions undivided from our faith and values), humility (staying grounded) and obedience to God (finding our liberation in submitting to an authority higher than ourselves). Of course, "sitting well with" and meeting the challenge are not the same thing! It's just as well God's loving kindness is new every morning!



The walk, however, is not the whole deal. What about the words? "When necessary, use words," is how it goes, not "no need for words". So we are challenged to speak the good news too, to tell the story we are living. Social action and evangelism are the two strands of the DNA of Jesus' ministry. A double helix held together, the integrated whole. Lived expression making sense of propositional truths. Jesus, the Word of God, said "I [who] am the way [how], the truth [what] and the life [why]" (John 14:6). It seems God gave us the whole story to pass on."

Our work with children and young people, at Breakfast Club, youth club and in our everyday relationships seeks to do the preaching of the gospel by action and example. We demonstrate God's love and care, God's seeing of those who go unnoticed, God's celebrating of those who go uncelebrated, God's concern for people's welfare, for hungry bellies and need for connection. We do practical things and we let others find their own agency by doing things for us and for each other. Of course, we use words as well in all that.

Thank God for all the spaces where these children and young people can get to experience the good news of God's love, and for camp and the spaces where they get to put words to that experience – words they can carry home and live by.

*Shalom,
Anna & Chris*

United Parish Services

We have enjoyed welcoming visiting speakers to our 5th Sunday United Parish services.

In 2024 we are looking forward to welcoming:

30th June Rev Steve Hollinghurst, Diocesan Mission Enabler: Environment

29th September: Emma Worrall, from Open Doors



Feedback from Bible in One Year

Just a few lines to say I completed the Bible in one year. My experience was rather mixed. Truthfully I was quite shocked at how much violence etc there was and how women and various groups of people were viewed and treated. A lot of it could unfortunately be events today. I had been quite ignorant of this. I also found the long

lists of offerings and temple rituals very tedious and did not understand the lengths of time people were living. I found the long lists of names difficult too. It did get better. I enjoyed the introductions Nicky had each day and Pippa's closing comments. It saddens me that despite this amazing record of events over 2000 years ago the news today is very similar. Will we ever learn? We should all strive to spread the good news and pray that love and peace will win over evil soon. I think I will read the Bible again but maybe make notes and take a bit more time especially over parts I found hard to understand and then ask or discuss with someone else how they interpret things.

Reading the Bible did give me a purpose each day and certainly surprised me how detailed it is and it gives an insight into how life was 2000 years ago however some things do not seem much different. Let's pray that we have a pandemic of Love and Kindness without any restrictions at all except to spread God's Love as much as possible. Thank you for suggesting and organising the Bible in One Year. It gave me a purpose each day and a surprising sometimes shocking insight. It was not what I expected. Thank you and everyone at St Laurence Church for always making me feel welcome. It means a lot. God bless you.

Pam Pryde



Winter Warmer!

The Winter Warmer welcomed around 50 people again last Saturday. If you know anyone who might like company on a Saturday morning, do invite them along.

During the Winter Warmer on 24th February, Esther and some of her friends are organising a cake sale to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

A poster for a cake sale. It features an illustration of three cakes: one with a cherry, one with a blue and white striped pattern, and one with a pink and white striped pattern. Below the cakes, the text reads 'CAKE SALE' in large blue and orange letters, 'SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY' in blue, and '10AM- 12NOON' in orange. At the bottom, it says 'PARISH CENTRE Church Street, Church Stretton' and 'raising money for mnda motor neurone disease association'. A blue banner at the very bottom says 'taking place during the Stretton Parish Winter Warmer'.

Please pray for our Waste Watchers Holiday Club that God will inspire the planning team and that the Holy Spirit will already be preparing the hearts of those children and families who will attend the week's activities

A poster for the Waste Watchers Holiday Club. It features a green recycling symbol with a blue globe in the center. The text 'Save the dates' is written in a curved banner above the symbol. Inside the symbol, it says 'WASTE WATCHERS HOLIDAY CLUB' and '27 - 30 August 2024'. Below the symbol, it says '10am-1pm' and 'The Parish Centre & St Laurence's Church Church Stretton'. At the bottom, it says 'Bible stories, fun challenges, sports, crafts and much more!!' and 'Booking opens shortly'.

NOTICEBOARD

The Alpha course planned to begin this month has been postponed. We hope to put on another Alpha course later in the year.



Ash Wednesday



To mark the beginning of Lent, we have a United Service of Holy Communion, with the option of Ashing.

Wednesday 14th February at 7.30pm in St Laurence.

Everyone welcome.

Our verse for 2024

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5



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Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Mothers' Union next meet on Tuesday 13th February, 2.30pm in the Parish Centre, where Marian Goulder will be sharing about the 2023 Annual Gathering in York.

Exploring Welcome Part 2

WHEN - 24th February, 9.30am to 12 midday

WHERE - Parish Centre, Church Stretton

BOOKING - Book in via the [website](https://strettonparish.org.uk) or contact Jo Aze at the Parish Office to book in at office@strettonparish.org.uk or call 01694 724224. Do come even if you didn't make the first session.

Welcome

Christmas Offerings

Offerings taken at our extra Christmas services across the parish came to £810, which we were able to give to the Stretton Foodbank.

Thanks to everyone for their generosity.



LENT LUNCHES



St Michael's Church, All Stretton

Every Tuesday
20th February - 26th March
12.30 - 1.30pm

**Homemade soup & roll/ fruit
tea or coffee**

£4.00 for the church funds.

**Our next Stretton Feast is being held on
Saturday 2nd March at 5.45pm in the Parish Centre.**

Come and enjoy a delicious freshly cooked two-course meal, enjoy a warm welcome and friendly conversations.

Donate-what-you-can on the night; any surplus funds after costs have been deducted, will be donated to parish funds.

Pre booking is either via the [website](https://strettonparish.org.uk) or through the Parish Office on 01694 724224. Do advise us of any food allergies/ preferences.



The Youth Life Group will be leading the next Altogether service at St Laurence on Sunday 25th February at 10.30am. Please do come along and support them.



PRAYER FOCUS

This monthly page replaces the Prayer Diary, which of course you can carry on using.

This month our focus is around the Persecuted Church.

Open Doors and Barnabas Aid are a couple of organisations working in this area.

More than 365 million Christians worldwide face persecution and discrimination for their faith – that's a staggering one in seven believers.

Algeria: The African Cup of Nations is underway in the Ivory Coast. The football tournament features 11 countries on the World Watch List, including Algeria. Since the new government came to power in 2017, more than 40 churches have been closed. A handful remain open. Pray that believers will find ways to gather.

Burkina Faso: Ongoing political instability and the rising influence of Islamic militancy have contributed to Burkina Faso facing one of the world's severest displacement crises, with many Christians affected. Pray for peace and stability, and that people will be able to return to the places they once called home.



*Thank God for funding support for Algerian Pastors after their churches have been shut by the authorities and they lost their income. Please pray for their futures and their ministry.

* Widespread persecution of Christians continues in Nigeria. It is estimated that some 500 Christians are killed a month. Pray for the grieving families and the injured and that hostility may cease.

*Pray for peace between neighbours of different religions in Sri Lanka. House churches are closed down if neighbours report them and leaders threatened .

* Praise God for the growth of the Church in central Asia, which means there is a great need to train Church leaders. The Shepherd's Academy offers courses and distance learning, please pray for the work of the Academy and the leaders following the courses that they may be fully equipped by God to minister to their communities.

A Prayer for Lent

May we walk through this season intentionally, removing distractions that take our gaze away from your glory. May we quiet the noise that pulls us from adoration of you and puts our attention on lesser things. May we simplify where we have been stressed, may we surrender what has been burdensome, may we repent of what has been sinful, Lord Jesus.

Residential Homes:

We pray for all our nursing homes, this month particularly remembering Ley Gardens

We give thanks for Mayfair and pray for all its activities.

We pray for all who are sick:

Sylvia L, Tricia P



Memorial Book

We give thanks for the lives of those in our memorial book in February:

Joseph Powell, Maureen Lloyd, Wilkie Marsden, Emilie Burnett, Audrey Powell, Gwyneth Whitrick, Glynne Medlicott, Doris Fleming, Muriel Worthing, Marian Lewis, John Littleford, Thomas Round, Olive Jones, Eleanor Trewinnard, Mary London, Ernest Broxton, Harry Luty, William Coles,

DIARY

Sunday 11th February Readings Genesis 12.1-3, Luke 14.16-24

St. Laurence's	8.30am	Holy Communion, Order 2
	10.30am	Morning Worship
St Michael's	10.30am	Holy Communion (URC)
All Saints	11am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)
Parish Centre	5pm	Young People's Life Group
Online Service	10am	Online via website

Tuesday 13th

9.15am	Parish Prayer Meeting, St Laurence
2.30pm	Mothers' Union, Parish Centre

Wednesday 14th

10.15am	Banner Group, Children's Room
7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion, with Ashing, St Laurence

Thursday 15th February

10.30am	Holy Communion, Order 2, St Laurence's
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Friday 16th

8.30am	Prayer Meeting, St Michael's
5.00pm	Choir Practice, St Laurence

Saturday 17th

10.00am	Winter Warmer—Parish Centre
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Sunday 18th February Readings Psalm 24, Acts 1.1-11

St. Laurence's	8.30am	Holy Communion, Order 1
	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Deeper
St Michael's	10.30am	Morning Worship
All Saints	11am	Holy Communion (Order 1)
Online Service	10am	Online, via website

Tuesday 20th

9.15am	Parish Prayer Meeting, St Laurence
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Thursday 22nd

10.00am	Parents and Toddlers, Parish Centre
10.30am	Holy Communion, Order 1, St Laurence's

Friday 23rd

8.30am	Prayer Meeting, St Michael's
5.00pm	Choir Practice, St Laurence

Saturday 24th

10.00am	Winter Warmer—Parish Centre
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Future dates for your diary:

Friday 1st March 10.30am, World Day of Prayer, St Laurence

Saturday 2nd March 5.45pm Stretton Feast, Parish Centre

Sunday 24th March: Newcomers' Lunch, Parish Centre

Saturday 20th/Sunday 21st April: Vision weekend including APCM, with United Parish Service on the Sunday with visiting speaker.

Do you need a lift to church on Sundays?

Are you interested in helping members of our congregations get to church?

We know that some Church Stretton residents are reliant on relatives and friends to drive them to church on Sunday and have suggested that a Sunday Ring and Ride service would make it easier for them to attend services. Mayfair would be happy to provide a service on a Sunday but do not, at present, have any volunteer drivers on Sundays. However, they have very generously offered to make their vehicles available to Stretton Parish, and maybe the other churches, if we provide the drivers.

The PCC thinks this is a great idea, but we need to do some research and planning first.

- **Would you be interested in using this service?** As a passenger you would need to join the Ring and Ride scheme and pay the usual £30 subscription and would be invited to pay £1 per trip to help cover costs. You would need to book by 1pm on Friday to secure your lift for Sunday.
- **Would you be willing to be trained as a driver?** You would be part of a team collecting church goers and taking them to each of our three churches. You would only need to volunteer for one Sunday each month. All drivers would be trained by the Ring and Ride team and would need an additional DBS check from Mayfair. You would need two references and to pass the Mayfair driving assessment.
- **Would you be willing to act as a passenger assistant?** Again, full training will be offered by Mayfair, a DBS check made, and references needed.

As you can see, we are keen on passenger and driver safety and all passengers and drivers will be covered by Mayfair insurance. We would run this service initially as a pilot for six months before reviewing.

We do hope you will join our scheme, either as a passenger or driver. If you are interested, do contact Jo Aze at the Parish Office by 26th February. Phone 01694 724224 or email office@strettonparish.org.uk

Rector	Rev Steve Johnson	steve.johnson@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 722585
Curate	Rev David Andrews	david.andrews@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 721355
Associate Minister	Rev Christobel Hargraves	chris.hargraves@strettonparish.org.uk	01547 550311
LEP URC Minister, St Michaels	Rev Hazel Allen	hazel.allen@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 751400
Children & Families Worker	Sally Clilverd	sally@strettonparish.org.uk	07985 943 906
Readers	Gillian Taylor	gillian.taylor@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 722956
	Chris Lear	chris@barcombe.net	07514 738 653
Churchwardens	Steve King	steve.king@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 722694
	Julie Lawton	Julie.lawton@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 723750
Deputy Wardens			
St Laurence	James Foster	James.foster@strettonparish.org.uk	07736 324 160
All Saints	Moirra Matthews	moiraemathews@gmail.com	01694 723045
St Michael's	Malcom Forbes		01694 723439
Pastoral Coordinator		Please contact the office for pastoral care or if home communion is required	
Treasurer	Graham Vince	graham.vince@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 328478
Rector's PA	Jo Aze	jo.aze@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 724224
Rector's Day Off	Fridays	Church office hours: 9am-12.30pm Monday to Friday	