One of St Michael’s hidden treasures is to be revealed during a COTHA Lent Workshop about ‘The Labyrinth’, taking place in St Michael’s Church on Saturday March 14 from 10 am to 12 noon, with doors opening by 9.30 am. The event is open to members of all churches within COTHA, and to others within the community and from elsewhere. Coffee and tea will be served at the end. The workshop will be free of charge, although donations will be welcome.

‘Hidden’ is a strange description, as the treasure is available to see 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, how many people look at it? And if they do look at it, do they understand what it means and how it can be used? The treasure is St Michael’s own Labyrinth. It forms part of the pathway from St Michael’s Square to the Church Hall. It is walked across daily by people going to one of the many activities which take place in the hall. But how many of them notice it? Hidden therefore needs to be read as ‘Hidden in plain sight’.

The session will be led by Diane Rutter and Joy Johns, both of St Michael’s. As part of the session, there will be an opportunity to walk St Michael’s Labyrinth outside, or one which will be created inside the church. There will also be an opportunity to create your own Labyrinth using different media.

Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools. Those who have walked a maze, may wonder what the difference might be. A maze may have a number of entrances and exits, and there will be different paths to choose from, and dead ends. A Labyrinth has a single entrance and a single path which leads to the centre and back. There is no risk of getting lost.

Part of the purpose of the event is to encourage future, on-going, use of the Labyrinth as a meditation and contemplative resource for their own benefit, or for the benefit of their church community.

It will be helpful to have an idea of numbers beforehand. If you intend to take part, please will you let the St Michael’s Church Office know (email: office@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk tel: 01494 726680).

‘All will be revealed on Saturday March 14 at 10 am!’ says Roland Gillott
Clergy
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revdebbieoades@gmail.com.

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Newsletter Editor
Kenneth Prideaux-Brune
01494 433871
pbrune@olcs.net

Worship
Sundays
8 am  Said Eucharist
10 am  Sung Eucharist *(Coffee afterwards)*
Gathered Round all age service  2nd Sunday.

Tuesdays
10.30 am  Said Eucharist
Mondays - Fridays
9 am  Morning Prayer
*The Church is usually open each morning from 9 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.*

3rd Saturdays
11.30 am  – 1 pm  Messy Church

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vicar or the PCC or the official policy of St Michael's Church.
Good Out Of Evil, Hope Out Of Tragedy

There's something remarkable about the way good can sometimes come out of terrible tragedy. Or perhaps it's not remarkable given that Christianity was born out of an excruciating execution, that Easter followed Good Friday. This not very startling observation is sparked by an article in *World Faith Insight*, the journal of the World Congress of Faiths, written by the Revd Mark Umpleby, Associate Priest in the United Benefice of Batley, West Yorkshire, describing the aftermath of the murder of much-loved local MP Jo Cox in June 2016. He writes: "We opened our church at 6 pm and many from the local community in Batley met together to hold one another in shock, horror, disbelief, tears, fear and concern after this attack. People gathered from the Islamic and Christian faiths and those of no faith."

The following day the local Council organised a gathering for reflection outside the Town Hall where Umpleby spoke, said a prayer, led a minute's silence and then invited a Muslim friend to speak. That evening he was invited to speak and say a prayer at a gathering at the Indian Muslim Welfare Society, attended by over 1,500 people. "Our service on the first Sunday," he writes, "was hugely emotional with many extra people attending. We tried to offer a space to hold people – a space to reflect, pray, remember Jo, talk with others and share words of comfort and community as we met together."

Later in the summer a community fun day brought thousands together at Upper Batley High School. "The event was amazing, where communities from across the constituency came together." Out of that event a group called More In Common Batley and Spen was formed. "We've worked together with men and women of goodwill of different faiths and none. Our sense of togetherness in difference was clear for all to see – we knew there are differences but never forgot the togetherness and work for the common good." He goes on: "The way in which God has been spoken of has been through the emergence of real hope after such a truly awful murder. ... We wanted to allow people to live out their deepest commitments without oppression or fear ... while coming together in a shared pursuit of all the things we can only achieve together." He concludes: "As we build our home together, God works with us and our common working together speaks of Him."

Ken Prideaux-Brune

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**St Michael’s Vision Statement**

*As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.*
Sacred Place

It will not be a surprise for some of you to learn that my Sacred Space is a small chapel in the loft of a tall white house in Poperinge, Belgium. Talbot House was a centre for soldiers during the First World War, about 10 miles from the front line of the Ypres Salient. Uniquely it was for all ranks – over the door of the chaplain’s room was a sign that read: “All rank abandon ye who enter here.”

The chaplain was a short, stocky man called Philip Clayton, known universally as Tubby. He was 30 years old with boundless energy and a remarkable ability to create an atmosphere of hilarity around himself. In 1930 the house was bought for Tubby by Lord Wakefield (the founder of Castrol oil) and now operates as a living museum and a highly atmospheric b-and-b.

When Tubby saw the loft at the top of the house, where the owner, a hop merchant, stored his samples, he said: “The disciples first met the risen Christ in an upper room. This Upper Room will be our chapel”. Engineers came to look and said: “If you have 50 or more men up here, all wearing heavy army boots and drilled to do everything in unison, we’re not at all sure that the floor will support them.” But Tubby was not someone to take ‘no’ for an answer and persuaded them that it would be OK so long as he had everyone sitting at the sides of the chapel, over the joists. As a result, the Sanctuary comes right down into the middle of the chapel. People knelt opposite each other to receive Communion, adding to the intimacy of the space.

The chapel is reached by a very steep staircase, with very narrow treads, more like a ladder than a staircase. When four WW1 veterans (all over 100) visited the house and wanted to spend time in the chapel the local fire brigade were called in to carry them up and down.

There’s a small harmonium (seen to the left in the picture), which still works. Tubby took it in the sidecar of his motorbike when going up the line to visit gun batteries.

Tubby found an old scarred carpenter’s bench in a shed in the garden and decided that that should be the altar at which Jesus the carpenter should be worshipped. The chair to the right of the picture (which converts into a table if you bend the back over to create a tabletop) was given in memory of a young private in the Pioneer Corps called Archie Forrest who was Confirmed at Talbot House, made his first Communion there and was killed on his next trip carrying gas shells up to the front line. Archie Forrest, in a sense, stands for the considerable number of people who made their first Communion at Talbot House and the very much larger number who made their last. And I think it’s that which gives the Upper Room it’s extraordinarily powerful atmosphere. It is indeed, in the words of military historian, Richard Holmes, “heavy with the presence of the thousands who knelt here to pray that their cup might pass”.

In that sacred space you are indeed surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses”.

In the first article in a new series Ken Prideaux-Brune writes about his ‘Sacred Place’.
Ron Haddock started running courses at St Michael’s to help a few of us improve our techniques in taking videos. There were several people interested who had made short videos for home use typically of family events or pets and there were those like me who did not even have a video camera at that time. Most of us had not even considered things like shot duration, panning, continuity and the like. All we did was push the little red button and waggle the cameras around hoping to get something on film. As the word spread, Ron and Heather brought a group of new videographers together and called this little happy band the Select Video Group of Amersham.

A tribute from Martin Elliston

"I had been a keen "stills" photographer nearly all my life and in recent years had started using a cine camera. I learnt a lot from Ron and we both bought the same "editing software" some years later. Ron taught me how to do "professional" editing and thanks to his tuition and many years membership of the SVG, we now have a library of family, holiday and club videos taken by Brenda and myself to look back on and treasure".

The club’s skills were quite varied. Some members had prior experiences at work managing different types of film and video, and they helped the other less gifted into making simple videos/films, not those you would expect to see in Hollywood or on the BAFTAs - but oh yes, the Bruges Plate. This was a pewter plate that was acquired in Belgium which was used as one of the awards for best film of the year. Ron and Heather had contacts from the film and production industry who came and graded all the films of the video group and placed them in order of merit. The award evening was an annual black-tie dinner at Guido’s where trophies were presented “BAFTA style” in various categories of achievement.

The group had an annual video holiday and we visited places like, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Bath, Cambridge, Chester, exciting days!

Ron was always pushing the boundaries of our capabilities and launched into larger scale amateur film production with professional actors and we used local locations for this - St Michael’s Hall, St John Ambulance HQ in Amersham, Gerry & Margaret Griffith’s house, Ron’s house and Workaid. Pantomime performances were filmed in the Hall, Church services over one Easter, Patronal Festivals. When the Workaid promotional video was commissioned, this was the biggest project undertaken and it resulted in such a high-quality film, parts of it were shown on a BBC programme.

We are all deeply indebted to Ron for his dedication and professionalism to film, which enabled us all to improve our skills and techniques, and more importantly our social camaraderie.

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Our Lent appeal

**Restoring the Hospital’s Water Supply**

We are once again invited to make a Lenten offering to Friends of St Anne’s Hospital, Liuli, Tanzania. We have supported the Friends for many years, ever since the then medical director Sam Ndimbo first visited St Michael’s. Incidentally, Sam’s many friends will be delighted to know that his prostate cancer is in remission and he is reported to be in very good form.

The major project of the Friends at present is restoring the pump that brings water from the lake to the hospital. The pump was installed by the Friends some time ago but global warming has led to a drop in the water level of the lake with the result that silt has clogged the pump. The pump needs to be completely rebuilt and the water intake moved further out into the lake. Clearly a good supply of water is essential for the hospital and so it is this work that we are asked to contribute to this year.

Envelopes for your contribution will be available on the letters table and can be placed in the offertory bag on Easter Sunday. Cheques should be made payable to: Friends of St Anne’s Hospital, Liuli.
Next summer the Tuesday Club will be returning to Suffolk for our annual holiday. As in 2018, we shall be staying at the Mill Hotel, Sudbury, a former water mill in a beautiful setting by the water meadows. There is a working water wheel between the restaurant and the bar. The hotel is very comfortable, with pleasant bedrooms, a fine restaurant and a relaxing atmosphere.

Last time we all enjoyed it immensely.

Sudbury is a nice, small market town, 17 miles south of Bury St. Edmunds. It is the birthplace of the painter, Gainsborough, with a fine Parish Church, St. Gregory’s, a good choice of shops and a pleasant market square.

Our Tuesday Club holidays are always full of fun and camaraderie, and we welcome people both from St. Michael’s and outside. During our stay we arrange outings each day. This year we hope to include the following excursions: Southwold and Blythborough Church (the Cathedral of the Marshes); a return visit to Aldeburgh and, this time, Snape Maltings (former brewery, now a tourist centre with all sorts of gifts and crafts); Norfolk Lavender, Heacham, with a tour of the lavender fields; a boat trip on the Norfolk Broads (a different location from last time); and Melford Hall (National Trust property at Long Melford, just outside Sudbury). On the last day we shall have lunch at Corncraft, Monks Eleigh, near Sudbury, an amazing place where they make corn dollies, have a fantastic collection of gifts and plants and great meals in the restaurant; a really fun place!

So do join us for a great holiday. We have a Motts coach with us all the time, so travel is easy and we can look after everyone according to need.

Shrove Pizza!

We are once again invited to celebrate Shrove Tuesday at Pizza Express on:

Tuesday February 25

Details of how to sign up and make your choice of food will be available in church on the letters table in due course.

Don’t miss the first social event of 2020!

A very warm welcome to Nicola Petrou Amerikanos, who is assisting Hazel in the office on two mornings a week. We will introduce her more fully next month.
**FEBRUARY 2020**

### Regular Weekly Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sundays</td>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>Said Eucharist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Sung Eucharist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.30 am</td>
<td>Said Eucharist. Lady Chapel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.00 – 8.15 pm</td>
<td>Choir Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursdays</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.</td>
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**The Church is usually open each morning from 9 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.**

### Other activities in February

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Candlemas. Main service at 4 pm.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Warden: Alan Jarvis (07586 54341)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK. Challoners G S. in recital. Free Church. 1.10 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Healing and wholeness. Lady Chapel. 3, 3.30 and 4.15 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>3rd before Lent. Gathered Round.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Warden: Roland Gillott (722674)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Traidcraft stall after 10 am service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK. Vintage Brass in concert. Free Church. 1.10 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>MESSY CHURCH. 11.30 am—1 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>2nd before Lent. Warden: Roger Leslie (726362)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday Feb 18 LUNCH BREAK. Anna LeHair (piano). Free Church. 1.10 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Sunday before Lent. Warden: Hazel Miller (773189)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>No 10.30 am service</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK. South Bucks U3A jazz band. Free Church. 1.10 pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shrove Pizza social event at Pizza Express</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>ASH WEDNESDAY. Eucharists at 10 am and 7 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Tuesday Club to The King and I at Milton Keynes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Pop in and Paint. 10.30 am—12.15 pm</td>
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*The Newsletter is published monthly (except January and August). The next issue will appear on Sunday March 2. Material for inclusion should please be emailed to the Editor on pbrune@olcs.net by February 17.*
The parable of the Shrewd Manager

Jesus often told stories with hidden meanings.

Once Jesus told a story about a rich man...

...and his servant, who managed the rich man's property.

So he called the manger to account for himself!

The rich man had heard that the manager has been wasting money.

Oh no! I am going to get the sack!!

The manager agreed to let the rich man's traders fiddle their books!

So they altered their debts - and stayed friends with the manager.

Jesus explained that the manager had been wise in managing his future... even though he was being dishonest.

Jesus was trying to encourage the people to think about their own futures too. But it's a hard parable to understand!