

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY



If this is your first newsletter, welcome ... if you have any questions about the church family, the Christian faith, or about our children's work, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Our administrator Vicky is normally available on 07804 558160 however please allow her time as she is unwell at the moment. This notice sheet covers the next week and combines:

- Notices,
- The church diary (including livestream & Zoom joining instructions),
- Prayers and readings for the services on Sunday 26th January 2025 and Sunday 2nd February.

We look forward to welcoming Revd Sally Morris who is preaching the Sunday at the 10.30m service. As well as her church ministry she has the not insubstantial responsibility(!) of being Head of Ormiston Academy which is the catchment school for many families in our benefice. Please pray for Sally and all our local schools (noting that Long Melford had a successful Ofsted visit last week).

Not all news is bad ...

I confess that after a year of disastrous PR for the Church of England I was worried that I might be singing to myself during the carol services! However, I was encouraged that numbers were up this year ... as they were in the churches of many of my clergy friends ... something to reflect on perhaps?

I am also encouraged that recently our youth group has grown so large (nearly 40) that we have had to 'multiply' into two groups ... and a number of members are expressing interest in our residential weekend which as well as being great fun (and good value) has Christian content.

Likewise, I am encouraged that over the course of the last year we now have now grown to 16 Junior bell ringers who meet weekly but with whom once a month we are discussing Bible stories. For the first time too at Christmas, we had nine choristers in the Long Melford choir (and of course we have some new adult members this year too).

Furthermore, we have many small groups emerging, from FaithChat which had an engaging discussion when they first met recently, to a group of men (mainly dads) who meet informally for breakfast & fellowship once a month. One of our more established bible study groups has seen growth over the last year so that they too are also considering 'multiplying'.

I should also mention Stained Glass fundraising team has done much to build community as well as raising funds (as indeed have many others including the amazing abseiling project).

All these things are not necessarily a sign of a spiritual awakening in our nation ... but they are surely a reminder that God can work in unexpected ways against the 'narrative of decline'.

We do not get to choose the times in which we live, but here we are together in beautiful rural Suffolk at the start of the 3rd millennium with the responsibility of carrying the baton of faith. I want our church community to make the most of these positive opportunities. As we will hear in our reading on Sunday, we are all parts of Christ's body. Therefore I encourage you in 2025 to join me in doing your best to play your

part, whether that be praying, giving, volunteering, fundraising, providing hospitality, encouraging, inviting people to events, supporting our worship, helping with maintenance, serving on the PCC or in ministry, or something else. Who knows ... it may just be that you discover God at work in a new way!

Revd Matthew

Love your enemies - Moltman

This is an inspiring story about a famous theologian Jurgen Moltman, who wrote extensively about Christian hope. As a young man he was a German prisoner of war in the UK during which time he became a Christian; having been given a Bible, listening to the chaplains, and been struck but the kindness he received. He recounts a key moment:

A special event that completely turned my life upside down was the first international SCM conference after the war, which was held in Swanwick, Derbyshire, in the summer of 1947. A group of POWs were invited to attend, I being one of them.

We came still wearing our wartime uniforms, and we came in fear and trembling. What were we to say about the wartime horrors and the mass murders in the concentration camps? But we were welcomed as brothers in Christ, and could eat and drink, pray and sing together with young Christians who had come from all over the world, even from Australia and New Zealand. To be accepted like that was for us a wonderful experience.

Let us never forget the power of kindness and welcome - whomever it is to whom we offer love. *Revd M*

FaithChat

The next session of FaithChat will take place at the home of Susie & David Tweed at 10.30 on Saturday 8th February. Topic - how sermons are prepared. If you're interested, please have a word with Malcolm or Judith Offord (01787 315689).

Exploring HOPE

We started exploring HOPE at our informal worship service last Sunday. We will have a series of **three talks** where we consider hope and the Christian faith in more detail, at our Café Church in Lawshall. These are suitable for all but will be accessible for someone who is not a regular churchgoer. The talks will be on the 9th Feb, 9th March and the 11th May (not April due to Easter) all at 4.00pm. Who could you invite along?



Snowdrop Sunday

This is a reminder that on Sunday 16th Feb at 9.00am at Shimpling the snowdrops should be in full bloom. All are welcome to this 'Snowdrop Sunday' service.

Suggestions for Prayer

- We pray for the USA as the new administration and President Trump take responsibility.
- We give thanks for the new life, physically and spiritually, around us, and pray that we would be able to make the most of every opportunity.
- We pray for children and staff at all the schools in our neighbourhood.
- We pray for a grant application we are submitting to support children and worship.
- We pray for ceasing of hostilities in other places of violence and hatred.
- We remember before God those who have recently died and we pray for those who mourn.
- We pray for those in need of God's presence or his healing touch including Barbara Brady, David Bremer, Phillip Cole, Robert Hawkins, baby Munroe, Mary Tuffen, & Gordon Wright.

Making the most of every opportunity Ephesians 5:15-17

New International Version

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

The Message (a very contemporary translation)

So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times! ¹⁷ Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.

Diary

Sun 26 th	10.30am	Holy Communion at Holy Trinity *
	4.00pm	Pub Social at The Hare – Melford
	6.30pm	Communion at Lawshall
Mon 27 th	9.30am	Connect Toddler Group St Catherine’s
Tues 28 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer
Wed 29 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice Holy Trinity
Fri 31 st	7.30pm	‘Fusion Plus’ Youth Club
Sun 2 nd	9.00am	Communion at Alpheton
	10.30am	Family Communion at Holy Trinity *
Mon 3 rd	9.30am	Connect Toddler Group - St Catherine’s
	7.30pm	A&S Home Group
Tues 4 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer #
Thurs 6 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice HT
Sat 8 th	10.30am	Faith Chat <i>(see notice)</i>
Sun 9 th	10.30am	Communion at Holy Trinity *

*** Livestream Joining Instructions**

- Google the five words “Holy Trinity Long Melford Facebook” or [click here](#) to open the church’s Facebook page (scroll down a bit to see the feed).
- Please note that you do not need a Facebook account yourself in order to watch the livestream.

Morning Prayer Zoom Meeting ID: 810 2345 2032, Password: 283350, or click [here](#).

Dates for your Diary include:

Wed	5 th Mar	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Service (time TBC - possibly at 7.00pm)
Sat	22 nd Mar	10.00am	Shimpling Graveyard tidy
Sun	20 th April	10.30am	Benefice Easter Sunday Service

Readings for the 26th January**Collect (prayer for the day)**

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

First Reading**1 Corinthians 12:12-31**

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading**Luke 4:14-21**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

²⁰Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You O Christ

(Bible readings courtesy of Bible Gateway New International Version - UK (NIVUK))

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Readings for the 2nd February 2025**Collect** (*prayer for the day*)

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God. **Amen**

First Reading**Hebrews 2:14-18**

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil –¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading**Luke 2:22-40**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord’),²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: ‘a pair of doves or two young pigeons’.

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ ‘Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.’

³³ The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him.³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying.³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You O Christ

(Bible readings courtesy of Bible Gateway New International Version - UK (NIVUK))

Post Communion Prayer

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**