



Sunday 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

August 2025

8th, 9th, 10th, 11th

Sunday after Trinity



**DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD**







Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad



“We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate.”

Services Sunday 10th August

Holy Trinity Oakengates

9.30am Holy Communion

St Peter's Priorslee at Holy Trinity Academy

No service**

St Georges Telford

9.30am Songs of Praise

Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

8.00am Holy Communion*

11.00am Family Praise

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

11.00am Holy Communion

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

11.00am Morning Worship

Please note there will be an 8.00am Service at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood on Sunday 10th August which will be led by Revd Lynne Morris

Please note: Dates and times are correct at time of going to print but are subject to change.

Collect - 8th Sunday after Trinity (10th August)

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Readings

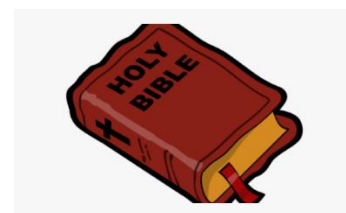
(10th August)

Psalm 50.1-8, 23-end

1st Reading Isaiah 1.1, 10-20

2nd Reading Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16

Gospel Luke 12.32-40



Services Sunday 17th August

Holy Trinity Oakengates

9.30am Morning Worship

St Peter's Priorslee at Holy Trinity Academy

No service **

St Georges Telford

9.30am Holy Communion

Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

11.00am Holy Communion

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

11.00am Morning Worship

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

11.00am Holy Communion

Collect - 9th Sunday after Trinity (17th August)

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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.

Readings (17th August)

Psalm 80.1-2, 9-end

1st Reading Isaiah 5.1-7

2nd Reading Hebrews 11.29—12.2

Gospel Luke 12.49-56



Services Sunday 24th August

Holy Trinity Oakengates

9.30am Holy Communion

St Peter's Priorslee at Holy Trinity Academy

No service**

St Georges Telford

9.30am Morning Worship

Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

11.00am Morning Worship

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

11.00am Holy Communion

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

11.00am Morning Worship

(Outdoors if weather is fine)

Collect - 10th Sunday after Trinity (24th August)

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; 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.

Readings (24th August)

Psalm 71.1-6

1st Reading Jeremiah 1.4-10

2nd Reading Hebrews 12.18-29

Gospel Luke 13.10-17



Services Sunday 31st August

10.30am Benefice Service at Holy Trinity Oakengates – “Goodbye to Rev Lynne”

Thank You Service with Holy Communion followed by coffee & cake

Holy Trinity Oakengates

10.30am Holy Communion

St Peter's Priorslee at Holy Trinity Academy

No service**

St Georges Telford

No service

Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

No service

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

No service

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

No service

****Please note there are NO Services at Holy Trinity Academy for St Peters congregation during August due to the School being closed for the holidays.**

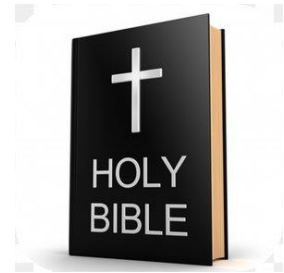
Collect - 11th Sunday after Trinity (31st August)

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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.

Readings

(31st August)

Psalm	81.1, 10-end
1 st Reading	Jeremiah 2.4-13
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 13.1-8, 15, 16
Gospel	Luke 14.1, 7-14



Daily Readings

		Morning	Evening
Monday	11/08	James 2.1-13	Luke 23.13-25
Tuesday	12/08	James 2.14-end	Luke 23.26-43
Wednesday	13/08	James 3	Luke 23.44-56a
Thursday	14/08	James 4.1-12	Luke 23.56b—24.12
Friday	15/08	Luke 11.27-28	Acts 1.6-14
Saturday	16/08	James 5.7-end	Luke 24.36-end
Monday	18/08	Mark 1.1-13	Acts 1.1-14
Tuesday	19/08	Mark 1.14-20	Acts 1.15-end
Wednesday	20/08	Mark 1.21-28	Acts 2.1-21
Thursday	21/08	Mark 1.29-end	Acts 2.22-36
Friday	22/08	Mark 2.1-12	Acts 2.37-end
Saturday	23/08	Mark 2.13-22	Acts 3.1-10
Monday	25/08	John 1.43-end	Matthew 10.1-22
Tuesday	26/08	Mark 3.7-19a	Acts 4.1-12
Wednesday	27/08	Mark 3.19b-end	Acts 4.13-31
Thursday	28/08	Mark 4.1-20	Acts 4.32—5.11
Friday	29/08	Mark 4.21-34	Acts 5.12-26
Saturday	30/08	Mark 4.35-end	Acts 5.27-end



EMAIL NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email regularly please contact newsletter@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk requesting you would like to receive it weekly, or can be found on our Website at WWW.Easttelfordbenefice.co.uk

Regular Dates for Diaries (For participation or prayer)

Mon	8.00pm	Compline via Zoom
Tue	9.00-10.00am	Prayer Group at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
	7.00pm	Whist at Holy Trinity Oakengates (1 st Tuesday of each month)
Wed	8.45-10.30am	Tea & Toast (Place of Welcome) at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
	9.00-11.00am	Food Bank & Clothes Bank at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
	9.15am	Morning Prayer at Wombridge Church (Suspended during August)
	10.30am	Midweek Service at St Matthew's Donnington Wood
	11.30am	Bible Chat session at St Matthew's Donnington Wood
	11.00am	Midweek Service at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
	12.00-2.00pm	Place of Welcome at Holy Trinity Oakengates
	1.00-3.00pm	Pray Bake Read at Lantern Academy Ketley Bank (Only during School Term)
	7.00-8.00pm	Prayer Group meeting at St Georges (4 th Wednesday of each month)
Thu	10.00-12.00pm	Tea & Talk Bereavement group (2 nd Thursday) at HTWW (Not in August)
	1.00-3.00pm	Place of Welcome at Priorslee Scout HQ
Fri	12.30-2.00pm	First Friday Free Lunch at Wombridge Parish Centre (1 st Friday)
	8.00pm	Compline via Zoom
Sat	4.00-5.30pm	Messy Church at HT Wrockwardine Wood (No Messy in August)
	11.00-1.00pm	Welcome Saturday at St Matthews Donnington Wood (3 rd Saturday of month)

Please note: Dates and times are correct at time of going to print but are subject to change.

Additional Dates for Diaries

Mon	11/08	12.30pm	Funeral of Pamela Stacey at Telford Crematorium
Tue	12/08	10.30am	Funeral of Angela Hill at Telford Crematorium
		11.00am	Burial of Ashes of Betty Mansell at St Georges Parish Church
Wed	13/08	1.00pm	Funeral of Rowland Waddington at Wombridge Church
Thu	14/08		
Fri	15/08		
Sat	16/08	10.00am	Spring/Summer Clean at Wombridge Church Parish Centre
		11.00am	Welcome Saturday at St Matthew's Church Donnington Wood
Mon	18/08	3.30pm	Funeral of Doris Chipp at Emstrey Crematorium
Thu	21/08	9.30am	Funeral of Peter Adamczyk at Telford Crematorium

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CHANGES DURING AUGUST

- The Wednesday morning prayer meeting at Wombridge Church is suspended for the summer holidays and will re-commence on Wednesday 3rd September.
- The Wednesday Prayer Group which normally meets at St Georges Church on 4th Wednesday in the month is cancelled in August and will meet again 24th September.
- The Tea & Talk Bereavement Group will not be meeting on the 2nd Thursday in August but will resume on Thursday 11th September at 10.00am, Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood.

There is no Messy Church in August due to school holidays. It will resume on Saturday 13th September.

Those in need of our prayers

Please pray for the families of Pamela Stacey, Angela Hill, Doris Chipp, Rowland Waddington, Peter Adamczyk, James Latham and all who are grieving the loss of loved ones at this time.

Merciful God, be close to all who mourn.
May they know the hope of your promises
and the comfort of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In our prayers we remember the Church, its members and our community. We pray for those who are unwell, either at home or in hospital and those who are adjusting to changes in their lives. We also remember those who can no longer join us physically in our church buildings for worship or fellowship.



- We offer prayers for people of countries affected by conflict, persecution and natural disaster.
- Children's clubs across Telford
- Safety for those who travel for work or holiday at this busy time
- Those suffering in the extremes of the weather across this country and the world.
- Those living with dementia
- God's Peace to bring healing where it is needed
- Our Church PCC's as they plan for the future

Those whose years mind we keep

Priorslee

- 10/08 Irene Fieldhouse, Lily Palin, Gladys Dodd, Percival Davies, Clifford Pascall, Annie Hampton, Emily Jones
- 17/08 Richard Morgan, Winifred Leyland-Jones, Walter Cadman
- 24/08 Brian Ainsworth, Gladys Taylor, Albert Eagleton, Andrew McGillivray, George Moscrop
- 31/08 Gillian Hodson, Lorna Chetwood, Vincent Holmes, Charles Luter, Leslie Phillips

Oakengates

- 10/08 Violet Allen, Edward Harvey, Barrie Southall, Kenneth Nelson, Frances Pagett, Charles Philips, Gladys Jaundrell, Eric Lonnon, Doreen Evendon, Joan Miller, Robin Dixon, Keith Lawton, Sid Talbot
- 17/08 Colin Tonks, Walter Mullinder, David Ghost, Dorothy Lowe, James Thompson, Alan Millward, John Mountney, Peter Jeffries, Martina Luscott, Ethel Roberts
- 24/08 Marion Cadwallader, Derrick Thompson, Henry Wassall, Herbert Mellor, Grace Tonks, Margaret Riley, Annie Mansell, Lucy Barrow, Eileen Harris
- 31/08 Roy Lea, Gwen Phillips, Sydney Massey, Mabel Spencer, Sue Bailey, Alec Leech, Bert Rhodes

Wrockwardine Wood

- 10/08 Beryl Mansell, Gary (Garf) Coles, Stuart Russell, Arthur Pitchford, Marjorie Harding, Gertrude (Betty) Hodson
Lynda Hancox, Gerald (Tom) Brown, Geoffrey Mann
- 17/08 Kenneth Steadman, David Pagett, Malcolm Lee, Maureen Weston, Ada Ruscoe, Mona Buckley, Robert (Rob) Stones, Benjamin Mansell, Albert (Tommy) Atkins, Derek Odell, Ethel Luter
- 24/08 Gordon Beardsmore, Barbara Worrall, Michael Griffiths, Dorothy Martin, Albert Steventon, Geoffrey Edwards, Douglas Boothman
- 31/08 John James, Rodwell Woodward, Howard (H) Hope, Enid Steventon, Paul Evans, Rose Price, Maud Beard

IMPORTANT.....BE AWARE!!!

If you get any emails alleging to be from Clergy or those in positions within the church that ask for money or vouchers or sounding unlikely please **ignore!** We would never ask for these things. Please check with us via other means and never click the links. There are a lot of phishing emails around currently that we cannot do anything to stop. **Please be careful!**

Ever received a suspicious email? 📧

📧 As of May 2025, over 42 million suspicious emails have been reported to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service, resulting in the removal of 400,000 scam websites by the NCSC.

🔗 Find out more about how to report suspicious emails, texts and websites: <https://orlo.uk/lzoEh>
#CyberProtect



A sample of the type of spam email that is being sent is:

"Good to hear from you, here is what I want you to do for me because I'm a little busy right now, conflicting priorities, I'm only available here for now. I have been working on incentives and I aimed at surprising some of our diligent staff with gift cards this week. This should be confidential until they all have the gift cards as it's a surprise. Can you get this done remotely and how soon?"

Please be extra vigilant and don't respond to emails like these!

Contact Details

Interim Minister: Revd Dr Tom Atfield
07453 527751
revdtom@yahoo.com

Licensed Reader: Christopher Harris
07941 961461
cjharrissinging@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor: Christopher Harris
07941 961461
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Licensed Reader: Kerry Debenham
01952 615367 (9.30-12)
admin@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk

Administrator: Kerry Debenham
01952 615367 (9.30-12)
admin@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk

Ecumenical Coordinator & Lay Funeral Minister:
Sue Rawlings
07715173634 Suerawlings12@gmail.com

Goodbye to Rev Lynne!

It was recently announced to the East Telford Benefice that Rev Lynne and her husband Geoff will be leaving the Benefice and moving to Shrewsbury.

There will be a service of Holy Communion at Wombridge Church on Sunday 17th August at 11.00am and this will be the last service which Rev Lynne will officiate at in the Benefice, and then on Sunday 31st August everyone is invited to attend the Benefice service at Holy Trinity Oakengates at 10.30am for a service of Holy Communion where we will have the opportunity to say "thank you" to Rev Lynne for all she has given to the Benefice and for the many years of ministry to the local area. We give our thanks to Lynne and pray for her and Geoff as they embark on their next chapter.

WEBSITE UPDATE

The East Telford Benefice website has recently been experiencing problems and it hasn't been possible to update the information or publish the weekly newsletter link.

Most of the issues have now been ironed out and the website should now see updates over the coming weeks. Each of our churches do use www.achurchnearyou.com where you can access individual church information.

BAPTISMS WEDDINGS & FUNERALS IN CHURCH

We are always excited to be able to celebrate Baptisms, welcome you for your Wedding or help you through a difficult time arranging a Funeral within our Churches. Funerals are welcomed in Church or at the Graveside and Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood are able to livestream funerals. Please telephone Kerry, Benefice Administrator to discuss arrangements.

Friday 5th September

**ST GEORGE'S
PARISH CHURCH**

 *Songs of Praise*

**Sunday 10th
August** 

at 9.30am

*Come and sing your
favourite hymns*

Everyone welcome

 **Free Community Lunch** 

 **On the first Friday of each month** 

 **12.30pm to 2.00pm** 

Wombridge Parish Centre

Thanks to sponsorship by the co-op

All welcome to join us for a light lunch, dessert and hot drink – followed by a short game – pop in or stay for as long as you wish - everyone welcome ☺

**ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH
DONNINGTON WOOD
WELCOME SATURDAY
AUGUST 16TH 2025**

Would you like to help make your Parish Churchyard look even more loved and cared for?

Can you spare a couple of hours on Saturday, 19th July and Saturday, 16th August?

If so grab your gardening tools and wellies, and join our working party of friendly volunteers between 11.00 a.m. & 1.00 p.m.

FREE CRAFT ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS

COMPLIMENTARY TEA, COFFEE, TOAST & BISCUITS FOR ALL VISITORS

TABLETOP SALE

RAFFLE IN AID OF CHURCH FUNDS

Pop in for a cup of tea, our welcome is warm, and our friendship is free!

Sat Nav ref TF2 7HP

Wombridge Parish Centre Spring/Summer Clean

Saturday 16th August 10am

The Parish Centre was built in 1993, in the Name of Jesus, and hosts Church gatherings, community groups, work meetings and also provides a valuable source of income for the Church.

Along with regular cleaning, it is good to have periodic spring cleans so that the Parish Centre remains in a good condition for all those who use it.

So, on Saturday 16th August at 10am, we are going to have a Spring Clean of the Parish Centre and it would be great if you were able to come along and help out for half an hour or more.

Thank you. Wombridge PCC

ST GEORGE'S PRAYER GROUP

*Please note NO meeting in August

The Prayer Group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month between 7pm & 8pm at St George's Church.



The next meeting is on Wednesday 24th September and is open for all to attend. During the time together there may be a brief discussion about issues of the day and/or individual concerns and then there is a time of prayer. Sometimes a bible passage is read and following a brief discussion may be used as a focus for additional prayers.



Join us in 2025 - 13 September

Some of our Benefice Churches are taking part in this

Charity Event including Holy Trinity Oakengates



St Matthew's Church will be taking part in the Shropshire Historic Churches' Annual Ride & Stride event on

Saturday, 13th September 2025

Church will be open between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to welcome cyclists and walkers from other participating churches, as well as holding our own sponsored ride using a static exercise bike in the churchyard.

If you would like to support St Matthew's by taking part in this fund-raising event (proceeds raised by us are shared equally between SHCT and St Matthew's), please pick up a sponsor form from Church.

Please support where possible.

For more information:

<https://www.shropshirehct.org.uk/OtherActivities/RideStride.aspx>

ECUMENICAL SERVICE **SEPTEMBER**

The next Ecumenical Service will be
Monday 1st September, 7.00pm.
at St Matthew's Donnington Wood.

Autumn Breakfast Bazaar

Wombridge Parish Centre
Saturday 20th September
8.30-11.00am
More details to follow....

Harvest Cream Tea's

St Georges Parish Church
Saturday 20th September
2.00-4.00pm
in Church

Battle of Britain **Commemoration Service**

St Georges Parish Church
Sunday 28th September
6.00pm

Compline via Zoom

As a Benefice we are grateful to Nigel who hosts Compline via Zoom at 8pm on Monday and Friday evenings.

For more information please contact Nigel at

Nigelcollins8561@gmail.com

TOMBOLA STALLS

Each of the churches in the Benefice are always in need of small quality items suitable for use on Tombola Stalls. If you can offer items for these stalls then please pass them to churchwardens who will forward them to the events coordinators for each of the churches. *Thank You.*



SAFEGUARDING

For all the churches in our benefice, the safeguarding, safety and security of each person is of the upmost importance. We have across all our churches committed to safeguarding and have adopted the national and diocesan safeguarding policies.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the coordinators if you have any questions and concerns and understand that everyone has a role to play to ensure we achieve our aim of being a benefice who cares and protects all who visit.

PLACES of WELCOME at HTO, HTWW & St PETERS



This outreach is something which has helped bring our community together and we are always pleased when new people attend. The format is simple – a short service, a shared lunch (soup and roll or sandwiches), chat/board games/puzzles/craft etc.

Please do let your friends and neighbours know about these Places of Welcome especially those who live alone or those who are looking for a place to meet new people. You will find a warm welcome at each of these Places of Welcome. We look forward to meeting you!

Please note St Peters meets at: Priorslee Scout HQ, Snedshill Way, TF2 9QQ



Living with dementia at any time brings challenges.

The Alzheimer's Society are working towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives. They do this by giving help to those living with dementia today, and providing hope for the future.

If you need support and advice, Alzheimer's Society is here for you. You can call the support line on 0333 150 3456 and find lots more advice and support here: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk>

As part of the action plan for our Benefice Churches for Dementia Friendly Church it has been suggested we publish monthly in our newsletters information which offers help in what 'not' to say to someone living with Dementia. We will be using information from the Alzheimers association website.

Things to avoid saying to somebody with dementia

2. You don't have to correct every mistaken belief: 'Nobody is stealing from you!'

When a person says something which you know is not true, your first impulse may be to correct their belief. This can be distressing for the person, as they are likely to be as convinced in their belief as you are in yours.

As dementia progresses, the person will find it hard to accept logic and so it may not be possible to convince them that their belief is incorrect. This can lead to confusion, bad feeling or arguments.

Try this instead:

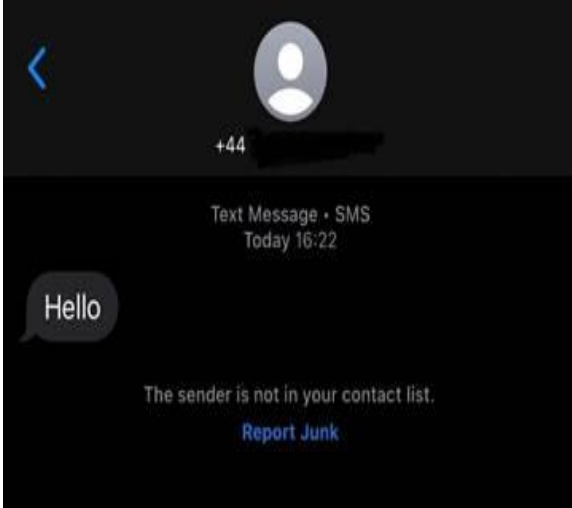
Think about whether it is necessary to correct the belief at all. If it is not causing harm or anxiety, then you may not need to. If the belief is causing the person distress, comfort them and remind them they are safe. Try to keep your tone, body language and facial expressions calm and reassuring.

Gently encourage the person to shift their focus onto something they enjoy – even something as simple as a subject they like to talk about, or putting on a favourite television show. These distraction techniques can be very effective

It started with Hello.....

People are used to receiving messages from unknown numbers, but this “Hello” could be the start of a scam.

Any response, from “?????” “Wrong number” or another simple “hello” verifies to the scammer that your phone number is active. From here the scam could go on to impersonate Police or the Bank, inform you owe a parking fine, be the start of a romance fraud, to name just a few of the many, many other ways of manipulating you into giving away sensitive personal or banking information.



And as a bonus if you do reply, expect more text messages from random numbers in the future.

So what should you do?

- Do not reply.
- Do not click on any links.
- Forward the message to 7726 along with the number the text came from.
- Delete and block the number.
- If you have given any personal information report the incident to Action Fraud via their website or by calling 0300 123 2040 and if you have given any financial information inform your bank immediately.

Please share this information with friends and family.

SCHOOL UNIFORM OFFERS – MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

SCHOOL UNIFORM SALES 2025
MONEYSAVINGCENTRAL.CO.UK/SCHOOL-UNIFORM-SALE-DATES

SAINSBURY'S 20% off Predicted to start on Wednesday 18th June 2025	ASDA 20% off Confirmed to start on Monday 23th June 2025	M&S 20% off Predicted to start on Tuesday 1st July 2025
ALDI £5 Uniform Bundle Confirmed to start on Sunday 29th June 2025	TESCO 25% off Predicted to start on Monday 21st July 2025	

MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

The Places of Welcome Facilitator for Staffordshire, Stoke-On-Trent & northern Shropshire has asked us to make this information known to help save families some money.

From the Diocese

Beginning and ending of life concerns

This article is a slightly abridged version of Bishop Michael's Presidential Address to July 2025's Diocesan Synod. As Parliament resumes on 1 September after summer recess,, it is timely to revisit this issue now before the the Bills continue their Parliamentary journey and with the Second Reading of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill imminent on 12 September.

Two Bills await scrutiny in the House of Lords: The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, providing for 'assisted dying' in some circumstances, and the Crime and Policing Bill, removing criminal liability from women who end their own pregnancies.

Both Bills affect vulnerable groups, who have had a bad few weeks what with these two Bills plus the debate over meaningful yet cost-effective support for people with disabilities. Vulnerable people are Christians' first call for compassion and advocacy, but here I am specifically addressing beginning and ending of life issues.

Increasingly, there are concerns being expressed about the end of life Bill. The Third Reading majority of 23 in a (free) vote in the Commons was significantly lower than the Second Reading majority of 55.

Some of those concerns are shared widely. Following the abortion decriminalisation vote, the Bishop of London helpfully pointed out that, *'Women suffering from coercion, or those who are victims of sexual or domestic abuse, would be the most vulnerable to the proposed change.'* Paradoxically, making those women free from legal sanction could make them more at risk.

In the case of assisted suicide, vulnerable people could, in their last months, feel themselves to be a waste of bed-space or a financial burden on their families, and then avail themselves of this way out. Over the past few weeks, several people who have been in situations of medical, psychological or social vulnerability have written to me to describe thoughts exactly like this. Sadly, in some cases there could be temptations for overburdened hospital administrators, or for fatigued families, to reinforce those inward feelings by their outward attitudes or words, so that people really do end up feeling coerced. The statutory inquiry into the COVID pandemic has recently heard evidence of the effective abandonment of residents of care homes to the ravages of a deadly disease because they were seen as more expendable than others. It is also hard to believe that there will not, over the years, be a relaxation of restrictions on who may avail themselves of assisted dying procedures. That has been the consistent experience of other jurisdictions.

As a Christian, I believe in the God-given sanctity of every human life, resting on the biblical truth that we are made in the image and likeness of our Creator. To take away God's gift of life is to choose to go against God's good purposes, whatever might be the circumstances in which that happens. That immediately raises a host of complex questions, particularly at the beginning of life. What if the life of a woman is endangered by a pregnancy, might not the imperative to save life point to abortion as the lesser of two evils? At what point does an incipient life become truly a human being and who has responsibility for the unborn life until that point? These complexities are addressed in this Church of England statement on abortion: *The Church of England combines principled opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be strictly limited conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative. This is based on our view that the foetus is a human life with the potential to develop relationships, think, pray, choose and love. Women facing unwanted pregnancies realise the gravity of the decision they face: all abortions are tragedies, since they entail judging one individual's welfare against that of another (even if one is, as yet, unborn). Every possible support, especially by church members, needs to be given to those who are pregnant in difficult circumstances and care, support and compassion must be shown to all, whether or not they continue with their pregnancy.*

At the other end of life, it is sometimes argued that no clear distinction can be made in borderline cases between assisting somebody to die, on the one hand, and on the other hand administering palliative drugs for pain control that will hasten the end of their life, or stopping intrusive medical interventions that artificially sustain a vegetative state. Many of us will have experienced issues like these in the dying days or hours of those we love. They can be bitterly difficult to decide. Nevertheless, there is a world of difference between acting to alleviate suffering in someone's dying hours and purposefully seeking to bring about death. Intentionality matters.

At the beginning and the ending of life, and at every point in between, as a Christian I affirm in wonder and gratitude that all human lives belong to God, and that every human life is to be treated with reverence and awe as an image of his glory and a temple of his spirit. Many people of other faiths or beliefs would share in that view, even if expressed in different language. In public as in private we must be free to bear witness to our strongest convictions; it is chilling to hear calls to exclude people from bringing their religiously grounded values to the debate because they are not 'neutral.' Faith or belief is not like a coat to be taken off and left at the door as we enter into the house of public debate.

Finally, at the most practical and immediate level, the Assisted Dying Bill currently before Parliament is good neither in content nor timing. The safeguards it stipulates are viewed by many as woefully inadequate and it seems to me quite extraordinary to be proposing a fully-funded suicide service when palliative care is dramatically under-resourced often left reliant on charitable resources, and when the NHS in general is under such strain.

So, the Lords will now engage with the Bill. Please pray for all members of the House of Lords, and particularly for the bishops who sit there, as we deliberate. Please also pray for debate about disabled people's provision. Every day the chamber begins its business with prayers led by one of the bishops. On the last day of each week these include Psalm 121. I put my hope in the final words of that psalm: 'The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.'

+Michael

Week Beginning 10th August 2025

Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary: Issue 277

We pray for the implementation of our diocesan strategy 'Seeking the Kingdom', within the context of the varied roles and ministries across the Diocese. As 'People of Hope,' we remember those impacted by natural disasters; those in Ukraine suffering grievously and we pray for the people & leaders of Russia; and for a lasting peace for the people of Palestine, Iran, Israel and the wider Middle East.

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Sunday 10th August: *(Laurence, Deacon at Rome, Martyr, 258)*

On St Bertelin's day, we pray for the one church in the diocese dedicated to him, in the town of Stafford. So too we pray for the church of Holy Cross Ilam, where his remains are buried and a Well bearing his name lies in the grounds. We pray for your hand of blessing to rest on both of these churches and the communities they serve. We also pray for Holy Cross' neighbour in the diocese's Dovedale House and their ongoing ministry. Today we also pray for the licensing of Revd Merry Smith at St Chad's Pattingham. We pray for constructive relationships between the church and the local community as Merry commits to her role of servant leadership.

Monday 11th: *(Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Minoresses (Poor Clares), 1253. John Henry Newman, Priest, Tractarian, 1890)*

We pray for Craig Newton and the ongoing ministry of Shallowford House on his first day as its new Director. Also, with one of the Communities of Poor Clare's located in Ellesmere, we lift before you not just their ministry but also the town in North Shropshire that hosts them and its church of St Mary's. Lord please bless and guide their vicar the Revd Pat Hawkins and the leadership in that place, towards an ever-closer walk with you.

Tuesday 12th:

We start a series of prayers for Trysull Deanery by praying for all for parishes in the deanery who are in interregnum; may God grant them all His guiding light to discern their path, the strength, courage and patience to carry on God's work, whilst waiting for the right time for the right priest to arrive. We thank you that the vacancy in Pattingham has come to an end this week and that the one in Perton will soon. We also give thanks for all the clergy in the deanery working so hard to lead us, offering support, guidance and prayer for churches waiting for a priest.

Wednesday 13th: *(Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, Teacher of the Faith, 1667*

Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910. Octavia Hill, Social Reformer, 1912)

On the day we remember Florence Nightingale, a prayer for health professionals from Common Worship:

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his name to the suffering and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Thursday 14th: *(Maximilian Kolbe, Friar, Martyr, 1941)*

Today we pray for our young people who have or will shortly be receiving their A-Level and other results and making decisions about what to do next in their lives. Please Lord, help bring hope where there may be disappointment, clarity where there may be uncertainty, and direction where there may be confusion; and we thank you for those who have received the results they are looking for.

Friday 15th: *(The Blessed Virgin Mary)*

Lord, as today we remember your earthly Mother, we lift before you all of our churches who bear her name; both the Parish and Tynings Lane Churches in Aldridge, Astley, Berkamsytch, Bilston, Blymhill. Bradeley, Brewood, Broughton, Bucknall, Bushbury, Calton, Canwell, Cauldon, Castle Church, Checkley, Colton, Dudleston, Dunstall, Eaton Constantine, Edstaston, Ellenhall, Ellesmere, Enville, Gratwich, Hales, High Offley, Hordley, Ingestre, Ketley, Kinnerley, Knockin, Knutton, Leighton, Longton, Market Drayton, Moreton, Mucklestone, Rolleston, Selattyn, Sharesill, Sheriffhales, Shawbury, Shrawardine, Stafford, Stanton, Stretton, Sutton Maddock, Swynnerton, Trentham, Tutbury, Uttoxeter, Weeford, Wheaton Aston, Whitmore, Whixall, and Wombridge. We pray for your hand of blessing to rest on each of these churches and their communities.

Saturday 16th:

We continue to pray for Trysull Deanery, and, while there staff and children may currently be on holiday, we specifically lift before you each of the church schools in the deanery; the primary schools and academies of Bilbrook, Corbett, Pattingham, Pendeford, Penn, Swindon, Tettenhall Regis, Tettenhall Wood both Infants and Juniors, Trysull, and Wombourne; and also the secondary St Regis Academy. Please may your hand rest upon the staff and volunteers who work in any of these schools in whatever role; and for all the children and their families who are part of them.

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For prayer resources for the worldwide church see the Anglican cycle of prayer: anglicancommunion.org/resources/prayer.aspx

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Sunday 17th August:

We lift before you today's licensing of Revd Amanda Mallen as the Team Vicar of Lower Farm The Holy Ascension and Mossley St Thomas, both in Bloxwich parish in Walsall deanery. We thank you for her prior ministry as a curate in this place and pray that the relationships that she has already built up will help her flourish in this new role.

Monday 18th:

Lord, we continue to pray for Trysull Deanery and the neighbouring parishes of Penn and Penn Fields. We pray for the Penn churches of St Bart's and St Anne's, and the Penn Fields churches of St Philip's and St Aidan's, all in vacancy; that the right people will be attracted to those posts and appointed. So too we pray for St Joseph's in Merry Hill as their vicar Joshua Blunt prepares to move on in September. We pray for him and his family as he embarks on a new ministry in Farnborough. We pray for the churchwardens and those churches in vacancy in the deanery.

Tuesday 19th:

On World Humanitarian Day we pray for all those working amongst those in dire need. We thank you for the courage of those who put themselves in danger to try to serve those who most need help and pray for their protection. Lord, please help us to recognise those situations which leave people vulnerable, challenge the people that create such situations, and support those people who work to alleviate them.

Wednesday 20th:

(Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, Teacher of the Faith, 1153

William and Catherine Booth, Founders of the Salvation Army, 1912 and 1890)

One of the Salvation Army's Morning Prayers from 'Family Prayers and Graces':

God, help us to enjoy the life we are living now.

Even when things are tough, remind us of all the good things we often overlook.

Help us to be happy with what we have.

Forgive us when we compare ourselves to others, and help us to understand that you love us just as we are and right where we are.

Help us to put our trust in you.

In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Thursday 21st:

Today we pray for our young people who have or will soon be receiving their GCSE and other results today.

Please bring hope in whatever may be the next steps in their life journeys, and guide us as to how best we may be able to support those we know and love as they take those next steps.

Friday 22nd:

As we step into the Bank Holiday weekend, we continue our prayers for Trysull deanery by praying for all the ordained and lay leaders both there and beyond that they may have been able to, or soon will, take some time out to rest and renewal. We think too of all our children and young people as they approach the end of their school holidays, and lift them before you as they prepare to start new years in new classes or even new schools.

Saturday 23rd:

We conclude our prayers for Trysull Deanery by praying for the farming community in that deanery and beyond. We thank you for the blessing of dry weather and remember their busy time ahead of harvesting and storing their crops.

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