

May 2026

PARISH MAGAZINE



Pentecost

Sunday 24th May

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and Christchurch, Rhydycroesau **50p**



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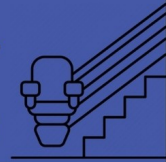
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Rosemary Davies

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Tel: 653598

Tel: 653316

Tel: 676450

Tel: 07813757498

Parochial Church Councils

S Oswald's: Hon Secretary: Ms Carron Boulton

Hon Treasurer: Mr Paul Evison

Tel: 652861

Tel: 653315

Christchurch: Hon Secretary:

Hon Treasurer:

Director of Music

S Oswald's: Mrs Samantha Lewis-Widnall

Email: samanthalewiswidnall@gmail.com

Organist:

St Oswald's: Josephine Sands email: joasands@hotmail.co.uk.

Christchurch:

Parish Office

S Oswald's: Church Street, Oswestry SY11 2SY.

Tel: 652861

Parish Administrator: Ms Carron Boulton

email: stoswald.office@gmail.com

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Dear friends,

Doing the right thing is an urgent question for our time. As I write, many parts of the Middle East are in flames because of war, not to mention the ongoing conflicts in other parts of the world. Politicians must consider not only practical questions but moral ones too in the decisions they make in response.

Moral questions particularly concern us as Christians. We are under the lordship of Jesus Christ and are keen to imitate him and follow his teaching as much as possible. Asking the question WWJD (what would Jesus do?) has guided Christians for generations. Christians have also sought happy and harmonious societies, consistent with the view that God loves the whole of humanity. So, the intercessory prayer in the Book of Common prayer communion service is that under our rulers we may be 'godly and quietly governed'

Making the right moral choices, both for ourselves, and for the good of wider society, has also concerned those of other religions and none. Philosophers have historically come up with 3 different approaches:

1. *Utilitarianism* seeks an approach that makes the greatest number of people happy for the greatest period. The English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) proposed that beggars should be forcibly taken from the streets into the workhouse. This would remove the pain of sympathy from the compassionate passer-by and the pain of disgust from the callous. The beggars would be made to work for their keep, reducing the burden on the taxpayer and improving their lives by helping them to become productive and responsible members of society. Everyone wins, he claimed. Thankfully, the Government never took up his suggestion.
2. *Libertarianism* seeks an approach that enhances individual freedom to the greatest degree. Being free to do what you like provided it doesn't hurt others sounds great, but it has a dark side. Libertarians oppose measures that tax the rich to help the poor. They argue: 'Why should a government take money that you have legitimately earned to give to someone else? It impinges on their freedom and disincentivises hard work and enterprise. Yes, the poor may need it more, but where will it all end? Should one of your healthy kidneys be forcibly removed to give to someone in kidney failure because they need it more?'
3. *The virtue approach*, favoured by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) say that we should make decisions which turn us into better people. Religious communities and traditional

societies have favoured this approach, particularly if they follow a holy book supposedly containing divine instructions telling us how to be good. Saudi Arabia has a religious police force 'for the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice' upholding strict Islamic law. Other religions, including our own, have had similar forces over the centuries. The problems with this approach are twofold: a) the most powerful have historically tended to decide what is virtuous, often to suit themselves, and b) certain groups find themselves less able to adhere to these virtues as a result of innate properties. This leads to 'in' and 'out' groups of people who find themselves favoured or victimised as an accident of birth. The 'out' groups have often been those of other religions or beliefs, other races and nationalities, gay and lesbian people, and in many cases, women. Sadly, some parts of the Anglican Communion will never accept our new Archbishop of Canterbury because she happens to have been born into the wrong sex.

All three traditional approaches to moral decision making have their own logic but also their own shortcomings, particularly in the way they create winners and losers. So, what should our approach be? Here's what I suggest, though I recognise others may disagree:

1. Take knowledge and discovery into account. Each generation discovers new things that impact our beliefs and moral decision making. For example, we found comparatively recently in the course of human history that males and females are genetically the same apart from one chromosome. Perhaps that should tell us something when it comes to discrimination between the sexes.
2. Ask what is right for today. The Bible contains much helpful wisdom on how to live a good life and create a harmonious society. But some of its teaching I regard as immoral. This includes its tolerance of slavery, its violent intolerance to those who follow other religions, and its attitude towards gays and women. Some dismiss progressive morality as wishy-washy adherence to fashionable thinking. I would argue that the reality of life in a fast-changing world with rapidly growing human knowledge throws up many grey areas. A mature approach demands that we grapple with these.
3. Follow the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. These remain the best example of how to live. We don't have a perfect picture of him, of course: the gospel writers were fallible humans like the rest of us and wrote with their own biases. And the society to which Jesus ministered was very different to our own. But provided we also bear that in mind, along with 1) and 2) above,

his life of compassion, healing and forgiveness is the inspiration we need to live a life to the glory of God and for the good of the world he loves.

Finally - pray. Prayer before making our own moral choices allows that vital space for reflection. Pray too for our politicians, our spiritual leaders, and those who shape our society today. They need all the wisdom they can get to make the right moral decisions in a fast-changing world.

Adrian Bailey

NEWS FROM YOUR PCC

The ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING will take place on **Monday 18th May 2026 at 7 pm in the Parish Centre.**

Now is the time to prayerfully consider whether you could offer yourself for ELECTION to the Offices of CHURCH WARDEN (4) elected annually. This year the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL will also elect Three new members for three years.

These representatives have to be elected at the Annual Parochial Meeting,

QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONS TO BE ELECTED: CRR M8

(1) A person is qualified for election as a parochial representative of the laity to the deanery synod or the PCC under Rule M6(1) (a) or (b) if:

- a) the person is aged 16 or over
- b) he or she is an actual communicant, and
- c) his or her name is on the roll of the parish and, unless he or she is aged under 18 at the date of the election, has been on the roll for at least the preceding six months.

(2) But if the person has his or her name on the roll of more than one parish, he or she must choose one of the parishes concerned for the purpose of qualifying for election as a parochial representative of the laity to the deanery synod.

(3) A person may not be nominated for election under Rule (M6(1) (a) or (b) unless -

- (a) The person has indicated his or her consent to serve, or
- (b) There is in the opinion of the meeting, sufficient evidence of his or her willingness to serve.

Disqualifications

(a) a person is disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected from serving as a member of a PCC if the person has been disqualified from holding office under section 10(6) of the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 (breakdown of pastoral relationships).

(b) to serve on the parochial church council if he or she is disqualified from being a charity trustee under the Charities Act 2011.

You will find details of the elections on the board by the South door together with nomination papers from Mid April.

All papers have to be in to the Secretary (Carron Boulton) BEFORE the meeting on 18th May 2026. Email: Carron at: stoswald.office@gmail.com.

Please keep the Parochial Church Council in your prayers.

Carron Boulton

ELECTORAL ROLL 2026

The Roll will be on display on the table by the main (south) door from **19th April until 3rd May**. It will then be revised for any changes, additions or errors. It will exclude telephone numbers.

If you are not on the Roll and are in any doubt as to whether you are eligible (eligibility details are on the application form), please have a word with me or one of the churchwardens.

Andrew Clarke
Electoral Roll Officer
01691 659340

Email acsclarke@yahoo.com

SWIMATHON

My wife Heather has swam 200 lengths in March to raise money for Marie Curie. £450 was raised for the charity.

Thank you for all the donations.

Haydn Jones

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH,
CRIGGION**

You are invited to join us for

SPRING SING

*an evening of seasonal hymns
and music followed by light
refreshments in church*

*Guest organist –
Revd Philip Harratt*

**SUNDAY, MAY 3rd
at 6.00pm**

retiring collection

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – 274 STANLEY LEIGHTON, M.P. AND MUCH ELSE BESIDES

In recent weeks and months, in both my researches on our church history, and on other matters of our local history, Stanley Leighton's name has cropped up on many occasions.

Regular readers of this column may recall the controversy over the gravestones which formerly formed much of the floor of the church, both nave and chancel, during the restorations of 1872/74, over plans simply to bury the old stones beneath the new church floor. Stanley Leighton argued against this approach, produced a detailed listing of the various gravestones (so that a record survives) and was instrumental in the removal of many of these stones to the church tower.

And readers will know of the work now underway to preserve Llwyd Mansion, the fine half-timbered building at the foot of Bailey Street, for the future. Now in the ownership of Oswestry Town Council, in 1875 the building was acquired by Stanley Leighton who was concerned for the future of the building, with its gables extending out over the street, knowing the Town Council's desire to widen both Cross Street and Bailey Street. Leighton commissioned local builders to restore the building, and then let it out as two shop units with living accommodation above. It has been fascinating being able to delve ever more closely into the history of this building, its owners and its occupants.

Discussions on both subjects – relating to the church monuments, and to Llwyd Mansion – have revealed that Stanley Leighton, his life and his legacy, may not be as widely known in Oswestry and district as he deserves to be. People may know that he lived at Sweeney Hall; that he was Member of Parliament for Oswestry from 1876 to his death in 1901; they may have spotted his grave, with its Celtic cross, in our churchyard close to the Broad Walk. They may be aware of his abilities as an artist, having come across his sketches of the country houses of Shropshire, many of which feature in Gareth Williams' great work on the subject¹. Or, like me, they may see him as one of our notable local historians, from his contributions to the 'Bye-Gones' column in the *Advertiser*, his work on Oswestry's corporation records², his championing of the work of the Shropshire Parish Register Society, or from his collection of valuable papers on Oswestry's history including many letters of Edward Lloyd of Llanforda (now at the National Library of Wales)³.

¹ *The country houses of Shropshire* (2021)

² Published in the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society* between 1879 and 1883, and then in a single volume by Woodall & Co. of Oswestry

³ Sweeney Hall Estate Records, A3-7, Edward Lloyd's letters and memoranda, 1662-1681

But, as a TV advertisement might say, there is more, much else besides. His sketches of Shropshire country houses are very useful, and very skilfully drawn. His own background – born in 1837, the son of Sir Baldwin Leighton of Loton Park, Alberbury, and his wife Mary Parker⁴; married to Jessie Marie Williams-Wynn – would doubtless have been helpful to him as he travelled around Shropshire, and elsewhere, visiting and sketching so many houses, these sketches now preserved in nine bound volumes at Shropshire Archives⁵. His premature death, aged 63, in 1901, meant that only one volume of these sketches was published commercially as *Shropshire houses past and present*; more had been planned.

As the son of a baronet, owner of land and property, and a Member of Parliament, the subject matter for these sketches might not be entirely surprising. But Leighton's interests went much wider – covering interesting old buildings (including Llwyd Mansion, our Lych Gate and the Broad Walk gates), but extending to include the buildings on the Sweeney estate, with a further three volumes of sketches of farm buildings, the houses of his farm and estate workers, and the Sweeney estate's properties in Oswestry including much of Lower Brook Street⁶. These, formerly held at Oswestry Library, are much less well known; 12 sketches were produced by the County Library in 1973 and sold as the 'Sweeney Prints', but the three volumes include in total well over 150 sketches. Drawn – like his country houses – between the 1870s and 1901, these are arguably an even more valuable resource, a record of the homes of many local, working people of the time.

Sketches of country houses, sketches of farm cottages, sketches of Shropshire, but also sketches and watercolours from many parts of the world. In his younger days, before he inherited the Sweeney estate in 1869 (settling there in 1871) and was married in 1873, Leighton had trained as a barrister, and later had travelled widely, in 1868 journeying to India, continuing to (what was then) Ceylon, before arriving in Australia in March 1869.

He spent six months in Australia, spending time in many of the principal towns and cities, visiting their civic buildings, also the houses of the landowners and what he called the 'squattages', the "up-country stations where the sheep farmers live". His Australian journals containing numerous sketches and watercolours, and photographs, were presented to the National Library of Australia in 1954 by Leighton's daughter

⁴ She inherited the Sweeney estate on the death of her brother the Rev. John Parker (rector of Llanyblodwel)

⁵ Shropshire Archives, 6805/1-9

⁶ Shropshire Archives, 7634/1/2-4

Rachel⁷, and are seen as an important visual record of life in Australia in mid-Victorian times. Later, whilst an M.P., he also visited South Africa in 1889 and the West Indies in the early 1890s.

I will return to Stanley Leighton next month, looking at his other interests, including education and the church. But, for now, one last thing: in 1896, his portrait was painted by the artist Sir John Everett Millais: it was one of Millais' last works, and was a gift to Leighton from his friends and constituents.

John Pryce-Jones

⁷ Extracts including many of his sketches are available online: see www.nla.gov.au. His journals from India and Ceylon were presented to the India Office Library (now part of the British Library) in 1953

PRAYING FOR OUR WORLD



The next meeting is May 6 at 7 p.m. in the Church Reading Area.

For people who wish to come in and pray during the day, prayer resources can be found in St. George's Chapel.

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ST. OSWALD'S LADIES GROUP

St. Oswald's Ladies Group met in the Parish Centre for their monthly meeting. June welcomed everyone and led us in prayer. Pip Machin was our speaker who is the Community fundraising executive for Shropshire for the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.



There are twenty one Air Ambulance services within the UK and they cover the largest area, serving six million people and are the second oldest. Since 1991 they have been to over 80,000 missions making them one of the busiest air ambulance services in the UK. They operate from strategically located regional airbases at Cosford in Shropshire, Strensham on the Worcestershire/Gloucestershire border and Tatenhill in Staffordshire. Each aircraft carries a crew comprising a pilot, two paramedics or a paramedic and flight doctor, plus full life-support medical equipment. Three rapid response vehicles are deployed when the helicopters are unable to fly, due to bad weather for example. The Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is the only operational helicopter-led emergency medical service in Shropshire providing pre-hospital care and life-saving intervention. It costs over £16 million each year to run their lifesaving service. As they receive no funding from the Government, NHS or National Lottery to fund their daily missions they are solely reliant on the good nature of the communities they serve. The charity also provides secondary cover to surrounding areas, such as Warwickshire and Mid Wales.

From January 2024, their pre-hospital lifesaving service has been trialling a new clinical operating model, which sees their crew now responding on a 24/7 basis.

The charity has a fleet of critical care cars, which operates between 7pm until 8am by critical care paramedics. Every second counts in an emergency and on average, their crew arrive on scene within ten minutes, whether by air ambulance or in one of their critical care cars. The charity responds to some of the most traumatic incidents including cardiac arrests, road traffic collisions and sports injuries. The aircraft reaches remote locations to attend to patients unreachable by land ambulance.

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is set to unveil Mission Critical, a powerful new public exhibition showcasing thought-provoking stories from former patients, the charity's critical care crews, and the dedicated supporters who help keep its lifesaving service flying.

The exhibition will officially launch in Birmingham city centre's Chamberlain Square on Friday 10th April 2026.

The talk was greatly enjoyed by all our members.

Our next meeting will be on Monday May 11th at 2.30 p.m. in the Parish Centre when we welcome Ruth Allen as our speaker. Ruth will speak to us about Hearing Dogs for deaf people.

If you would like further details about our Group please do not hesitate to speak to me in Church.

Ann Sagar
Honorary Secretary

CONFIRMATION - SUNDAY, 31ST MAY

The Bishop of Shrewsbury will be presiding at the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday 31st May.

Anyone wishing to be confirmed please contact Muriel Jones, Church Warden.

BONUS BALL

Congratulations to the March winners of the weekly Lotto Bonus Ball draw who will each have received £29. The winners were:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ball Number</u>	<u>Winner</u>
7 Mar	19	Bill Bowen RIP
14 Mar	59	Judi Neale
21 Mar	46	Rachel Lee
28 Mar	18	Bill Bowen RIP

The Bonus Ball year started at the beginning of March. The cost of taking part is £13/quarter which is collected either annually, half yearly or quarterly.

If you would like to join the St Oswald Bonus Ball, please let me know.

Paul Crosby
658606

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A 5-Day Journey of Reflection, Community, and Faith May 2026

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THE JOURNEY

I am undertaking a five-day walking pilgrimage through historic landscapes, West Pennine villages, and scenic canals, culminating in arrival at Manchester Cathedral.

- **Day 1** Whalley to Great Harwood (Woods & Fields)
- **Day 2** Great Harwood to Helmshore (Canalside & Villages)
- **Day 3** Helmshore to Hawkshaw (Moorland & Heritage)
- **Day 4** Hawkshaw to Bury (Greenway Corridor)
- **Day 5** Bury to Manchester Cathedral (City Arrival)

SUPPORT THE CAUSE

This is a **Sponsored Pilgrimage**. All funds raised will go towards **St Oswald's Church, Oswestry**

- Please sponsor me, Sally Wright, by using the sponsor form on the table at the back of the church.

"A journey of thirty six miles begins with a single step."

HAPPY TRINITY TERM!

I do hope you all had a joyful and refreshing Easter, filled with wonderful gatherings, good food, and time spent with those you love. As we begin this new term, I want to take a moment to say how grateful I am for such a warm welcome during my first months here. Your support, encouragement, and thoughtful feedback have meant a great deal to me, and have made this first term both enjoyable and rewarding.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Jo and the choir for their dedication and hard work throughout the term. I am sure you will all agree that they have been sounding absolutely fabulous. Their commitment week by week, particularly through the demands of Holy Week and Easter, has been truly commendable.

In addition, my thanks go to the St. Oswald's Singers, who so kindly stepped in during the choir's holiday. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a capable and generous group to "take the baton" when needed. Even from afar, I was able to listen in, and it was a real pleasure to hear how beautifully you supported the services.

CHANGE AND THE WAR OF HYMNS!

As we move into Trinity Term, I would like to briefly touch on the subject of change. Music in church is something deeply rooted in tradition, and for many of us, particular hymns, psalms, and settings carry strong personal and spiritual significance. At the same time, the life of a church is not static, and part of my role is to gently explore how we can continue to grow musically—honouring what we cherish, while also being open to new possibilities.

I know that changes, even small ones, can sometimes feel unfamiliar. In particular, I have had a few conversations about the wording of certain psalms and hymns. These texts can be powerful, poetic, and occasionally challenging. It is worth remembering that they come to us from different times and contexts, and part of our engagement with them is to reflect on what they mean for us today. I completely understand the frustration when words are altered from what we know as the "original"—I really do. Whilst I cannot control the spoken texts used in services, I do have more influence over what we sing.

My aim is always to approach this thoughtfully and sensitively—retaining the richness of our musical heritage while ensuring that what we sing remains meaningful and accessible to our congregation. I am always very

happy to hear your thoughts, and I am grateful for the openness with which these conversations have already begun.

PSALMS AND HYMNS

The psalms we have been using are from a more modern text, simply to allow greater ease of reading and understanding. As with everything, generations change, and we are increasingly aware that younger people often engage differently—their concentration and ability to absorb dense or unfamiliar language can be more limited, particularly after covid. These updated texts aim to make the Bible and the message of Jesus more accessible, while still holding onto the heart of the tradition. That said, this does not mean we dismiss the richness of the older texts—far from it. Rather, we are trying to hold both together. I hope you can be patient, open-minded, and willing to come on this journey with us.

When it comes to hymns—well, they really can start a war! You all have wonderfully diverse tastes, which is a real strength of our congregation. However, it does mean I won't always be able to please everyone. We are also somewhat limited by the hymn books we have, unless we resort to a great deal of photocopying.

One possible alternative is to make more use of the projector screen. This may suit some, but it is not accessible for everyone, particularly those with visual impairments, so we will need to approach this carefully. Over the coming months, there will be some trial and error as we find the right balance.

You may have noticed that I have been trying to vary our hymn choices, including introducing more modern hymns, particularly on the first Sunday of the month. This is still very much a work in progress, and I appreciate your patience. For those who find new hymns or settings unfamiliar, we do run workshops at the centre on agreed dates. If you would like to learn, I warmly encourage you to come along—we always finish with some food and a chat, making it a relaxed and enjoyable afternoon.

ADOPT A CHORISTER

We are still raising funds for this coming summer. Although we only have one chorister going this year, any contribution, no matter how small, would be very gratefully received. If you would like to support, please make a cheque payable to St. Oswald's PCC and write "Adopt a Chorister" on the back.

NEWS OF THE CHOIR

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Chelsea Morris as Choral Music Assistant. Chelsea will oversee rehearsals and services in my absence, as well as assisting with planning and general organisation. Her first service conducting will be Ascension on Thursday 14th May—please do come along and show your support.

Looking ahead, there is much to enjoy this term, and I am excited about the music we will continue to share together. Thank you, as ever, for your support, and for being such an important part of our musical life.

BILL BOWEN

Lastly, as a choir, we would like to express our deepest condolences to the family of Bill Bowen. He was such a lovely man, who always supported the choir as well as myself whilst I was growing up. The choir and myself are honoured to be able to sing for him one last time, at his funeral on Tuesday 5th May at midday. God bless you, Bill

With warmest wishes,

Samantha Lewis-Widnall
Director of Music
St Oswald's Parish Church, Oswestry

MOTHERS` UNION FELLOWSHIP GROUP

We had a very enjoyable and interesting talk, at our April meeting from Rosie Radford on her year as our Oswestry Mayor, which will finish in May.

Our May meeting has been transferred to Wednesday May 20th when we will go to Selattyn for a Deanery meeting.

There will be no meeting in June but the July meeting will be as usual.

In August we will be at Welsh Frankton for a 150 year celebration of the founding of The Mothers` Union.

Pam Musson

Services at S. Oswald's

May 3 <i>Easter 5</i>	08:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:00 Choral Evensong
May 10 <i>Easter 6</i>	10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:00 Evening Prayer
Thursday May 14 <i>Ascension Day</i>	10:30 Eucharist BCP 19:00 Festival Eucharist
May 17 <i>Easter 7</i> <i>Sunday after</i> <i>Ascension Day</i>	08:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:00 Choral Evensong
May 24 <i>Pentecost</i>	10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:00 Reflective Space
May 31 <i>Trinity</i>	10:30 Parish Eucharist and Confirmation with The Rt Revd Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury
<i>Every Thursday</i>	10.30 Holy Communion (BCP)

MORNING PRAYER is streamed online through the church Facebook page at 9 o'clock on Wednesday and Friday. Sunday worship is on the YouTube page.

Enquires for Baptisms, Marriages etc should be made to the Parish Office. Please email the Parish Administrator (stoswald.office@gmail.com) for an appointment.

Services at Rhydycroesau

<i>First Sunday</i> May 3	09:30 All Age Service
<i>Easter 6</i> May 10	09:30 Holy Communion
<i>Pentecost</i> May 24	09:30 Holy Communion



Parish Church of St. Oswald, King & Martyr
MUSIC LIST - MAY 2026

Sunday 3rd May **Easter 5**

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: MacMillan - St. Anne's Mass

Anthems: The Call - Vaughan Williams

6.00pm Choral Evensong

Introit: Hail Gladdening light - Stainer

Responses: Rose

Setting: Stanford in Bb

Anthem: Greater love hath no man - Ireland

Sunday 10th May **Easter 6**

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: Mathias - Communion Service in C

Anthems: If ye love me - Tallis

Thursday 14th May **Ascension**

7.00pm Festival Eucharist

Setting: Darke in F

Anthems: God be in my head - Stainer

Sunday 17th May **Easter 7**

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: Thorne - Mass of St. Thomas

Anthem: A song for Ezekiel - Greenhow

6.00pm Choral Evensong

Introit: O taste and see - Vaughan Williams

Responses: Sumsion

Setting: Stanford in C

Anthem: O clap your hands - Vaughan Williams

Sunday 24th May **Pentecost (St. Oswalds Singers)**

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: Addington - Shephard

Anthems: O rest in the Lord - Mendelssohn's Elijah

Sunday 31st May **Trinity**

10.30am Parish Eucharist with confirmation

Setting: Archer - St. Albans service

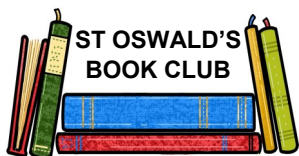
Anthems: Trinity Blessing - Rizza



CALENDAR FOR MAY 2026



Tuesday 5	1030— 1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 6	0830— 0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1900 <i>Praying for Our World</i> — Reading Area
	1915 Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Monday 11	1000 Clergy Eucharist and Meeting
	1430 Ladies Group—Parish Centre
Tuesday 12	1030— 1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 13	0830— 0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1915 Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Monday 18	1900 Annual Parochial Church Meeting—Parish Centre
Tuesday 19	All Day Marches School Concert
	1030— 1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 20	0830— 0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1415 Mothers' Union Fellowship Group—Deanery meeting in Selattyn
	1915 Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Tuesday 26	1030— 1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre



**ST OSWALD'S
BOOK CLUB**

St Oswald's Book Club is taking a post Easter break and will resume in June. Please check St Oswald's website and weekly pew sheet for information on dates and books. All are welcome to join us for coffee and cake and lively discussion! We look forward to seeing you there.



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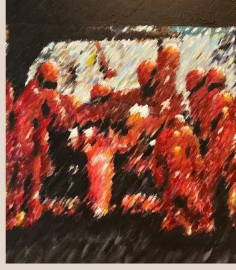
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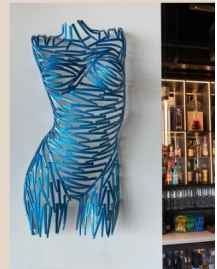
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Visions, goals, strategies: they're key to helping our churches move together into the future, to God's glory. These words can be a distraction, but a vision is just how and where we want to be in the future, goals are just waypoints: things we want to see on our journey: they may lie ahead or we may have passed them, reassured that we are on track. Strategy is just the plan or the map we follow. We shouldn't get bamboozled by words.

Money can also bamboozle us. Strategies provide choices about the future we want to live in: money provides opportunities to make choices. Sometimes money's presence or absence appears to be the deciding factor, or we make it that, not God or us together with God.

When it comes to money, the anxieties are often to do with not knowing what to do with it or not knowing where to find it. There is often the sense that 'if only' we had more, 'we could....' Sometimes, an unexpected gift or legacy places the opposite problem: 'what we could do now, so many possibilities.' We seem often to be besieged with opportunities either those we can't afford or those we can't choose between.

Opportunities and choices together give us a future when yielded to God. They give us the courage to work with what we have, not what we hope for, because we recognise that it is God's resource we are using not our own and that he has provided, is providing and will provide what we need to move forward.

So a strategy is something that uses God-given talents and God-given resources to bring new life. Money too, is a God given resource that can help create opportunities to be living bread and water to others. Money and strategy have the power to confound or to bless. The way to demystify both is to put them together, prayerfully and with eyes open.

The opportunity before us all, in Lichfield Diocese now, is to embark on a journey together: the Seeking the Kingdom journey where we have chosen to prefer growth to decline and recognised that we can grow into the future through feeding our faith, supporting our ministry and building up our parishes and communities. We can grow by being better at being church, together.

These choices are the choices before us in Seeking the Kingdom, supported in the consultations across the four episcopal areas last autumn. Our opportunity, simply put, is to express the values of God's Kingdom in our churches, in our communities and in our lives so that we can bring the life in all its fullness that Jesus Christ came to give us and so that we can become his hands, feet and body.

As we embark on a shared path, we stop spending our resources on distractions and may find we have enough to put towards the task at hand: inhabiting the future that God calls us into: his Kingdom.



David Wright is Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

For more on our strategy, Seeking the Kingdom visit: www.lichfield.anglican.org/our-vision

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A GRAND DAY OUT: BELL RINGERS, KNITTED MICE & SIZZLING FAJITAS

**BY SOMEONE WHO NOW APPRECIATES JUST HOW HEAVY
A BACK BELL REALLY IS**

If you happened to be wandering around North Wales on Saturday 21st March and thought you heard an unusual amount of enthusiastic clanging, that was us—the Oswestry and St Martins ringers—embarking on a fourtower adventure. Think of it as a pub lunch, but with more rope handling and fewer regrets.

Chirk: The Refurbished Ring That Refused to Disappoint

We began at St Mary's, Chirk, where the recently refurbished ring of eight practically sparkled with pride. They rang beautifully, and for once no one pretended they “meant to do that” after an unexpected crunch. A strong start.

Ruabon: Six Bells, Zero Time to Breathe

Next stop: St Mary's, Ruabon. Their six bells—originally cast in 1768 and spruced up in 1998—were in fine voice. With so many ringers eager to get their hands on a rope, the session felt like speeddating for bell enthusiasts. Blink and you'd missed your turn, but everyone left smiling.

Wrexham: St Giles and the Knitted Mice

Then came St Giles, Wrexham, where some of our ringers faced the thrilling challenge of ringing more than eight bells for the first time. They rose to the occasion magnificently, supervised by the tower's resident knitted mice, who—despite their lack of vocal cords—judged us silently but firmly.

Helping to ring up one of the back bells reminded us all that bell ringing is basically a gym membership disguised as a hobby. Respect to the locals who do that every week without collapsing.

Lunch: The Buck Hotel, Bangor on Dee

By this point, we'd earned a rest, so we descended upon The Buck Hotel and nearly doubled the village population in one go as 20 of us sat down. Meals ranged from light bites to steaks, and two brave souls ordered the sizzling fajita platter. Delicious, yes. Sensible before more ringing? Absolutely not.

St Dunawd: History, Beauty & Ground Floor Ringing

Our final tower was St Dunawd, just across the road. Their six bells include four Abraham Rudhall II originals from 1727, plus later

additions from 1811 and 1865. All rung from the ground floor, which was a welcome relief for anyone still digesting their fajitas.

Sunshine, Good Company & a Hint for the Future

The weather was glorious, the ringing was joyful, and the food was excellent. Spirits were high, and the day reminded us why tower tours are such a highlight of the ringing calendar.

And so, with absolutely no subtlety whatsoever, we end with a gentle nudge to Brian and Tony to organise the next one. Preferably soon. Very soon.

Andrew Davies

Also, we have had number of notable “firsts” in the year of the centenary of the Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers especially amongst our newer ringers with new methods being tried and quarter peals rung. Four firsts for Matt and a 100th for Jan!

Sunday, 22 February 2026 in 46m (13–3–19 in F)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Matthew T Leak
- 2 Richard Major
- 3 Cordelia Warr (C)
- 4 Peter Neil
- 5 William A M Barter
- 6 Anthony J Freemont

First QP at 1st attempt - 1. Welcoming William. For Reflective Space.

Sunday, 22 March 2026 in 46m (13–3–19 in F)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Matthew T Leak
- 2 Richard Major
- 3 Peter Neil
- 4 William A M Barter
- 5 Chris W Hoare
- 6 Brian J Rothera (C)

First of minor - 1

Before the performance of Victoria's Requiem by the Scholars and Gentlemen

Sunday, 29 March 2026 in 49m (13–3–19 in F)

1320 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Brian J Rothera (C)
- 2 Matthew T Leak
- 3 William A M Barter
- 4 Peter Neil
- 5 Chris W Hoare
- 6 Richard Major

First inside - 2. For Reflective Space on Palm Sunday

Sunday, 12 April 2026 in 48m (13–3–19 in F)

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Jan Snowball
- 2 Cordelia Warr
- 3 Anthony J Freemont
- 4 Chris W Hoare
- 5 Peter Neil
- 6 William A M Barter
- 7 Brian J Rothera (C)
- 8 Matthew T Leak

For Evening Prayer.

100th quarter - 1 First as cover - 8.

Richard and Frances Major wish to be associated with this performance.

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HERE WE GO GATHERING NUTS IN MAY...

One of the joys of exploring a churchyard, chapel yard or cemetery can be the small, unobtrusive plants that you may find. Pignut is one of these. This plant has light, feathery leaves, looking like those found on a carrot top and you may find a near carpet of them in an old churchyard in the spring. It flowers in April and May, producing small, white flowers in clusters that are known as umbels. In fact, Pignut is a member of the umbellifer family, the same plant family as the more familiar carrot, cow parsley and fennel, but unlike its relatives, it is small, the leaves low to the ground and the flower on an upright stem of about 30cm.

Pignut has several names referring to the dark brown tubers found on its roots. Ground-nut, Cat-nut, Earth-nut, Earth-chestnut and the less obvious Jog-journals. Pignuts were dug up and eaten raw or cooked, when they taste like parsnips.

Pignut is a plant of undisturbed, flowery grassland which is often found within burial grounds as burial grounds, unlike the surrounding landscape, have seen little change, consistent management and are relatively chemical free. Pignut is also found within woodland, in glades and sunnier spots. Again, burial grounds suit it well, having a mosaic light and shade creating different habitats.

So what of the nursery rhyme, *Here we go gathering nuts in May, on a cold and frosty morning?* Pignut leaves wither and disappear in late spring and, although the flowering stem with seedheads remains visible, the lack of leaves make Pignut plants hard to spot. The time of year to gather them is May, as opposed to other kinds of nut which are harvested in autumn. Another interpretation of the nursery rhyme is that it is a corruption of *Here we go gathering knots of May*, May being another name for Hawthorn. A knot is an old name for a bunch of flowers and Hawthorn flowers in April when frosts are more likely to occur so that makes sense of the *cold and frosty morning*.

We would love to know which churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries contain pignut, in part because this unobtrusive little plant is indicative of species-rich grassland, a habitat which has declined by a staggering 97% since the 1930s. Please take a photograph using the iNaturalist app if you are a smart phone user. If not, use a field guide to check the identification, then send us an email.

All the best,

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, harriet@cfga.org.uk,
www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code diomem22

The Summer term has begun, and I have had some exciting opportunities to share the love of Christ within the local schools.

At the end of April, I was able to provide prayer spaces to three of our local schools. These prayer spaces are a great opportunity for young people to engage in praying for themselves, others and our world. Please join us in praying for the children who took part in these events. Pray that they will continue to see the value in connecting with God through prayer.

May is a big month for schools as primary SATs, Secondary GCSEs and A level exams start. This can be an anxious time for many pupils, staff and families as they seek to support those taking the exams. I will be looking for opportunities to support and encourage all within the schools, and to be available to listen to those who are struggling.

This month I will be booking schools in for the It's Your Move transition to secondary school workshops, that will take place after half term. These are a great opportunity for the year 6 pupils to explore how God can help them as they move to a new school.

What's Happening in May

- Assemblies this month will focus on themes such as love, compassion, forgiveness, creativity and the life of Jesus.
- The Christian Unions will be focusing on Christian Characteristics and how we can reflect the fruit of the spirit in our lives.
- The Bible Comes to Life Exhibition. Taking place in Holy Trinity School and being organized by Holy Trinity Church, this exhibition will be an opportunity for many local schools to take part. Through interactive activities and interesting artifacts, children will be able to learn more about the events and people seen in the bible.

Please pray for

- SATs and GCSE's starting this month.
- That schools will want to book the It's your move workshops.
- Bible Comes to life Exhibition.

Regards

Jane Webber

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A prayer for the Middle East

Lord, we pray for the conflict in the Middle East, and how it is damaging the lives of so many millions of people. You, Lord, make wars cease to the end of the earth; You break bows, shatter spears, and burn shields with fire [Psalm 46:9]. Through Your Holy Spirit, move upon the leaders of the nations to de-escalate this crisis. We hear of wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6), but You Lord are our rock, our fortress and our deliverer. Our hope is in You. Let Your name be exalted among the nations; may You be exalted in the earth [Psalm 46:10]. *Kyrie eleison – Lord have mercy.*

Middle	D F E E E G O D M C W E	crisis
East	Y I Y A R P S U R A R I	many
Conflict	C R I S I S O S R O N R	Lives
Pray	R E T T A H S H C P L Y	millions
Damage	E R A I A I S K F E I K	Lord
War	M E T C I L F N O C V A	Our
Cease	M V I E A I H T R A E E	Rock
Earth	M I L L I O N S T U S R	Fortress
Break	R L D A M A G E R A B B	Deliverer
Bows	U E O D R S H I E L D S	Hope
Shatter	O D C E L E U C S W O B	Kyrie
Spears	Y O E S P E A R S O S M	in
Burn		You
Shields		mercy
Fire		

Solution on page 39

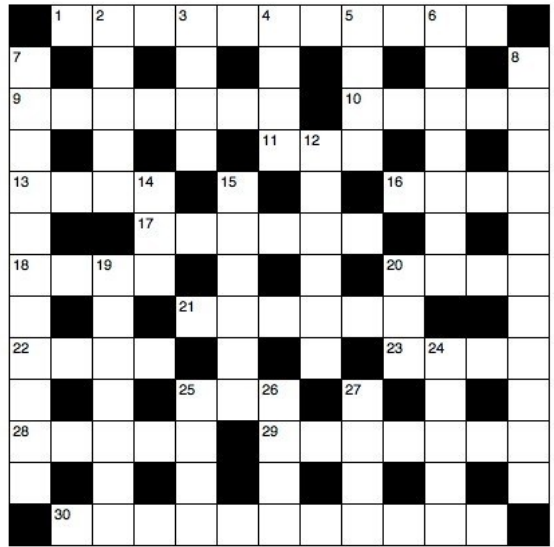
COFFEE ROTA FOR MAY

3	Jane Wilkinson	Val Hamer	Carol Burke
10	Judi Neale	Babs Bone	Elaine Leek
17	Hazel Pryce	Dilys Lloyd	Jane Mayne
24	Val Hamer	Glenda Evison	KayCole/Fiona Pearson
31	Ann Sagar	Dilys Lloyd	Olwen Phillips



Across

- 1 Overpowered
(Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 'The — are mantled with corn'
(Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 'Each man—a sword to his side'
(Exodus 32:27)(5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom
(Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
- 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins'
(James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke
(Acts 13:50) (6)
- 18 Burden (Luke 11:46) (4)
- 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us'
(Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign (Luke 23:38) (6)
- 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet'
(John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream
(Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has (anag.) (3)
- 28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, —sons'
(Genesis 10:1) (5)
- 29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and— awake'
(Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
- 30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains'
(2 Timothy 1:16) (11)



Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
- 3 'A bruised — He will not break'
(Matthew 12:20) (4)
- 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel'
(Luke 2:13) (4)
- 5 Slip (anag.) (4)
- 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life'
(Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
- 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
- 8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people'
(Galatians 6:10) (11)

- 12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
- 14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
- 15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on——!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
- 19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
- 20 'She began to——his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)
- 24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
- 25 'Give to everyone who——you' (Luke6:30) (4)
- 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my——come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
- 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

Sudoku

8			6	5			4	
				7	4	3	2	
	3		8		9		1	5
	4			1		2		
2		7				1		9
		8		6			7	
4	7		2		1		6	
	8	6	4	3				
	9			8	6			1

Easy

8				4				5
5		7			8		6	
	4			5			2	
					9	3		2
9				1				7
4		1	7					
	8			9			7	
	7		2			5		6
1				7				9

Medium

PUZ?LES

**Solutions
on page 39**



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Easy

8	2	1	6	5	3	9	4	7
6	5	9	1	7	4	3	2	8
7	3	4	8	2	9	6	1	5
5	4	3	9	1	7	2	8	6
2	6	7	5	4	8	1	3	9
9	1	8	3	6	2	5	7	4
4	7	5	2	9	1	8	6	3
1	8	6	4	3	5	7	9	2
3	9	2	7	8	6	4	5	1

Medium

8	9	2	1	4	6	7	3	5
5	1	7	3	2	8	9	6	4
6	4	3	9	5	7	8	2	1
7	5	8	4	6	9	3	1	2
9	3	6	8	1	2	4	5	7
4	2	1	7	3	5	6	9	8
2	8	5	6	9	4	1	7	3
3	7	9	2	8	1	5	4	6
1	6	4	5	7	3	2	8	9

PUBLICATION DETAILS FOR NEXT MONTH

Material required
SUNDAY, 17 MAY
 Make-up day for working party,
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Tuesday, 26 May

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