



Parish of Holy Cross Shrewsbury

E-Sheet 76

April 2026



60 YEARS OF SINGING WITH PASSION

It is always a privilege to host major concerts by local choirs. Saturday 21 March was no exception in that respect, although the audience spilling into the side aisles was unusual and wonderful to see. It was only fitting, though, as this was the sixtieth anniversary concert of The Phoenix Singers, who were keen to mark the occasion with a 'big one' - and they don't come much bigger than JS Bach's St John Passion.

What it takes to stage a concert such as this cannot be overstated. Not only do you need a very capable choir, professional orchestra on period instruments, 6 professional soloists, professional organist and of course conductor, you need all the organisation and rehearsal that goes with that, a huge financial commitment and a prayer or two that ticket sales will at least defray some of the cost. I don't know the sums but it did seem prayers were answered on Saturday.

Phoenix employed the excellent

services of Noxwode Baroque. So what are baroque or 'period' instruments? They can in some cases be ancient string and woodwind instruments made centuries ago but are more likely to be copies, made by highly-skilled specialists using rare timbers and ancient methods. Period instruments are usually tuned lower than modern concert pitch, in this case A=415 Hz rather than today's standardised A=440. That's because when Bach was writing in the early 18th Century, 415 or thereabouts was the norm. If you have an orchestra at 415 then the chamber organ needs to match - another expense but essential. I once sang in a Haydn concert in Bridgnorth where the band played at A=430 'classical pitch', which was rather pleasant.

Saturday's St John Passion was the final concert under the baton of David Thomas, who was recently appointed Organist of Exeter College, Oxford. Known to many from his years at Shrewsbury School, David leaves the choir both strong in number and in very fine form. His legacy will no doubt live on. The newly appointed director with the hard act to follow is Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, who will no doubt bring her own creativity to the post.

www.phoenixsingershshrewsbury.co.uk

<https://sierrafarquharwulff.com>

www.noxwode.com

NEW EVENING STEWARDS

We had a great turnout of willing stewards for St John's Passion. Sue Pearson, our volunteer coordinator, was one of them. She is an avid patron of the arts and in fact sang with Phoenix for 35 years! We also had two new stewards with us: Dave



Shrewsbury Abbey

Welcoming pilgrims since 1083

Holy Week at Shrewsbury Abbey

Palm Sunday with Procession of Palms - 29th March

11:00am - Choral Eucharist

3:00pm - Choral Evensong

Monday 30th March - 7:00pm Compline

Tuesday 31st March - 7:00pm Compline

Wednesday 1st April

12:00noon - Said Eucharist

7:30pm - Tenebrae

Maundy Thursday 2nd April - 7:30pm

Solemn Eucharist of the Lord's Supper with Mandatum and Procession to the altar of Repose.

Good Friday 3rd April - 12pm

Three Hours Devotion -

The Final hour - 2pm - The Good Friday Liturgy (Sung)

Holy Saturday 4th April - 8pm -

The Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday - 5th April

11:00am - Choral Eucharist

3:00pm - Solemn Choral Evensong



and Anne. They fitted in really well and have already signed up for more events.

Could you be a steward? Please consider it, not just in the evening but daytime too. A couple of our daytime stewards have had to give up recently for health reasons so we could really do with bolstering the team, especially with holidays not too far away. Please help if you can.

Steve

Starting at
10.30am at
St. Chad's
Car Park



**Good Friday
Walk of Witness**

Followed by refreshments at St. Alkmunds



NEW KEYS

The PCC has decided we should have new locks and therefore keys to the Abbey. These are on order and we will give as much notice as possible as to when the new locks are to be installed. All keys are high-security and numbered and keyholders will be required to sign for theirs. At the same time, please return any old Abbey door keys you may have. There are more out there than we can account for (one of the reasons for this watershed) and there's no stigma in returning more than one! Obviously your old key(s) won't work anyway.

STOP PRESS: New key handover is scheduled from Easter Sunday. Please call if you would like to arrange another time.

Steve

YOUNG TALENT IN THE ABBEY

The Abbey is for everyone to visit or perform in and it's very gratifying to welcome new talent, especially local talent. The Shrewsbury College English Bridge campus is one of relatively few colleges in the UK to offer Music A-level. That's impressive in itself. Not only that, there are over 30 students currently on the course! That's thanks to the leadership of Chris Lewis, Head of Music, and his dedicated staff, plus support from parents and the students themselves.



It has become a tradition for groups of students to perform lunchtime recitals in the Abbey. Twice a year It gives them the experience of playing in a big space and it really is worth hearing if you are able to. As something of a musician myself, I call tell you that the quality of musicianship is just as impressive as the numbers taking part. The students deserve every support.

KEELE CHAPEL EVENT

Saturday 18th April, 10:00 to 15:00

'I was a stranger': Theological Perspectives on Migration

According to the Refugee Council there were 89,509 asylum applications in the UK in the year to September 2025. In that same period 559 small boats were detected arriving in the UK carrying 45,183 people.

Ten years after the Brexit vote, migration still makes headline news across the UK, often dividing opinion; but what might a faithful Christian response be to asylum seekers and refugees? What does the Christian tradition have to say about people movements and exile? How can we shape a theological response to the questions of immigration?

Join us for our inaugural day conference bringing into dialogue some of the key areas of research and innovation from Keele University

with theologians and the Christian tradition. The day will include presentations, conversations and the opportunity to asks questions. Refreshments will be provided but please bring your own lunch. Join us at Keele Chapel to explore the connections between faith communities, migration and the Christian tradition.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-was-a-stranger-theological-perspectives-on-migration-tickets-1982780828834?aff=oddtcreator>

ABBEY FOREGATE NETWORKING GROUP

AFNG is meeting at the Abbey at 17:30 on 27th March.

It promises to be particularly interesting as it will focus on Shropshire Council's and BID's proposals for enhancing the visitor experience in Abbey Foregate.

If you can't make the meeting, there will hopefully be hard copies of plans that we can circulate.

This is something that will affect everyone who comes to the Abbey for whatever reason - hopefully in a good way but we want to make sure it's as good as it can be and the best way of doing that it by talking to the people responsible. For further information, please let me know.

Steve

