

Saints ALIVE

The magazine of:
All Saints, Leighton Buzzard
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe
St. Michael's, Eggington
St. Michael and All Angels,
Billington
The Good Shepherd, Sandhills

May 2020

60p

Closed but still here

See inside for how
the Ouzel Valley
team churches
are keeping
worship going;

plus

God knows by
Fr. Bernard;

Mother Cate's
Easter Reflection
for those who
missed it on
Easter Day;

Prayer for Healing
by Don Brewin;

And looking
forward to
Pentecost.

*Cover photo by
Mother Cate*



All Saints Leighton Buzzard

Team Rector & Vicar of All Saints:

Rev'd Cate Irvine

The Vicarage,

Pulford Road, LU7 1AB

01525 373217

Curate:

Vacancy

Team Vicars:

Rev'd Noel McGeeney 01525 237633

Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton 01525 372149

Rev'd Steve Marsh 01525 838450

Associate Priests:

Rev'd Wyn Jones 01525 373638

Canon Malcolm Grant 01525 372771

Canon Don Brewin 01525 373644

Diocesan Readers

Roger Collor 01525 376430

Geoffrey Huskisson 01525 757013

Molly Bowerman 01525 374186

Geoffrey Marchant 01525 371797

Linda Morris 01525 371750

Tricia Humber 01525 381184

Laurelin Burge 01525 371849

Churchwardens

Nick Clarke 01525 234130

Janet Wenborn 01525 370987

Bill Webb 01525 383356

PCC Secretary

Mike Sharman pccsecretary@allsaintslb.org.uk

Head Verger

Lindsay Bevis 01525 381418

All Saints Parish Office

All Saints Church, Church Square,

Leighton Buzzard LU7 1AE

Open weekdays from 9am – 1pm

Tel: 01525 381418

Website

www.allsaintslb.org.uk

Email:

parish@allsaintslb.org.uk

Facebook:

All Saints Leighton Buzzard

Office Manager & Vicar's PA

Jo Waller

Director of Music & Choir Master

Paul Dickens 01525 210210

Young Adults

James Legg 01525 379427

Free Will Offering Scheme

Tony Kempson 01525 756264

Sunday Saints Co-ordinator

Alison Dobbie 01525 759259

Mothers' Union Branch Co-ordinator

Janet Wenborn 01525 370987

Tower Liaison

Kevin Pughe 07402 233022

Margaret Birtles 07949 141211

ACTIVE Youth Group

Lindsay Bevis 01525 381418

Toddler Time

Julie Dolton 07954 148128

All Saints Preservation Trust 01525 217594

30, Hockliffe St, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1HJ

E-mail: enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org

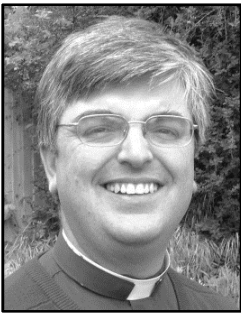
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Advertising: Nick Clarke, 01525 234130; njnclarke@aol.com

Distribution: Jenny Huskisson, 01525 757013; jennyhuskisson@gmail.com

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God knows ...

By Rev. Dr. Bernard Minton

There is supposed to be an ancient Chinese curse that runs, 'May you live in interesting times'! Well, we certainly are at the moment. Who knows what will happen next, or where we will all end up?

Well, God knows, of course. And it may seem trite or obvious. But God knows precisely what is happening, and how it will all turn out, for every single one of us. He sees the whole of created time laid out before Him, as though it (we) were a map. God knows exactly what will happen, and He is active in each one of us; as embedded in creation, as our bones in our bodies. God knows the future, and His love is unfading: He remains as Passionate about every one of us, as He was when creation was just a spark of love in Him.

He knows the future, and He will be with us in it, as intimate as the breath in our lungs or the air on our faces. But that future cannot evade death, loss, and grief. The fact that God is with us in these things, does not mean they won't happen, or won't hurt. It is not part of God's plan that there should be no death: or not yet. At the moment, for us, God's plan includes suffering, death, and evil. He suffered those things Himself: He knows full well the pain and hurt they give. And He does not promise to take them away: but He promises to bear the pain with us. He promises us that He will be with us in all those evil things: there to hold us; to love us; to suffer with us; and to be blamed and cursed and raged against, if it helps, when it helps.

God makes another promise, also. He does not promise an escape from death and evil. But He does promise that they have already been broken. If evil and death are a prison, the walls are already flattened; if a fortress, the gates are broken; if they are simply nothingness and rot, the New World has ripped them open and the Fire of Him has poured in. He brings a colour, life, beauty and joy that cannot die or fade: things of which the greatest joys we know here are but an echo. And God promises that we will know that world with every sense we have, and some we do not yet have: His Spirit will fill us, and we will be transformed, renewed, to shine like stars and rainbows.

He promises something else, as well. That New World is coming, whether we like it or not. And we do not have to earn a place within it: indeed, we cannot! We do not qualify or disqualify ourselves by what we do before our death. All we need to do is to let Him break our hearts and fill us with His love: self-giving, selfless, eternal. If we let Him, He will remake us in His image, to embody His peace and joy. Simply because He loves us: there is nothing else but that. Alleluia!

Father Bernard Minton

Our normal pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays

8am Holy Communion

9.15am Parish Eucharist

11.15am All Age Service:

1st Sunday: Messy Mass

3rd Sunday: All Age Communion

11.15am Holy Baptism (2nd & 4th Sunday)

6pm Evening Worship

1st Sung Evensong, with augmented choir

2nd Said Evening Prayer

3rd Full choral Evensong followed by

Benediction

4th Said Evening Prayer

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

12.00pm Wednesday (BCP on 1st Wednesday)

10.00am Thursday (said with hymns)

9.00am Saturday

Morning Prayer: St. Hugh's Chapel

9.00am Monday – Friday

Evening Prayer: St. Hugh's Chapel

4.30pm Monday – Friday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.linslade-parish.org.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays

8am Holy Communion

11am Parish Communion

(1st Sunday: Family Service)

For details of other services please visit:

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

Sundays:

1st & 3rd Sundays: 9.15am Parish Communion

St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington

Sundays:

11.15am Parish Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

Sundays:

9.30am Parish Communion

(2nd Sunday: Family Communion)

Plus Messy Church on an ad hoc pattern.

Shared Prayer: 6.15pm on alternate Tuesdays.

(Venues vary – please contact Nerissa Walters 01525 371615 for details).

Good Shepherd, Greenleas School, Sandhills:

Sundays at 9.45am

1st & 3rd: Communion

2nd: Messy Church

4th: All Age Worship

Service times may vary according to circumstances and on special occasions.

Sunday Saints: for age 4+ year olds, meets during 9.15am Sunday service at All Saints.

All Saints Toddler Time: meets in All Saints on Wednesdays during term time.

Morning session 9.30 – 11am every week; afternoon session 1.30pm-3pm, except 1st Weds of month. £1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

ACTIVE: (Senior Youth Group for age 11+) **not meeting at present because of a lack of leaders.**

If you could help, please contact the office.

Young Adults: meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 8pm. See Facebook page "All Saints Young Adults".

New Beginnings Bereavement Support Café, offering friendship, support and understanding
1st Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints.

Choir Practice: Friday evenings, Juniors 6.45pm; Adults 7.30pm.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30pm-9.30pm.

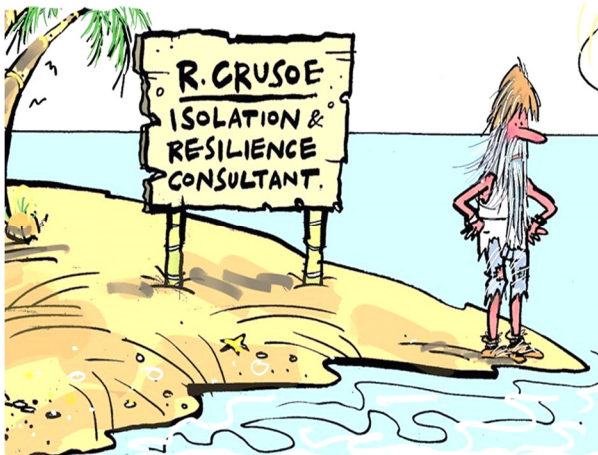
Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10am-3pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

At the time of publication, following the instructions of our Archbishops and Bishops, all Church of England buildings, including All Saints, are currently closed. Both emails and phone messages are being picked up remotely, so please continue to contact the church if you need to and we will do our best to help you.

Please continue to fill your Jars of Hope which should be returned when church reopens.



With a slight cough,
Stuart decided to self-insulate



Worth a smile

One day, a friend of Noah's dropped by to see how the Ark was coming along. "Come and see," said Noah, leading his friend towards the long wooden boat in his back yard. "I've built cages for the animals and the birds, so now I've had to find a way to manage all the fish." They went into the Ark and along wooden planks to a section near the front, where Noah showed his friend rows of small fish tanks alongside the wall, one on top of another. "I can get them all in here," said Noah, "I'm going to call it my Multi Storey Carp Ark!"



Warning: If you get an Email with the subject 'KNOCK KNOCK' – DON'T open it!!

It's a Jehovah's Witness, working from home.



Yesterday morning God was seen wandering around Bedfordshire.

What are you doing?" he was asked.

"Working from home," he replied.



The twins had been doing Messy Church at home.

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, March:

No weddings at All Saints

'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate'

Holy Baptism, March:

8: Noah Archie Brodigan, Poppie Ellen Christine Rowe, Dottie Louise Gates

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. March:

10: Jerry Turney at Crownhill; 12: Jeffrey Langdown at St. Mary's; 19: Frederick King at St. Leonard's; 26: Audrey Cooper at Crownhill; 31: Sylvia Wilson at Old Linslade Cemetery

'Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'

Years Mind, May:

1: Marjorie Parker, Michael Boyce; 2: Philip Meredith, William Cummins, Colin Sykes, Molly Goodliffe, Patricia Dancer; 3: Charles Kiteley, Dennis Duff; 5: Frederick Groom; 6: Ronald Higgs, Robert Molloy; 7: Gwendoline Parris; 8: Victor Norman, Louise Sutherland; 9: Valerie King, Audrey Hill, Margot Freeman; 10: Vera Elliott; 11: Nicholas Jovic; 12: Percy Collor; 13: Francis Hyde, Kenneth Watts; 14: Alan Daniels, Aubrey Marchant; 15: Marion Butler; 16: David Mills; 17: Mollie Biggerstaff; 20: Edith Sutton, Kevin Smith, June Audas; 23: William Atkinson, Wingate Underwood, John Wellby; 24: Paul Reynolds; 25: Patricia Olds; Karolyn Jones, John Watkiss; 26: Christine Roe, Peter Jones; 27: Cyril Stratton, Olive Aris, Ray Francis, John Lawrie; 28: Ethel Gilbert, Eleanor Edgoose; 29: Sarah Loke, Amy Willett; 30: Irene Sutton, Brian Hill; 31: Sydney Ranger

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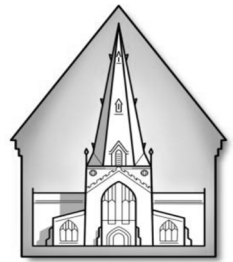
Pulford VA Lower School

Head Teacher: Mr Dave Heather

Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulford.beds.sch.uk



*A church school for
a whole community*

Pulford in Lockdown!

Normal school life was terminated rather abruptly at Pulford at 3.30pm on Friday 20th March when the government made the decision to temporarily close all UK schools due to the Corona virus.



We did however manage to hold a service for Lent before we went our separate ways and M Cate very kindly came down to officiate for us and bless our palm crosses. The picture shows our outdoor stage area which the Pulford Trust kindly provided funds for last year.

Since then we have had to change the way we operate quite dramatically. Each day we take care of around 15-20 children whose parents need to be at work as they are performing essential duties.

We split into 3 small classes for learning and gather for worship each morning at 10am. In order to involve the whole school community, we stream these short services live using our Facebook page which enables us to sing pray and share the stories of the bible together as well as celebrate special times such as birthdays. You are welcome to join us if you have access to the internet. Just navigate to the school website and click on the “like” button in the middle of the home page.

The teachers have been busy educating the children using a range of technology as well as the more traditional workbook.

We also have a duty to support those most vulnerable and we make sure that food vouchers are sent regularly to those in need. Additionally, we have had many donations of food delivered and we have been able to distribute these gifts to those who have been hard hit financially by this current situation.

At the time of writing, we are waiting for the government to outline what happens next and as we wait we are reminded that scripture teaches us to “trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs)

David Heather



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On a musical note.....

It may well be that the All Saints' choir can't, for the time being, rehearse on Friday evenings and sing on Sundays, but that doesn't mean that we can't continue to have fun together, both musically and socially.



For many years, choir practice on the first Friday of the month has been followed by a trip, for adult members of the choir, to one of Leighton Buzzard's finest hosteleries. And on Friday 3rd April, at the appointed hour (8.30 pm), many of us dusted down our iPads and charged our smart phones to join a choir virtual pub meeting on Zoom. The fact that we were apart did not stop the alcohol or the

conversation from flowing, (at least no more than the occasional problem with bandwidth). A glass in hand was often visible on the screen; presumably the altos' bottles were carefully stashed out of sight.

Talking of bandwidth problems, lots of choirs around the world have been wondering if they could sing together using Zoom or some other virtual meeting platform. I don't know of any which has succeeded. The delay between speaking and being heard varies from person to person and it is difficult to sing and hear others at the same time. But many choirs have succeeded in producing great performances by getting each singer to record his/her own part separately and then joining the voices together. Shortly after lockdown, Alan Perrott suggested we should try this ourselves. "This joyful Eastertide" was chosen as our first attempt, in the hope of using it at the Easter Morning service. Had there been no lockdown, we would have sung this from the south transept at the beginning of the service.

A small group was put together to see if it was feasible. After much hard work, especially by Alan, we found that indeed it was, and the rest of the choir was invited to contribute. Unfortunately, it had taken so long to complete the pilot project that the rest of the choir had less than 24 hours to do their recordings. Nevertheless, many did. Alan then put it all together and the result is what you may have heard on Easter Sunday morning. We are now planning our next project – an anthem and a hymn for April 19th.

Oh, and choir drinks for adults is now scheduled fortnightly. Mmm – less singing and more drinking; I'm not sure that is the right direction!!

Paul Dickens

**Despite all the craziness,
let us not forget that the seasons continue:
Pentecost will be on 31st May ...**


So let us imagine:

On that long ago first morning of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with thousands of visitors, for it was one of the most popular feast-days in the Jewish calendar – the Feast of Firstfruits, looking forward to the wheat harvest.

In one small room of that great city, a small group of people who had followed Jesus were praying. There was nothing else for them to do: Jesus had died, He had risen, and He had ascended, promising to send them ‘a Comforter’. They were left alone, to wait at Jerusalem. And so, they waited – on Him, and for Him. They were not disappointed, for that morning the Holy Spirit fell upon that small room, and transformed those believers into the Church,

Christ’s body here on earth. Pentecost was not the first time that the Holy Spirit came to the world – throughout the Old Testament there are stories telling of how God had guided people and given them strength. But now His Spirit would use a new instrument: not just isolated prophets, but the Church, His body on earth.

Acts opens with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish nation. Within 30 years the Gospel had spread throughout the northern Mediterranean: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Malta... to the very heart of the Roman Empire: Rome. The Church was on the move – God was on the move! He was calling people from every nation to repent, turn to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins, and to follow Him.




“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.
If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit”


Read Galatians 5:13-26

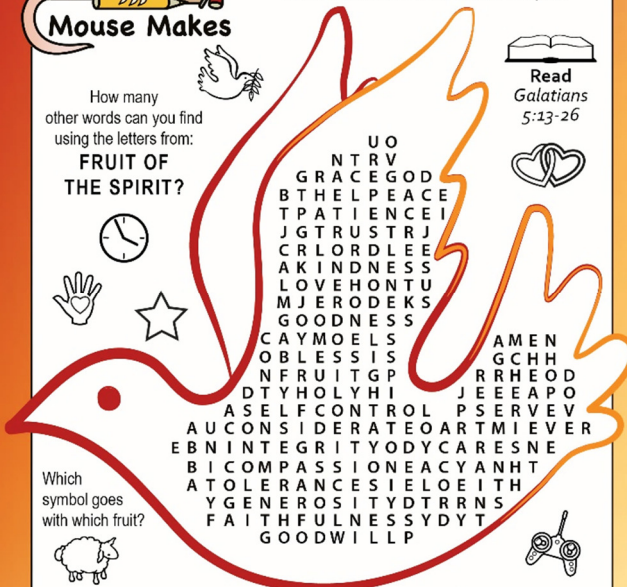
How many other words can you find using the letters from:

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?




Which symbol goes with which fruit?





U	O																					
N	T	R	V																			
G	R	A	C	E	G	O	D															
B	T	H	E	L	P	E	A	C	E													
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AMEN
GCHH
RRHEOD
JEEEAPO
PSEERVE

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AGREEMENT • UNITY • CALM • CONTENTMENT • REST
PATIENCE • TOLERANCE • KINDNESS • COMPASSION • HELP
GOODWILL • GENEROSITY • GOODNESS • HONESTY • INTEGRITY
FAITHFULNESS • LOYALTY • TRUST • GENTLENESS • CONSIDERATE
SELF CONTROL • RESTRAINT • FRUIT • SPIRIT • LIVE • SERVE

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10

Reflection for Easter by Mother Cate

This Lent has been full of limitations. To begin with there were the limitations that we imposed upon ourselves to keep the season, to draw nearer to God. Then, as time went on there were limitations that we took on in the ways that we shared communion, then the most startling limitation that we could hardly have imagined, our churches were closed to protect people and to try to slow the spread of this pandemic. For me there was another unexpected limitation ahead as I can down with the symptoms of the virus myself. Two weeks on and I am definitely recovering, but the exhaustion has been every bit as much of a limitation on this Holy Week.

Like so many of us, these days have been a strange mix of loss and bewilderment, with moments of clarity and joy as what is really important becomes starkly clear and the stuff that had filled so much of our lives falls away. So it is hardly surprising that this Easter is unlike any other that we have known. The disciples went to the tomb, just as we entered Lent only a few weeks ago, with a certain set of expectations, and we, like them have been confounded by what we have found.

There is an unexpected emptiness in our lives at the moment, it may be different for each one of us, and we may be more aware of it in these strange circumstances, but if we are honest, we always have that empty place inside. The message of our Easter Gospel is not to stay there, not to make that empty place the place from which we live.

If we stay at the tomb, all we will know is loss. Like the disciples who flee, or like Mary as she weeps in the garden, it is very easy to wander, hurt and confused by shock and grief. Our greatest hope and our greatest challenge this, and every Easter, is to listen to that unexpected, familiar voice that calls our name. We cannot cling to Jesus, we cannot control God. This is not the Easter that anyone wanted, but I do believe that at the heart of our faith is transformation and the continual call to newness of life in our risen Lord. On this day we remember that Jesus triumphed over death and opened for us the way to new life in God. There will be many limitations ahead, there always are, but we are an Easter people, living through a love that casts out fear and confident that in the resurrection we are assured that nothing can ever come between us and our God.



Mother Cate

***“Little things, BIG difference”
Staying connected;
worshipping together though apart***



Posted by All Saints, Leighton Buzzard



*Posted by St. Leonard's with
Hockliffe & Egginton*



Posted by St Barnabas, Linslade



*Zoom or Facebook;
Whats App, FaceTime ...;
live or recorded;
on Sundays and on weekdays;
the choice is yours.
The furthest distance
is from bed to floor ...*

All Services are currently suspended and meetings and social events cancelled.
We will keep our Facebook page and website updated: <https://allsaintslb.org.uk/>
Sunday worship continues on Facebook at 9.15am:
<https://allsaintslb.org.uk/contact-us/facebook/>

Zoom Church, as viewed from the Walters' study.



The Zoom Church Experience

The link arrives.

It is just a line of jumbled characters. You click on it and suddenly you are enveloped into another community. You select the gallery view and see people in their most intimate setting; they are welcoming you into their home. The conversation is full of salutations and mirth.

As the weeks have progressed there are fewer ceilings and nostrils. There is now a community which has adapted so quickly to the new technology and is deft with the mute button.

In these difficult times it has been very comforting to be part of an evolving and growing community, learning together. A feeling of progress in these times of limbo is very welcome.

We are lucky that Father Noel has embraced Zoom (other apps are available) and enabled us all still to experience the fellowship of a church service so much needed in these isolated times.

We now attend morning prayers. A good start to the day in our living room.

Thank you Father Noel and crew for connecting us.

Pam Cross



A message from All Saints Churchwardens



Firstly, Happy Easter! We hope that you enjoyed the day, even in these strange times.

Well here we are, several weeks into lockdown, unable to access our beloved churches. There are differing opinions as to the merits of this, but we would commend to you the Easter Day interview with Archbishop Justin. As the Archbishop says, "It's a decision taken by all the Bishops and it was taken with much pain and much thought and much prayer and after much discussion. There are some people who are very unhappy. I'm unhappy with it. We're here to set an example to share in the deprivation of the things we like doing to care for others. This is not about us. It's about example and service." You can find the full interview at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p089bksf>

There have been new ways of doing Church, and we hope that you have taken comfort from Mother Cate's recent broadcasts from her study. If you haven't had the opportunity, or were unaware of where to go, these can be found on our Facebook page; simply type the following into your browser: <https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsleightonbuzzard/>

Jo and Lindsay continue to work hard remotely to keep the show on the road, with occasional visits to check on the building: please hold them in your prayers.

We are grateful to all of you for your continued financial support during these times. The closure of the coffee shop will hit us badly – it contributes £30,000 p.a. to our accounts, keeping us afloat. It is unlikely that we will benefit from the Government's coronavirus charities support and we cannot make up the lost income. If you are able to consider your giving at this difficult time, it would help enormously. If you are not already paying by standing order, please consider doing so. Our details are:

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With all good wishes from Janet, Nick and Bill

A little game to play.....There are names of seventeen (17) books of the bible hidden in the paragraph below. How many can you find? A preacher found 16 books in twenty minutes; it took him 3 weeks to find the 17th. HAVE FUN!

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for the facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the name of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes the preacher to find one of them, and will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now. There really are seventeen names of books in this story.

(Answers on P19)

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Julia Dickens 210210; Nerissa Walters 371615



We can't do church in church – but we can bear witness to the risen Lord, much more publicly, in the street: the Spellers made this Easter garden in their front yard, right beside the A5, with the lorries thundering by, and for all to see.



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St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



Well the spring has arrived, with all the beautiful spring bulbs flowering. The church yard looks lovely so all our hard work has paid off. We hope to be able to have a working party next month as long as we all keep distance between us. We do not want all our hard work to be overgrown and wasted.

We are all in lockdown for the foreseeable future with this virus about but are keeping in touch with each other via the amazing use of zoom, facetime and other such things. My family are playing games together via zoom; and my grandchildren are going to school via the internet (though I'm not sure that they are all enjoying this).

At St Michael's we are hoping that the builder will be able to start work next month on the work needed for the vestry repair.

Over Easter we all enjoyed the Services that Father Noel provided via Zoom. It was a great comfort to us all, enabling us to have a service each day during Holy Week. Our Sunday services are being provided the same way which is much appreciated by us all, we can see other members of our congregations that we don't see every day, so keep up with all the news.

One of the downsides of this social distancing is we have had to cancel all of our fund raising activities for the foreseeable future. Both the quiz night on 4th April, the plant sale on 16th May are cancelled, and the Hog Roast on 4th July is doubtful. We will be able to rearrange these once we can mix again. We feel very sorry for our couples who have had to rearrange their weddings but am sure it will be a wonderful day for them on the new dates.

Please continue to keep safe, look after each other, and keep everyone in your prayers.

Carol Hart



And while we're away, the church mice can pray, unmolested

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644;

Julia Haviland 850380



During the last few weeks two songs have continually been returning to my mind. Is Bob Dylan just a crazy, Nobel prize winning poet or is he a prophet of our time?

Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows

That too many people have died?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

The answer is blowin' in the wind.

It is uncanny that the virus, unseen, unheard but menacing has been blowing in the winds of the world since January.

The other song which has been a comfort and solace to many ever since St John Henry Newman wrote it in the 1800s is:

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom; Lead thou me on.

The night is dark and I am far from home; Lead thou me on.

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene;

one step enough for me.

Many dire predictions have been made over the media as to the eventual consequences of Covid19. But when all is said and done what can we do except go step by step into the future in faith, knowing that God's plans are good and not evil, counting each day the blessings we receive.

At St Michael and All Angels, like every other congregation, we have been unable to celebrate Easter in our church. Instead though Revd Steve Marsh has organised Zoomed services for us and for the Church of the Good Shepherd from his sitting room. We have appreciated this very much and want to thank Steve, and all the musicians and tech experts, for making this possible and thank God for all the ways we are able to keep in touch while still being apart.

We were fortunate that before the barriers came down in earnest we were able to hold a clear up day in the Church and Churchyard. An amazing number of people turned up to help; drains were cleaned, brambles cut back, a fallen tree cleared and a bonfire lit. Inside the church pews were swept out and everything dusted and polished. Even the brass was cleaned by two wonderful volunteers. After the hard work Jean Albertella provided us with bowls her renowned soup which the hungry workers appreciated.

We are disappointed but feel that to avoid confusion we had to come to a decision about Italia Day. It will not be happening this year but we look forward to a time when we can all get together and have a massive party.

Sandra Brewin

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens: Steve Nixon & Hazel Farlam



Virtual Church

At the Church of the Good Shepherd we have adjusted well to social distancing. Our services are delivered via Zoom, we have live music from couples and families in their homes and there are opportunities to interact during the service.

At our Easter Sunday service we had 65 people joining us. This included Rev Captain Paul Niemiec and his wife Helen, who was our vicar before Steve joined us and members of St Michael and All Angels Church in Billington.

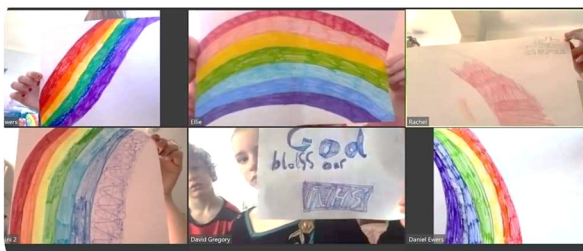
Junior Church+ were recently able to split off from the main service and spend time in their virtual room together where they made sections of rainbow to piece together on the Zoom gallery view.



Messy Church volunteers have also set up a virtual games night each Tuesday where families can play games together via Zoom, while our WhatsApp chat group has also been busy with messages asking for prayer, sharing pictures of Easter Messy Makes and requests for help with shopping for those social isolating.

Technology and the willingness to chip in with ideas and support has allowed our church community to adjust quickly and continue to thrive during this strange and challenging time.

Jo Bellamy



I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for the facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the name of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes the preacher to find one of them, and will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now. There are really are seventeen names of books in this story.

A little game to play – answers for Page 14

Patterns of Prayer

In a series of articles looking at different types of spirituality and the influences that inspire us in our lives of prayer, Rev. Canon Don Brewin discusses

Prayer for Healing

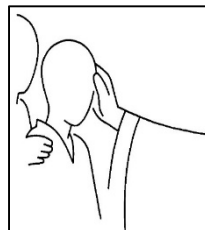


Matthew's Gospel is very organised! Every so often he includes a summary, so that his readers would know what is expected of them as disciples of Jesus. One of these comes at the end of chapter 9 (v.35), just before the disciples are sent out on mission:

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness."

These three elements – teaching, preaching and healing – were fundamental to Jesus' ministry, and to the ministry of the disciples (see chapter 10). They are intended to be fundamental to the ministry of a healthy Church. They are like the three legs of a stool – enabling the balance and stability not possible on two legs (or one!).

Churches will make available the ministry of healing in different ways. In some, the ministry is offered regularly at the end of a main service, with teams available of those gifted in this ministry, supported by those who have the gift of intercession. This ministry is not the same as pastoral counselling – it may lead to a person receiving counselling at another time, but is intended to be a brief opportunity for the Holy Spirit to touch the person – usually through the laying-on of hands.



Jesus' ministry of healing was not concerned with alleviating symptoms, but dealing with causes; not just cutting down on pain, but dealing with the source of that pain. He had a broad vision of what "dis-ease" is, and an equally broad vision of what truly constitutes healing. For Jesus, "dis-ease" was anything that fell short of God's perfect pattern for His creation – maybe in terms of individual illness (of body, mind, spirit etc.) or corporate sickness (of family, community, national structures etc.). The different elements are often inter-related: they interact with one another. To take an example, anxiety about possible redundancy can easily lead to loss of sleep, headaches, depression etc... It is tempting, but dangerous and usually wrong, to over-simplify the relation between one element and another. The most obvious over-simplification is the statement "All disease is the result of sin" with the interpretation "Your disease is the result of your sin". This is sometimes true, and people coming for healing need to be able to make appropriate confession, and to receive the assurance of God's forgiveness.

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, when a person came to Jesus for healing, he went straight to the root of the problem – and we need to do the same. In most situations today, people's problems have more than one element. If a person has a headache, for example, do we pray for that to be relieved (important though that is) – or do we seek to discern the cause of the headache and bring the healing power of the Holy Spirit into that situation?

My experience has shown me that there are various dimensions of healing: healing of the body; healing of the mind; healing of the spirit; and healing of the memories. God's intention is that we should be "made whole" – through the power of the Holy Spirit of Jesus. For this to happen, we need to pray for discernment about the real need. In some Christian cultures every dis-ease is thought to be caused by a demon – and so those who are praying focus on "deliverance". This is not usually the right approach. Certainly, every dis-ease is a result of evil coming into the world as a result of the Fall – but the causes of a person's dis-ease are usually more complex. (There are situations where the specialist ministry of deliverance is needed; and each diocese has a number of clergy who are licensed for this ministry.)

The other aspect of this ministry where there is often ignorance is in the healing of memories – sometimes called "inner healing" or "healing of past hurts". When we are vulnerable, we may go through an experience so painful that our conscious mind recoils from thinking about it. The painful memory gets buried, and apparently forgotten; but its effects are still felt long afterwards. For example, a person may be unable to form lasting relationships (however much they may want to with their conscious mind) because of some past experience, when they moved towards another "significant person" (such as a parent) and were either rejected, or abused. Then they may make an "inner vow" not to put themselves in that vulnerable position again.

The place where these painful memories are stored is like a cess-pit, which becomes more and more like a volcano as the memories fester and the pressure increases. For some people the energy required to keep the lid on is so large, that they have little energy left for normal living, and are constantly exhausted. When we face in the present a trauma similar to the one stored in the cess-pit, the barrier between the conscious (above the pit) and the subconscious (in the pit) is weakened, and cracks appear. Our reaction to the present day event will be out of all proportion, as emotion from the past surges up through the crack. We cannot understand this, and feel guilty at the unintended hurt this can cause others. Psychiatrists may be able to point to the cause of these problems; but only through the power of Jesus Christ (who is outside time) can the causes be dealt with: the blockage can be removed, and love can flow again into that area of our lives.

The mystery in the whole area of healing, is that some people are healed through prayer, and others continue to suffer or even die. Francis MacNutt, who wrote the classic book "Healing", has a whole chapter entitled "Eleven Reasons why People are not Healed".

As we try to deal with the global trauma of the coronavirus, and as the Church adjusts to the changed situation in society that will come "afterwards", this ministry of healing, in its widest sense, is going to be more important than ever. Let us pray that we will be ready to play our part in this.

Don Brewin

(I have written a training Manual on this subject, entitled "Healing and Wholeness", with some diagrams which people have found helpful. If you want to find out more, please let me know.)

How big are your feet? – Calculate your own carbon footprint

Barbara Ward, Baroness Jackson of Lodsworth (1914-1981), was an economist, particularly interested in the problems of developing countries. During the 1960s, she turned her attention to environmental issues and was an early advocate of the idea of ‘sustainable development’. In the book *“Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet”*, written jointly with American environmentalist Rene Dubos (who coined the phrase “Think globally, act locally”), for the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, she writes: *“We have forgotten how to be good guests, how to walk lightly on the earth as its other creatures do.”*

We all know we should be reducing our carbon footprint – a measure of our impact as individuals and as a society on the planet – but where do we start? First we need to know how big our footprint is and then how small it needs to be.

There are lots of carbon footprint ‘calculators’ out there in internet-land. Here’s one from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) that I find particularly easy to use and understand:

www.footprint.wwf.org.uk

Why not give it a go yourself and explore ways that you could walk more lightly on the earth?

Esther Clarke



“ We have forgotten to be good guests, how to walk lightly on the earth as its other creatures do. ”

Barbara Ward

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