

# 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*

*July / August 2020*

*60p*

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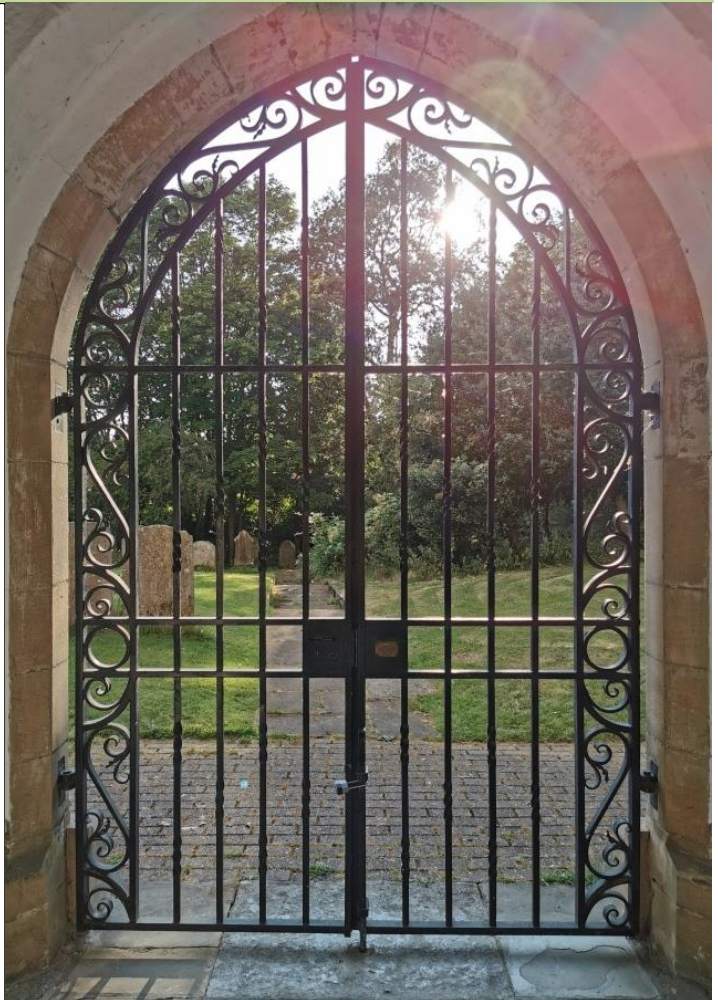
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# All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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*Pulford Road, LU7 1AB*

01525 373217

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*Vacancy*

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Canon Don Brewin 01525 373644

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Website: [www.allsaintspreservationtrust.org](http://www.allsaintspreservationtrust.org)

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## *Now but not yet ... a message from Mother Cate*

I know that many of us are longing for the days when we can gather together again to share in worship and community. It is a long time since we have been able to break bread together and whilst I have had the privilege of offering Holy Communion on

behalf of all of us through this time when we cannot gather it has been a bittersweet experience to offer worship to God in an empty Church. Eucharistic worship is always about now, but not yet, that sense that Jesus is amongst us and yet we long for the time when his kingdom will be fully present. We see signs of that kingdom in our own lives, in the way that we care for each other and forgive each other.



I am sure that as lockdown eases, we will all be feeling a wide variety of emotions. We may be angry at the decisions that others have taken on an individual or institutional level, decisions that affect our lives in all sorts of ways. We may be fearful of the risks that we will need to take as we begin to get back to normal. We may also be thankful for some of the unexpected gifts that lockdown has brought, for the friend or neighbour that has kept in touch, moments of silence and peace, the chance to slow down, to reconnect with nature, catch up with reading or hobbies that normal life didn't make time for.

As we begin to come back together we will need to be kind to ourselves and to each other. We need to recognise that some of us will have been lonely and really felt the isolation, others will have been working very long hours and trying to work out how to do their jobs within new parameters, or to fulfil the responsibilities of caring for friends and family in very challenging circumstances. So I would urge you to listen to those around you before judging them, to recognise that each of us will still be having a very different experience of these lockdown days and of the world slowly starting to change again as the lockdown eases.

In Holy Communion we recognise that God dwells with us, that we are the body of Christ in this place and for this time. We also recognise that God's kingdom is not yet fully present and acknowledge the brokenness of the world that we live in. None of these things has been changed by our time apart and whilst we long to be reunited into the "now" of being together again we still have some "not yet" to live through. So let us use this time wisely, let us use the longings that we have to make the kingdom of God real amongst us in all the ways we can, through listening to each other, forgiving each other, reaching out in love and care to one another.

***Mother Cate***

## *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:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Messy Mass

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: All Age Communion

11.15am Holy Baptism (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)

6pm Evening Worship

1<sup>st</sup> Sung Evensong, with augmented choir

2<sup>nd</sup> Said Evening Prayer

3<sup>rd</sup> Full choral Evensong followed by

Benediction

4<sup>th</sup> Said Evening Prayer

#### **Weekdays:**

#### **Holy Communion**

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)

12.00pm Wednesday (BCP on 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.linslade-parish.org.uk)

### **St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach**

#### **Sundays**

8am Holy Communion

11am Parish Communion

(1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Family Service)

For details of other services please visit:

[www.saintleonardschurch.com](http://www.saintleonardschurch.com)

### **St. Michael's, Eggington**

#### **Sundays:**

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

(2<sup>nd</sup> 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

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>: Communion

2<sup>nd</sup>: Messy Church

4<sup>th</sup>: All Age Worship

***All Saints will be open for private prayer on  
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 - 2***

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

1<sup>st</sup> 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

**Welcome to this Bumper 'Holiday' issue of Saints Alive. All information is up to date as at the time of publication. The next issue will be September.**

\*\*\* \*\*

**CHURCH OPENING:** We are pleased to confirm that All Saints will be open for individual prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am - 2pm. In line with government guidance we will be providing hand sanitiser and ask that everyone follows strict social distancing rules and not to visit if anyone in their household is unwell or shielding.

\*\*\* \*\*

**PRESERVATION TRUST CONTACT:** To conserve costs in these difficult times, All Saints Preservation Trust has dispensed with its telephone line, saving more than £400 a year. The Trust can still be contacted by post at 30 Hockliffe Street, LU7 1HJ or by e-mail [enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org](mailto:enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org). You can still phone the Appeal Director, Terry Warburton, on 374278. Please continue to support the Trust so it can continue to support All Saints when repairs and other fabric works are needed.

\*\*\* \*\*

**SUMMER FETE CANCELLED:** The Summer Fete is one of two fundraising events held at All Saints to help towards the expenses of the church. Its cancellation will increase the shortfall in funds. If you were planning to support it, perhaps you would consider donating an amount which you might have spent at the fete to church funds direct, or send a cheque payable to "All Saints, Leighton Buzzard" by post to the Parish Office. Church Account: All Saints Leighton Buzzard; Sort code 405240; A/c no 00019360. If you have been putting your collection away each week, you could use one of these methods to send what you might have given. At the present time when nothing is coming in from collections, or from the Coffee shop, donations will be very welcome.



# Parish Registers

**There were no weddings or baptisms at All Saints in either May or June**

**R.I.P. May:** 4: John Wilson at Heath & Reach Cemetery; 6: Jean Plummer at Vandyke Road Cemetery, Kimberley White at Heath & Reach Cemetery; 7: Patricia Baillie at Berton; 12: Albert Russell at Berton; 18: Derek Windle at Berton, Trevor Howlett at Old Linslade Cemetery; 21: Eileen Showler at Vandyke Road Cemetery; 28: Anthony Hawkins at Old Linslade Cemetery, Doreen Cope at Berton; 29: Barbara Barton at Old Linslade Cemetery  
**R.I.P. June:** 4: Patricia Munroe at Crownhill, David Cox at Berton; 5: Freda Allen at Vandyke Road Cemetery; 9: Sarah Lewis at Berton; 10: Elizabeth Dolton at Berton; 12: Dennis Lilly at Berton, Wendy Clarke at Crownhill; 15: Hugh Goan at Vandyke Road Cemetery, Eugenio Caruana at Berton; 16: Patricia Stonehouse at Berton

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

**Years Mind, July:** 1: William Gilbert, Margaret Nash; 2: Edith Benton; 3: Harry Powell; 6: David Edgoose; 7: Albert (Ted) Rhodes, Vicki Smith; 8: Ruth Kiddle, Stephen Goodger, Hazel Jones; 9: Florence Groom, Elizabeth Hankins, Meg Hollins; 10: Joy Reynolds; 11: Eva Milne, Ray Naisbitt; 12: Frederick Benton; 13: Primrose Cox; 14: John Ferguson; 15: Ethel Scott; 16: Steve Hill, Victor Conquest; 17: Canon Alan Freeman, Josie Watkiss; 19: Christopher Hinchliff; 20: Blake Edwards; 25: Dick Spratley, Mary Wilson, Joan Kemp, Peter Quick; 26: John Brantom, William Parris; 29: Charles Beauchamp; 31: Arthur King

**Years Mind, August:** 2: Annie Clements; 4: Alan Booth; 5: Peter Harris; 6: John Connew; 7: Norman Rumbelow, Bert Whitney, Peter Baker; 9: Marion Deeley, David Harrington; 11: Lionel Allen, Olive Joynes; 12: John Froud; 14: Henry Weeden; 16: Wilfred Dumble, Margaret Dumble, Douglas Coulthard, Violet Ferguson, John Killman; 18: Thomas Froud; 20: Doreen Rolls; 21: Edith Todorovic, Harold King; 22: Arthur Woolhead, Elsie Daniel, Doris Dunnett; 24: Leslie Nash, Linda Wood; 25: Elizabeth Woodward; 26: Bernard McAuliffe, Dr. José Esteves Penna Firme; 27: Catherine Flynn, Stanley Bryan, Sheila Wright; 28: William Savage; 29: Joseph Arnold; 31: Beatrice Campbell

Independent Funeral Directors  
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16 Old Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard,  
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[www.dillamorefuneralservice.co.uk](http://www.dillamorefuneralservice.co.uk)

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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](http://www.pulford.beds.sch.uk)***



*A church school for  
a whole community*

*“O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
consider all the works thy Hand has made.”*

As Mr Heather wrote in the last edition of Saints Alive, we, along with the rest of the world, continue in very strange times. Since 1<sup>st</sup> June we have been able to welcome more children back to school, but are now at capacity within the Government’s guidelines. As I write, we are planning the use of a marquee in the school’s grounds to accommodate two of our “bubbles”! We are greatly looking forward to our Summer break after what has been a very tiring term, and look forward, God willing, to seeing all of the children back in September.

It has been difficult for those children whom we cannot take back at the present time, but we have greatly enjoyed seeing pictures in our worship of what they have been doing. If you haven’t yet seen our daily broadcasts, please do look at our Facebook page (you don’t need to have an account) – we broadcast at 10.00 daily.



As you can see from the pictures, a lot of time and energy has recently been spent on landscaping and improving areas of our Forest School. These beautiful pictures were taken by Sophie Heather.

Our School Council has also been concerned about the animals at Whipsnade Zoo, which as we all know has now re-opened. The children are going to be dressing as animals to raise funds for the zoo – pictures to follow in September!



***Bill Webb, Assistant Head.***



## The Gentleman Gardener

Let your local RHS qualified gardener make your garden beautiful, from simple garden maintenance to redesigning your garden.

Please call Barry  
01525 222451 or 07541 196384  
to pop round to have a chat.

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## Nettie Forsyth

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**Eileen Naples**

BSc. DC(OCC), MBAAC

**Telephone (01525) 377 384**

## St Leonard’s Church Hall Heath and Reach

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Regular or occasional bookings



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Easy access. Car parking  
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stleonardheath@gmail.com



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01525 372 204

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www.selections-  
web.co.uk/petandgarden*



## On a musical note.....



I can hardly believe it, but it's that time of the year again when we say goodbye to our leaving choristers. This year it's our Head Chorister, Genevieve Pughe, and one of our ex-trebles, David Major. David has been a member of the back row since his voice broke a few years ago. Both have been members of the choir for at least 10 years. Genevieve is taking a gap year before going on to university and David has decided to take a break from choir. We thank them both for everything they have given to the choir and the church over the years.

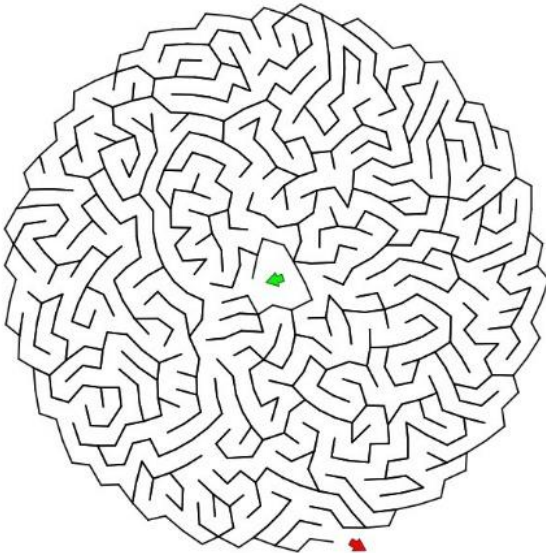
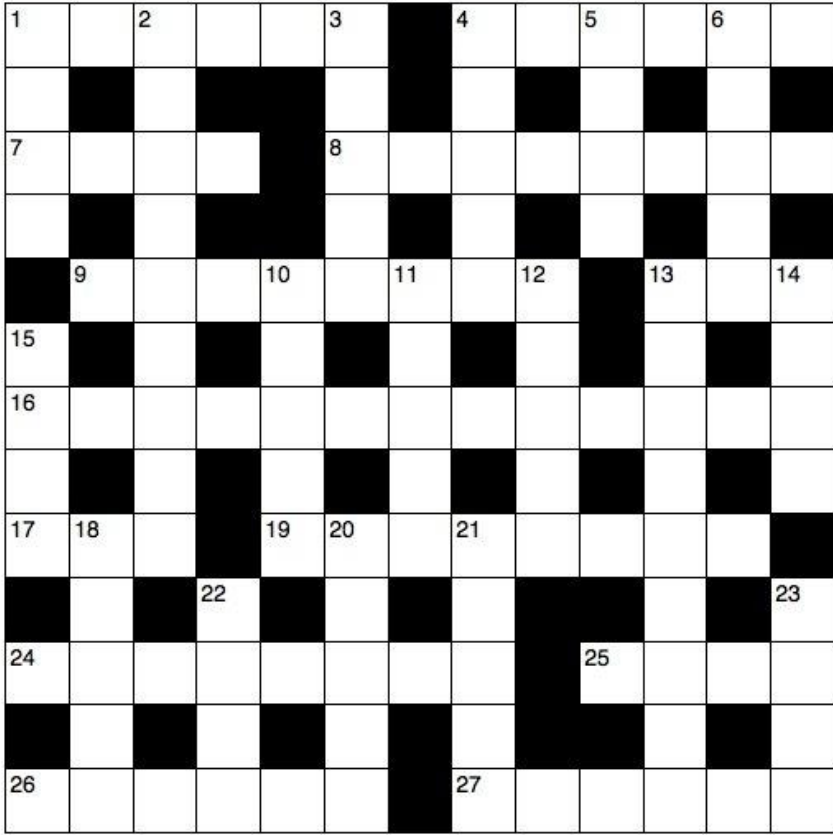


It is such a shame that we cannot celebrate properly with our usual final leavers' services. But we hope to be able to put together some virtual music to mark the occasion.

I have said it before, but may I encourage you to take a look at the Facebook group "Choral Evensong Appreciation Society". They don't come "nerdier" than that (actually, come to think of it, they probably do). But there are so many delightful discussions about all sorts of things vaguely related to Evensong.

I was particularly taken by a recent discussion about the television dramatisation of the Salisbury poisonings. First of all we had someone pointing out that the interior of Salisbury cathedral looked a bit like Bristol cathedral. Attention then focussed on the choir shown processing through the nave, singing the Reading responses: clearly not Salisbury, as that choir wears green robes. The Director of Music at Bristol cathedral then pipes up to say that it was indeed their choir in their cathedral, but that he had missed out on the fun because he had been ill. Of course, that then generates a huge discussion about whether Responses can properly be sung whilst processing . . . and on it goes – delightful!

**Paul Dickens**



Cross word answers  
ACROSS: 1, Riches; 4, Abner's; 7, Soul; 8, Damascus; 9, Statues; 13, Add; 16, Craftsmanship; 17, Old; 19, Redeemer; 24, Walls are; 25, Wise; 26, Target; 27, Thief.  
DOWN: 1, Rest; 2, Courtyard; 3, Sadhu; 4, Arm he; 5, Nose; 6, Round; 10, Tutor; 11, Timid; 12, Sense; 13, Ashbelite; 14, Dips; 15, Echo; 18, Lhasa; 20, Exact; 21, Erect; 22, Flag; 23, Mede.

Across

- 1 'I pray that out of his glorious — he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being' (Ephesians 3:16) (6)  
4 'Saul's father Kish and — father Ner were sons of Abiel' (1 Samuel 14:51) (6)  
7 'Praise the Lord, O my — ' (Psalm 103:1) (4)  
8 See 5 Down  
9 Laws (1 Kings 11:33) (8)  
13 'Who of you by worrying can — a single hour to his life?' (Luke 12:25) (3)  
16 Artistry (Exodus 31:5) (13)  
17 'Your young men will see visions, your — men will dream dreams' (Acts 2:17) (3)  
19 How David described his Lord (Psalm 19:14) (8)  
24 'If this city is built and its — — restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates' (Ezra 4:16) (5,3)  
25 'The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you — for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15) (4)  
26 Intended destination of arrows (Lamentations 3:12) (6)  
27 Eve hit (anag.) (6)

Down

- 1 'For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find — for your souls' (Matthew 11:29) (4)  
2 Where Peter was when he denied Christ three times (Luke 22:55) (9)  
3 Remarkable early 20th-century Indian evangelist, a convert from Hinduism, — Sundar Singh (5)  
4 'Now the king had put the officer on whose — — leaned in charge of the gate' (2 Kings 7:17) (3,2)  
5 and 8 Across The Lover describes this facial feature of the Beloved thus: 'Your — is like the tower of Lebanon looking towards — ' (Song of Songs 7:4) (4,8)  
6 'Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled — your waist' (Ephesians 6:14) (5)  
10 Trout (anag.) (5)  
11 Easily frightened (1 Thessalonians 5:14) (5)  
12 The ability to perceive (Ecclesiastes 10:3) (5)  
13 One of the clans descended from Benjamin (Numbers 26:38) (9)  
14 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who — bread into the bowl with me'" (Mark 14:20) (4)  
15 Resound (Zephaniah 2:14) (4)  
18 Traditional seat of the Dalai Lama (5)  
20 Precise (John 4:53) (5)  
21 Build (Ezekiel 4:2) (5)  
22 Beat harshly (Acts 22:25) (4)  
23 Darius, who succeeded Belshazzar as king of the Babylonians, was one (Daniel 5:31) (4)

**Answers on Page 10**

# Re-opening churches for private prayer

As lockdown eases, the Ouzel Valley Team Churches are starting to re-open, within Government guidelines. For now, this is for private prayer only – public services are still not allowed. And as all readers know by now, this is a constantly changing situation. What is published today may well be wrong by tomorrow!

The list of opening times is as known in late June, less than a week after the government announcement that opening was to be allowed at all. Inevitably, not all churches have been able to make plans yet; nothing is fixed in stone; and each church will take the opening-up process at the speed that feels right for them.

Please visit church websites and FaceBook pages, or contact clergy and churchwardens for up-to-date information (see details elsewhere in this magazine).

All Saints:	<i>Tuesday and Thursday 10am - 2pm</i>
St Barnabas:	<i>Monday &amp; Friday 10 – 11am</i>
St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach:	<i>Wednesday evenings – time to be decided</i>
St. Michael's, Eggington:	<i>Saturday mornings – time to be decided</i>
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe:	<i>Sunday afternoons 2 - 5pm</i>

## REOPENING CHURCHES

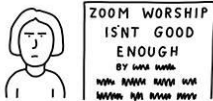
MATCH THE PERSON TO THE TASK

### PEOPLE

IRATE  
TWEETER



NEWSPAPER  
COLUMNIST



CONCERNED  
BISHOP



LOCAL  
VICAR



### TASKS

JOINING  
THE  
CLEANING  
ROTA



SUPERVISING  
THE VOLUNTEERS  
(ALL AGED  
OVER 70)



MANAGING  
THE JOYFULLY  
NON-COMPLIANT



FEELING  
WEIGHT OF  
RESPONSIBILITY  
WHEN IT ALL  
GOES WRONG



[HINT: THE VICAR WILL HAVE TO DO ALL OF THEM]



## Worth a smile

### Actual complaints received by a resort chain (before lockdown!)

On my holiday to India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food.

We booked an excursion to a water park, but no one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price.

The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room.

No one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared.

It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair.

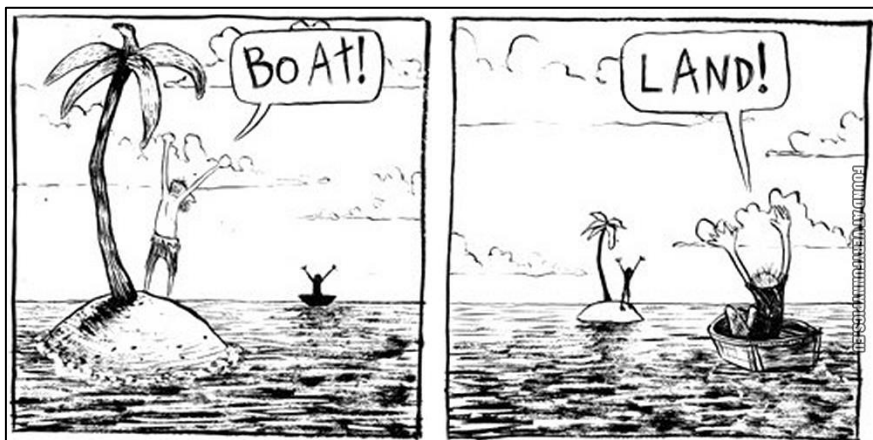
We had to line up outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning.

I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes.



**The queue:** While waiting in a socially distanced queue early one morning for the supermarket to open for us 'seniors', I was surprised to see a young man saunter along and try to cut in at the front of the queue. A furious old lady waved her cane at him, and he quickly backed away.

A moment later, the young man tried again. He managed to dodge the old lady, but then two old men started shouting at him. Again, the young man backed away. But he wasn't giving up, and soon the young man approached the queue for the third time. By now, all of us pensioners were ready for him, an angry wall of opposition. The young man stood there for a moment, and then shrugged his shoulders. "If you people won't let me unlock the door, none of you will ever get in to shop."



Perspective...

*“Little things, BIG difference”  
Celebrating those who make things happen...*



The Editors' schedule for this edition of Saints Alive said  
“Centre Page – Getting ready for choir tour to Exeter Cathedral”.

Photos would include a washing line full of trebles' ruffs; Janet ironing a mountain of surplices; Paul arranging masses of music into service booklets; hymn books being counted into little blue Ikea bags ...  
And choir practice. Lots of it ...

Instead, we are doing lockdown.  
Exeter has been cancelled, and the choir has been creative in order to keep the music going.

These photos are of various socially-distanced choir practices, where, come rain or shine, members of the choir gathered in the necessarily small groups.

The products of all this work are preserved for posterity on the All Saints FaceBook page – it is well worth getting in the popcorn and settling down for a listen. They have produced some stunning performances.



## *Getting things in perspective*

Maybe we don't have it that bad?

It's a mess out there now. Hard to discern between what's a real threat and what is just simple panic and hysteria. For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900.

On your 14th birthday, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20th birthday. 50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet. And don't try to catch your breath. On your 41st birthday, the United States is fully pulled into WWII. Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

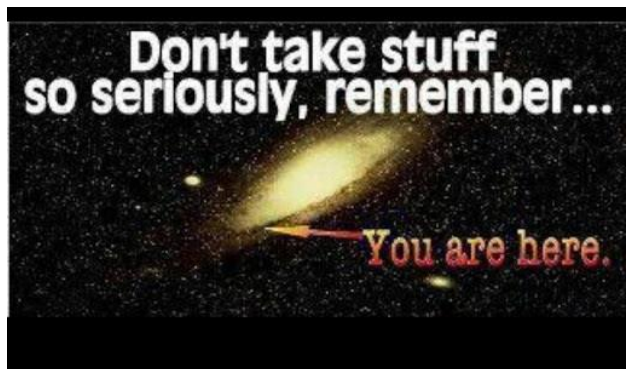
Smallpox was epidemic until you were in your 40's, as it killed 300 million people during your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts. 5 million perish. From your birth, until you are 55 you dealt with the fear of Polio epidemics each summer. You experience friends and family contracting polio and being paralyzed and/or die.

At 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn't end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict. During the Cold War, you lived each day with the fear of nuclear annihilation. On your 62nd birthday you have the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, almost ended. When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.

Think of everyone on the planet born in 1900. How did they endure all of that? When you were a kid in 1985 and didn't think your 85 year old grandparent understood how hard school was. And how mean that kid in your class was. Yet they survived through everything listed above.

Perspective is an amazing art.



Refined and enlightening as time goes on. Let's try and keep things in perspective. Your parents and/or grandparents were called to endure all of the above – you are called to stay home and sit on your couch.





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The recent pandemic has distracted from the considerable achievement of the All Saints Team in last September's Bike 'n Hike. We raised the magnificent sum of £1,565.00 and a Silver Award Certificate has been awarded but not yet presented. This was the highest amount collected by any church in the Dunstable Deanery and was nearly 30% of the total collected by all the churches in this Deanery. Overall the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust raised more than £95,000 and our contribution was 1.6% of the total. This is especially noteworthy as Canon Malcom has been elected this year as the Chair of the Trust. Well done Brian, Jennie, Maggie and Canon Malcolm.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, a decision regarding this year's Bike 'n Hike will be made over the next few weeks and following Government advice. In the meantime, please put this date in your diary and be prepared to walk, ride, drive or sponsor this worthwhile charity to support our Historic Churches.

More details from Brian Bainbridge 01525 382 404.

### ***The Day It All Stopped ...***

As the sun awoke from its long journey,  
there was a problem boarding the English deck.  
A silence descended upon the never-stopping city,  
nothing was happening in any community.

A few cars rumbled over the roads,  
looking at everything – all closed.

A sense of unease spread over the country,  
it all happened so very abruptly.

The Doctors and Nurses were applauded and celebrated,  
nothing, in this time, was going to be overrated.

Everything was valued so, so well,  
but we couldn't go to the beach and pick up a shell.

The hospitals were full to the brim with patients,  
mothers had to take extra care of their babies.

The children were told they couldn't go to school,  
everyone had to follow the new protocol.

The adults were told that we had the virus,  
everyone hoped that it would soon bypass us.

No one knows how long it will take,  
we're all waiting to hear about the next update...

***Annabel Rose Sims aged 11***



## ***Lock down and I***

*By Rev'd Noel McGeeney*

Sitting in my office on a wet Tuesday, I can only hope for a miracle vaccine. My life now is all about the next Zoom link and thinking together with others how to be as creative as possible given the limitations. After two weeks getting our world sorted around Zoom Sunday services, on Easter Monday I began with Morning Prayer with the intention of having it every day except Sunday, beginning with Psalm 1. By the time you are reading this we will be around Psalm 70; our regular numbers are well into double figures and I can see us continuing after the pandemic is over. The feedback says that it being presentable by 9am is a good way to start the day!

Funerals are now at the crematorium and graveside, family only, which is very painful for those shielding who cannot attend the funeral of their loved ones.

Life goes on but not as we knew it; we have choices, individually and as a country, in how to use our time, how to spend our money, where to go on holidays, where to invest our energy. At least we can pause and think about all these things. At the time of writing, 5th May, the country has exceeded thirty thousand deaths from Covid-19, a sobering fact. Not that people do not die every day from all kinds of illness and accidents. It is just that we have not had as much time to think in the routine of our daily lives BC, (Before Corona).

When are we going to wake up to the maxim 'there is enough on this earth for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed'; as long as the powers that be continue to create scarcity so as to fan competition, we will all be the poorer. The one quote from GK Chesterton that challenges me to the core says, '*it is not so much that Christianity has been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried*'.

Has the Gospel not taken root in the world? Have we really wasted two thousand years of human history? What does it take to be 'living stones' as the Gospel asks?

To get back to the thrust of this article, there is the Good News that needs to be new and relevant to every generation. Each one of us has a part to play. You may have heard me say there are three ways of looking at life: being a believer in Fate, Luck or Providence. As Judeo-Christians we rely on God's providence; we have the Scriptures to guide us, God leading his chosen people from slavery to liberation, and this is everyone's spiritual journey, out of the fleshpots of Egypt to the Promised Land. God's providence is working through every one of us so all our choices matter.

***Noel McGeeney***

# ***St. Nicholas, Hockliffe***

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Churchwardens:***

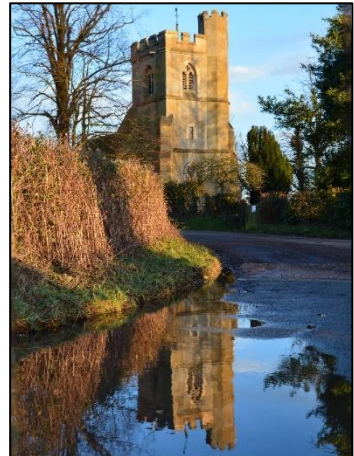
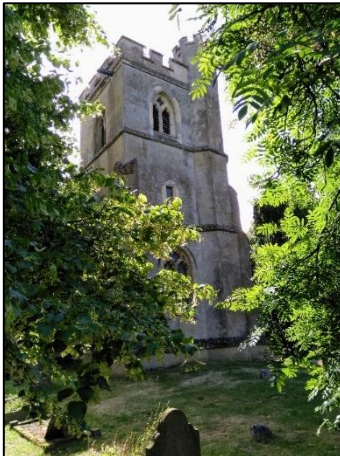
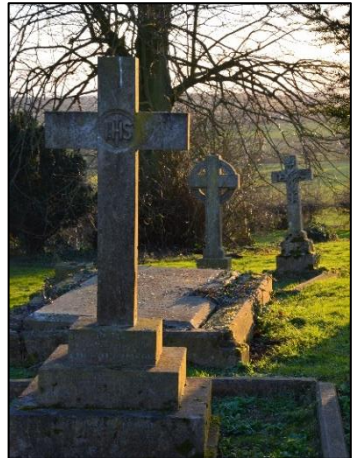
***Julia Dickens 210210; Nerissa Walters 371615***



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# ***St. Michael's, Eggington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Church Officers:***

***Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861***



In these strange times, you certainly notice the lack of traffic and aeroplanes flying overhead, which add to the sense of peace and tranquillity I felt in our churchyard. This made me wonder if back in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, when the church was built, did they build it here because they also felt the peace and tranquillity of the place rather than it was more or less in the middle of the village.

Although we had originally had to cancel many events, including the plant sale, with the slight easing of restrictions, it was decided that we could re-instate the plant sale with strict guidelines. We were able to enter the churchyard via one gate (where hand sanitizer was available), and walk past tables with plants on them, then out the other gate after passing a donation box. It was all done following strict social distancing and with the sun shining; people were able to have a chat, unfortunately, no tea and cake! Maybe next time. All in all, the donations came to a whopping £475! Well done and many thanks to Julie, Martine and their helpers for all their help in organising this. This, plus a "Socially Distanced Working Party" in the churchyard, has helped to bring back a bit of normality to our lives. Our thanks to Stephen, Anne, Carol, Julie and Pauline for all their hard work. Despite the weather, we managed to get the hedge looking neat and tidy again.



We are very thankful to Noel for arranging the Morning Reflections and Sunday Services via Zoom, which he has done every day since the start of the lock down. It is so comforting and uplifting to feel still part of the family of the church and be greeted each morning with cheerful smiles from all the participants. Our numbers are increasing!

It is with great sadness that we heard of David Cox passing away. He was such a lovely, gentle and kind hearted gentleman and so talented with his music. He was also an active member of our church as organist and PCC member. His funeral took place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June at Berton Crematorium. Although, only family were able to be present at the service, we were able to be with them due to the wonders of technology and the use of Webcasts. It was a lovely service with great hymns. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Irene and their family at this sad time.

We hope and pray that before too long, we all may return to worship in our churches and to meet and socialise once again. My God help and bless us and keep us all safe.

***Paul Brown***

## **St. Michael & All Angels, Billington**

**Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh**

**Tel: 01525 838450**

**Churchwardens:**

**Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380**



The Lockdown is easing for which we give thanks, but with the easing come the old problems that we had almost forgotten about, one of the problems being litter. I expect that many of you will have noticed that the verges are now heaving with accumulated rubbish. We are hopefully beating the virus; now we must try to tackle this scourge which threatens to destroy our country and urban environments. The photo was taken recently at the back of Billington Village Hall.



The poem was written a few years ago.

*Along the paths and lanes around my home*

*I searched for flowers as a sign of Spring*

*Deep under hedges mongst the moist green my eye was drawn to vibrancy  
of colour*

*Electric blue, bright silver and a glowing red and all along the path strands of  
saffron grass.*

*But close my eyes. This is not what I sought: the brazen hues of plastic and  
of tin and verdant green turned yellow with the farmers spray.*

*Forgive us Lord for we despoil your land,*

*Yet with you Resurrection power you do forgive.*

*Gently you send your warmth and rain upon the earth.*

*Plants hidden deep through winter's death will live again and heal the wounds  
we've made.*

*Each field and flower will shout the life you give*

*And will we hear you Lord?*

*And will we listen?*

**Sandra Brewin**

## ***Good Shepherd, Sandhills***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens: Steve Nixon; Hazel Farlam***



### ***The gift of a no frills funeral***

Throughout lockdown there has been many heart-breaking stories about how families have been unable to say goodbye to a loved one nearing the end of their life or unable to attend a funeral.

Last month, my Gran died following a stroke. She was 96 and had been living in a care home for two years, defying all medical odds with her longevity despite a myriad of health problems.

My mum stayed at her bedside in her final days, as end of life visits were permitted and somehow my mum got away with staying for 60 odd hours straight, sleeping in my Gran's chair. We were able to say goodbye via WhatsApp video. My five year old has a canny way with words and ended the message with a simple 'I love you, goodbye'. From then, all I could do was sit and wait for the inevitable news, praying and keeping in frequent contact with my family.

During this time, I received prayers and support from my church community, including a phone call from Rev. Steve which was a great help. Prayer, when I was powerless to do anything physical, even offer a hug, was enormously comforting.

The funeral was held in a crematorium in Cheshire and led by a local vicar. This is where for us the Covid-19 restrictions were a gift. The morning air was fresh and the sky clear as we walked through the Garden of Remembrance to the crematorium. There had not been a funeral procession following the hearse as these limousines cannot be used right now. There was no gathering of people we had not seen in years to greet and exchange brief pleasantries with. Instead we just met my parents, brother's family and a care worker from my Gran's care home.

My dad, brother and I each gave a eulogy with personal stories and many references that only us would understand. My mum has written down my Gran's life so that we have a record for future generations. This was not read out at the service, instead the focus was on our fond memories.

Lockdown allowed us a private service, no stress about putting on a public face, no worry about the arrangements for the wake but instead a time to be open and natural to remember a loved one.

For the wake, we brought our own packed lunches and camping chairs to sit in my brother's garden.

Once we no longer have to social distance we will arrange a memorial to invite wider family and friends. But in that fragile time of grief we are grateful that we could share it privately with no frills.

***Jo Bellamy***

## ***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, Roger Collor discusses*



### ***Intercession***

Just over fifty-four years ago, I found myself assisting George Willett (Brian's dad, in case you asked!) construct a strangely-shaped bouquet composed of a variety of fresh herbs and flowers mounted on top of an old broomstick that had been handed down to us from previous generations. It was George's very first time after being appointed as the Garlandman for an older and uniquely English custom – indeed unique to Leighton Buzzard even! George was a professional gardener who had actually grown the wonderful flowers to be included in the bouquet, and incidentally including over-100 'King of Denmark' geranium blooms from one (Yes, one!) of George's magnificent greenhouse plants. This horticultural part of the custom originated in the need for a garland of 'sweet-smelling herbs' to be carried by a Garlandman in front of a procession of worthy citizens through the streets. The garland's purpose was in order to alleviate the ever-present putrid odours which would rise from the rotting matter deposited in the stagnant gutters before they engaged the delicate noses of the procession's participants. This procession of clergy, choir, Almshouse Trustees and congregation, which has taken place here in Leighton annually at Rogationtide since the seventeenth century, wends its way from All Saints church to the Wilkes Almshouses in North Street.



There, at the boundary of the Almshouses' estate, the Vicar of Leighton is required to stand some young person from the choir on his (or nowadays possibly 'her') head whilst an extract from the Wilkes' will is read out. This bizarre action is required by the will "to impress upon his mynde" not only where the boundary is but also the memory and generosity of Edward and Matthew Wilkes for the money they gave to build and maintain the almshouses. I cannot help thinking that the will was written with a mischievous smile.



So much for the context! The point is that the Rogation procession is an offshoot from a much-earlier and more widespread national tradition which harks back to the time when parishes defined their boundaries by ‘walking’ them annually in procession at Rogationtide. Indeed at points along the way, choirboys were beaten with sticks (Beating the bounds) “to further impress upon their myndes” where the boundaries were located, and occasionally an oak sapling was planted and the Gospel for Rogation Sunday was read out over it. Hence the origin of the ‘Gospel Oak’ as a permanent parish boundary marker. But included in the procession’s programme – and indeed to this day included in the Wilkes Walk too – there are four pauses on the journey. These are to read out ‘Rogation’ prayers to the North, East, South and West, originally asking for God’s blessing on the developing crops in the surrounding fields in those directions and on those who laboured in those fields to tend them, but updated in recent years in the Wilkes’ Walk, to include such things as local industry, commerce and education.

These prayers, read out ‘over’ the crops and other ‘estates’ are categorised as ‘intercessions’. In other words, they are prayers offered on behalf of others - in the original case, the farmers – who for a variety of reasons might not formulate those prayers themselves or would wish others to do so on their behalf.

Our Sunday and weekday church services always have a special part reserved for intercessory prayers and they are offered to Almighty God by an ‘Intercessor’ whether it be the person taking the service or by someone else nominated for the purpose. The prayers take up matters not only of personal or local concern on behalf of the congregation, but also on behalf of the wider world and deal with those things that they wish to set before God.

But why do we need intercessors? Can’t we do this ourselves in our private prayers? Well, of course we can, and certainly God listens to our own prayers but our own prayers can – quite properly - include prayers for and about ourselves too, and sometimes this can divert us from the more altruistic approach of intercession that we may have set ourselves as a purpose when we started praying at that particular time.

And an incidental advantage of having intercessors is that we can benefit from hearing a rich range of styles of prayer, from which we can pick and choose to craft our own private prayers, whether these are indeed just about ourselves (‘forgive me my trespasses’) or including those close to us (‘give us today our daily bread’) or more worldly (‘may thy will be done on earth’).

So, in interceding, we are looking outwards from ourselves, looking to see what others need, what others wish to pray for but for some reason perhaps cannot, and to selectively ask for God’s help in meeting their supplications. And we can do this ourselves in our private prayers and/or we can become part of a greater body - a prayer group, congregation or whole Church – being led by an ‘intercessor’ in a common purpose, offering up a single or a series of prayers to which we can affirm in a meaningful “AMEN”.

*Roger Collor*

# *God moves in a mysterious way*

When William Cowper penned the words of the hymn which begins with these words in 1773 he was suffering from acute depression and had attempted to take his own life. It appears the poem that came to him was God's way of reaching him with a healing touch. The poem was originally entitled 'Light Shining out of Darkness'.

Today's Covid-19 crisis is causing acute anxiety for millions, quite apart from the deaths of thousands. It is far from easy to discern what God is saying to us through it. Now as the lockdown is being cautiously lifted, we find ourselves asking what the future will be like. The vast majority do not want it to return to how it was before. In three months, the carbon footprint has shrunk in previously unimaginable ways. Air pollution has vanished from our cities; sound pollution from traffic and planes. We have had time to notice the natural world, and perhaps to have grown in appreciation of it. Springwatch on the tele has been better than ever. More have ventured into horticulture. Cycling has more than doubled. Working from home has become viable for many. Some are seeing the possibility of a massive change in the ways in which we must rebuild what now looks like a broken world.

So, is God moving in a mysterious way to enable us to discover new ways of living together on this crowded planet? Surely, He is. Just as the crisis of WW2 led to the birth of the NHS, so our present crisis must become the crucible for a new vision for the future. I think the light is beginning to shine in some areas.

1/. The crisis has revealed how valuable the lives of care workers and many other key workers really are. This value is not reflected in how much they are paid. The gap between rich and poor must be radically reduced.

2/. The opportunity to create new green jobs, and to invest in clean energy for a carbon free future must be the response to the loss of so many jobs to the virus. It is as if God has kick-started the green revolution to enable us to live in a sustainable way.

3/. The death of George Floyd in Minnesota at the hands of the police has prompted world-wide awareness of the virus of racism and the bitter legacy of slavery which still haunts our society. The part that non-white people from around the globe have played in our battle with the corona virus, and the high proportion of them who have died, has brought this issue to the fore for us all.

In these and doubtless many other ways the God of surprises is prompting us all into new ways of thinking and being. I do not believe that William Cowper thought that God either caused or desired his depression. Nevertheless, he discovered that 'the bud might have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.' Let us use the bitter taste of the virus to search out what the flowers might be.

**Canon John Payne-Cook**

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