

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

June 2021

70p

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40th anniversary**



All Saints Leighton Buzzard

Team Rector & Vicar of All Saints:

Rev'd Cate Irvine

The Vicarage,

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Curate:

Kirsty Borthwick

Will join the team from Sunday 27th June 2021

Team Vicars:

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Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton 01525 372149

Rev'd Steve Marsh 01525 838450

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Canon Malcolm Grant 01525 372771

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Welcoming a new curate

By Rev'd Cate Irvine



As I write this, we still don't know whether we will be enjoying a restriction-free life by the end of this month and I suspect that many of us are waiting with bated breath to see what our summer will hold.



But, whatever the government decides, we all have something to look forward to: the arrival of our new curate Rev'd Kirsty Borthwick. Mother Kirsty will be ordained Deacon by Bishop Alan on Saturday 26th June at St. Albans Cathedral and we will be welcoming her to All Saints on Sunday 27th June. She will be based primarily at All Saints but will work across the whole team so you'll all have a chance meet her whilst she is with us.

A curate is placed in a parish for two reasons: firstly, there is a minister suitable to be a Training Incumbent; secondly, the parish itself is healthy and able to provide a variety and range of opportunities for the curate. This means that you will all be part of shaping this stage of Mother Kirsty's ministry and I hope that you will allow yourselves to be open both to what she will bring to us and to the ways in which you can support and encourage her.

Here are some top tips for supporting a curate:

- Please pray for Mother Kirsty both as she prepares for her ordination and throughout her ministry.
- Do welcome her, and if you send a card or letter why not include a picture to help her put names to faces?
- Don't expect her to know your name or what you do. She will be getting to know a lot of people in a short time and it will really help if you can introduce yourself each time you meet.
- Do be open to both the new things and the experience that Mother Kirsty will bring to our shared life.
- Don't compare Mother Kirsty to anyone else.
- Do be ready to learn, both as individuals and congregations.

Having a curate joining us in ministry here is a chance to renew our own commitment to our vocations as we seek to serve God in this place. Maybe it will encourage you to think about what God is calling you to do or to be.

As we celebrate her ordination with her, we can give thanks that God calls each one of us and is faithful as we discern together what our vocations are, both as individuals and as congregations.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me." Jeremiah 29:11-13

Mother Cate.

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

Please note new times which allow for cleaning between services

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am

1st & 3rd Sundays: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday Holy Baptism

6pm Said Evening Prayer

3rd Sunday: followed by Benediction

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

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

During Lockdown, services in Heath & Reach, Eggington and Hockliffe are being shared by Zoom from each church in rotation at 10am. For details please contact Fr Noel McGeeney.

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays: Occasional services

8am Holy Communion

For details please visit:

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

Sundays: Occasional services

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

Sundays: Occasional services

St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington

Sundays:

11.15am Holy Communion

Good Shepherd, Greenleas School, Sandhills:

Sundays at 9.45am:

1st, 3rd & 4th: All Age Communion

2nd: Community outreach at Astral Park Sports & Community Centre

Service times may vary.

For details of services and all other events, please see the websites.

Sunday Saints: for age 3+ year olds, meets during 9.30am Sunday service at All Saints.

All Saints Toddler Time: All Saints on Wednesdays except 1st Weds. of the month, during term time, from 9.30–11am. £1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

Both of these activities will restart in October

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".

Bereavement Café: a support group offering friendship and understanding.

1st Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints

Choir Practice: Normally Friday evenings. Restricted at present by Covid regulations.

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

Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10am-2pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

Pulford Pre-school Places for September 2021: If you are looking for a space in our pre-school in September, NOW is the time to contact school; we are currently considering applications for our next intake. If you would like more information about our setting please look at our website <https://www.pulfordschool.org/> or call Mrs Quick, 01525 372188.

*** **

Climate Sunday, 6th June: ahead of the COP26 summit, churches across Great Britain & Ireland will hold a climate-focused service. At these services (8:00 & 9:30), we will make a commitment to greater action, to pray for our world, to address climate change in our own place of worship and community and to use our voice to tell politicians we want a cleaner, greener, fairer future.

*** **

The Spire Coffee Shop has now re-opened. We are continuing with the same arrangements as when we closed in December 2020 (waitress service and one-way system). Arrangements may change according to government regulations. If anyone wishes to become a volunteer, please contact the Parish Office.

*** **

Many services are being live-streamed on our You Tube channel:

We will keep our website and Facebook page updated.

<https://allsaintslb.org.uk/>

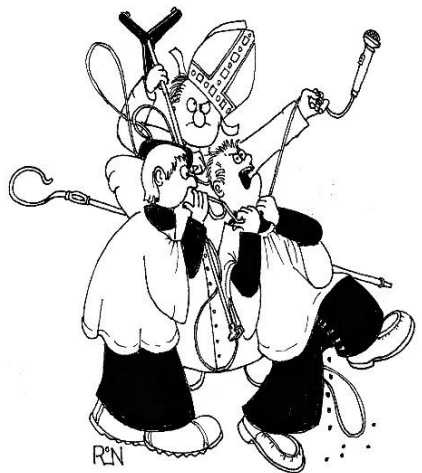
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Worth a smile

Miscellaneous observations on life

- I want to be 14 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.
- Scratch a dog – and you'll find a permanent job.
- Every seven minutes of every day, someone in an aerobics class pulls a muscle.
- Few things are more satisfying than seeing your children have teenagers of their own.
- Learn from others' mistakes. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.
- Money isn't everything, but it does keep you in touch with your children.



After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practice.

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, April:

No weddings

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

Holy Baptism, April:

No baptisms

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. April:

1: Laura Fox at All Saints; 6: Alfred Bates at Bierton; 8: Angela Slade at St. Leonard's; 13: Ruth Moore at St. Barnabas; 19: Roy Gibbons at St. Leonard's; 21: (Gwendoline) Hope Rose at St. Barnabas; 23: Ronald Sherriff at Bierton; 26: Rosemary Hodey at All Saints; 27: Patricia Plaster at Bierton; 30: Andrew Tooth at All Saints

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

Years Mind, June:

1: Ada Gotzheim; 2: Sheila Aris, Barbara Macdonald, Patricia Stonehouse; 3: Hedley Thompson, Ira Bowerman, Eugenio Caruana; 4: Karl Jones, Rev. David Joynes; 5: Norman Griffiths; 7: Dorothy Speller, Beryl Jessup, Sidney Westwood; 8: Robert Molloy, Doris Pullin, Shirley Jones; 9: Ann Meredith; 11: Peter Beecroft; 13: Davina Baker, Jasmine Baker; 15: Jean Waudby, Cyril Burchell; 18: Norman Cowley, John Shelley; 20: Margaret Leath, George Willett, Doris Froud; 21: Marie Cooper; 22: Frances Eaton, Ron McCall; 23: Edgar Hart, Minnie Eaton; 24: Norman Dillamore, Joy Square; 27: Elsie Beauchamp, Eddie Shephard; 28: David Ingledow; 29: Rosemary Plenderleath; 30: Caroline Greco, Paul Bottos

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Pulford VA Lower School
Head Teacher: Mr Dave Heather
Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick
Tel: 01525 372188

A church school for
a whole community



Honey Bees and Pentecost

We are delighted to have a beautiful school full of children eager to learn! Last Monday, however, the school became rather overcrowded with the arrival of 1000 honey bees. One of the residents in Church Avenue spoke to me after Church on the Sunday and mentioned that she had seen the swarm moving in the direction of the school. Sure enough, they had decided that a football goal would make a superb location for a hive. (*See front cover for a picture of the swarm.*)

I confess, unlike some of you, I know very little about honey bees but this experience taught me several new facts. Did you know that:

- The honey bee is the only insect that produces food eaten by man.
- A honey bee can fly for up to six miles, and as fast as 15 miles per hour, hence it would have to fly around 90,000 miles - three times around the globe – to make one pound of honey.
- It takes one ounce of honey to fuel a bee's flight around the world.
- The queen bee lives for about 2-3 years. She is the busiest during summer, when the hive needs to be at its maximum strength, and lays up to 2500 eggs a day.
- The honey bee's wings stroke 11,400 times per minute, making their distinctive buzz.
- A honey bee visits 50 to 100 flowers during a collection trip.
- Fermented honey, known as Mead, is the most ancient fermented beverage.
- The term "honey moon" originated with the Norse practice of consuming large quantities of Mead during the first month of a marriage.

When I asked the Queen Bee why they had taken up residence at the school she said it was because she had heard that Mother Cate would be taking the service to celebrate Pentecost later in the week.

And so, on a lovely sunny Wednesday morning that week the whole school joined together on the field to sing, pray and listen to God's word and give thanks for the birthday of the church. We have enjoyed worshipping in this way during the restrictions of the past year but have missed being in All Saints for our services. We hope that very soon our church will once again be filled with the singing of our children as we continue to grow together in our Christian faith.

Mr. Dave Heather, MBE





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On a musical note.....



The Upside of Lockdown

Making music on your own in your living-room is surreal. Making it “musical” is next to impossible. And yet that is what the All Saints choristers have been doing during lockdown.

In terms of human interaction, and in common with so many activities this year, it is strange, isolated, a little lonely, lacking camaraderie. Normally, in “real choir”, singers rely on each other to make music musical. They feel, breathe, tune ... re-act together as a body, like a swarm of fish or murmuration of starlings. It is not possible to interact with a backing track! If you go wrong, it will not share a wry smile or giggle with you.

But there are upsides to being alone: I am not a musician, and only joined my first choir a very few short years ago. In fact, when I think about it, I have never been in a church where there was a choir before - so all this music is new to me. The pace at proper choir practice is frenetic – new music every week; 5 or 6 pieces to do in an hour, plus warm up and hymns and psalms. 6 minutes per piece – if you’re lucky. To the uninitiated, it can feel as if you’re drowning. (I often wonder how the youngest choristers cope. It is a good job they have experienced, patient minders to help, but even so!)

I have the invaluable support of other altos – kind, generous, and tolerant. Together, we can breathe, sing loudly or be quiet, produce music more or less musically. And share the frustration when it goes wrong. Even with their help, whether I get the right notes in roughly the right order is very hit-and-miss. And I rarely feel as if I’ve actually learned a piece properly.

So doing it alone in my living-room appeared at first to be a daunting challenge – maybe a challenge too far. The reality, though, is different – we have backing tracks, with metronome clicks to keep us in time; voice-emphasised versions to help us learn the notes; and detailed instructions about exactly how the nuance and subtlety of each piece should work – how to negotiate the dynamics, and manipulate the phrases so that they make sense. My sight reading has improved beyond measure, and I can learn in my own time, at my own pace. I sing pretty much every day now – a novelty in itself. And only when I am pretty sure that I’ve cracked it, do I attempt to press the ‘record’ button.

Even then, I often need 57 takes before I hit the ‘save’ button - frustrated by wrong notes and forgotten dynamics or scuppered by the arrival of the Amazon delivery man screeching to a halt outside the window of my “recording space”! And it still won’t sound much like music until the tech wizkids (Alan, Patrick and Paul) have waved their wands and worked their magic, blending my offering with all the others.

But by myself, in my little bubble, I am ecstatic every time I reach the moment when I can press that ‘save’ button. Such is Lockdown joy.

Julia Dickens

***Celebrating ordination – new and old
two special services to look forward to ...***

Sunday 27th June 9.30am at All Saints

Welcome Kirsty: Our new curate, Kirsty Borthwick, will be ordained in St Alban's Abbey on Saturday 26th June. Her first service in All Saints will be at 9.30am on Sunday 27th June. We look forward to welcoming her.



Monday 28th June 10am at All Saints

Canon Grant Fellows will be presiding at a service to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. All are welcome to attend this service and share this occasion with him.



Come & Sing

for Leighton-Linslade

**Programme includes Gilbert & Sullivan
& Songs from the Shows**

Rehearsal at 3pm

Run though at 6.30pm. Visitors Welcome

Registrations and information from secretary@lbfs.org.uk

St. Barnabas Church Linslade

Saturday 10th July www.lbfs.org.uk

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PARISH CHURCH

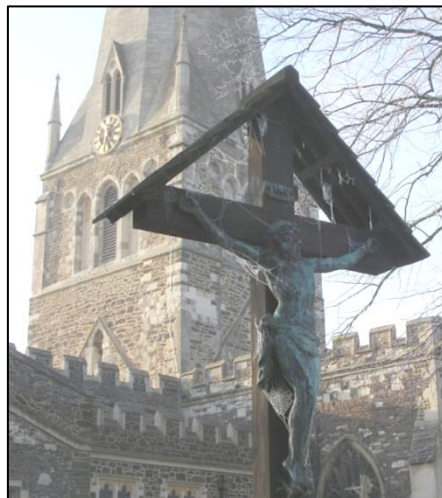
SUMMER FETE

Saturday 3rd July
11am to 3pm
Fete set in the Church Grounds

FREE ENTRY- FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY
Stalls - Music - Refreshments -Etc
All activities will follow the government COVID-19
guidance at the time

Lift your eyes ... Looking at some of All Saints' curiosities

with thanks to Terry Warburton for his help with this series



Faces of All Saints

A reminder of Christ's crucifixion is the first thing people notice as they enter the churchyard. It represents the faith to which All Saints bears witness. The crucifix, originally outside Faith Press, a religious publisher and printer in Wing Road, was moved to All Saints in 1965 and looked just right in its new home, facing the town, with the old church as a backdrop. The picture above shows it being installed and top right, standing watch on a more recent wintry morning. Note the condition of the building in the earlier picture.



Inside, there are eight restored roof angels. The one above the staircase replaces one lost in the fire. (The charred remains now live on a window ledge in the north transept).

All the repaired or replaced figures and angels were beautifully decorated by Campbell Smith & Co.



The Roof Apostles

The first followers of Jesus had hard and challenging lives and some can be seen depicted inside the church, standing on corbels in the chancel. They are high but worth looking at. All were damaged to a greater or lesser extent during the 1985 fire, but careful research by the then curate, Keith Robinson, and the expert craftsmanship of Joe Dawes of Corpusty, Norfolk, helps us to identify them by providing items to wear or to hold relating to their lives (or deaths).

From top right going clockwise, they are:

- St John with a chalice and serpent;
- St Jude with a halberd and book;
- St James the Less with fuller's club and book;
- St James the Great with satchel and staff;
- St Andrew with saltire cross;
- St Peter with keys and a book;
- St Paul with a sword.

There are three more to discover when you visit:

- St Bartholomew with flaying knife,
- St Matthew with a cross
- and St Philip with three loaves.



A message from All Saints Churchwardens

At last, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. And it's not a train! It has been wonderful to see the resumption of more of our services mid-week and on Sundays at 8.00 and 11.30. Whilst, for the time being, we still need to maintain physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings, we hope that by the time you come to read the July / August issue we may be back close to our old normal. Unfortunately, earlier in May, we were unable to undertake our yearly walk to the Alms Houses with the Wilkes' Walk. Mother Cate was, however, delighted to be able to deliver her first Wilkes' Sermon. We had some great facts about the Wilkes family – do catch it on You Tube if you missed it on the day. We hope that the choir will also be able to resume before too long: unfortunately step 3 of the Government's roadmap has not lifted restrictions yet on church choirs.

May also sees the Annual Parish Church Meeting, which will have passed by the time you come to read this article. Copies of all of the committee reports are available from the church office if you missed collecting a copy from All Saints. One of the key presentations is on the church finances: like many organisations, All Saints has been affected greatly by the pandemic, with many fewer weddings, baptisms and funerals, and the closure of the Coffee Shop, which has impacted significantly our income. On current estimates, we are facing a deficit in excess of £10,000. Please can we encourage all church members to review their giving? If you are not already paying by standing order, again may we make a plea that you give it due consideration so that we can plan more accurately?

Whilst mentioning the Coffee Shop, we are pleased that it has been able to re-open under the current guidelines. Please do show your support and tell your friends!

On Sunday 16th May, we were delighted to have the Bishop of Bedford with us for our first Confirmation Service in Church since 2019. As you can see from the photo, Bishop Richard was pleased to pose for photos with Mother Cate and our five candidates from All Saints: Dave, Peter, Sam, James and Emma.



Whilst the congregation was small, it was a lovely occasion, with a notes-free sermon on St Matthias, including a quiz which we all failed!

If you haven't been to a service for a while but do now feel safe and able to return, we look forward to seeing you.

**Bill, Janet and John
All Saints Churchwardens**

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

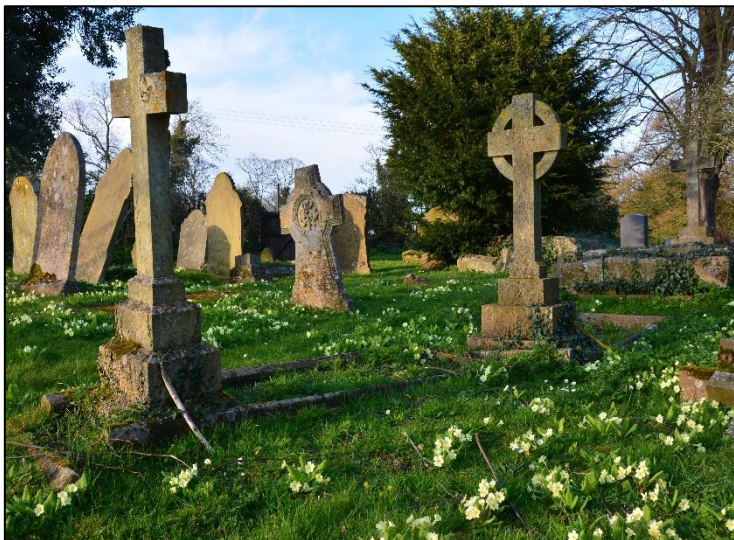
Churchwardens: Brian Speller: 210 565;

Roger Spalding: 07451 877 501



During the lockdown, I think most of us have thought differently about our faith and our lives. More of us, have had more time, and are looking around at the beauty of the earth, and realize there is more to life than rushing around, and that we should take time to relax and take a breather.

After a long spell of crisp mornings and beautiful blue skies, we notice that the trees are full of blossom; flowers, shrubs, and hedges are beginning to send out their green shoots. In our gardens, everywhere we go, there are bird nests, which we try not to disturb. The churchyard too is full of primroses and violets.



At St. Nicholas, we have had a new noticeboard erected to replace the old one, which was beginning to deteriorate. This was made by Bob Walters, and we thank him very much for doing such a good job. It looks really smart now.

We welcome Amelia Geraldine Miles and her family on her baptism at St. Nicholas Church, and we hope she will continue on her spiritual journey throughout her life.

There is also to be a marriage between Matthew Comb and Sarah Cory on Saturday 19th June, and we would all like to wish them every happiness for the future.

At our A.P.C.M, we elected a new member on to the committee, (though she has been a regular communicant and coming to our Church for many years). Rose Price said she is willing to help, and we appreciate her coming to join our team.

This year we hope to get back to our normal programme of events and services, as soon as possible, with renewed vigour and Christian love.

Carol Speller

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History and Mystery in our churchyard: This month - History



In a remote corner of our churchyard, there is a grave surrounded by an iron fence and sadly overgrown with ivy and weeds (a job for our working party!). Therein lie the graves of **Rev. John Hurnall**, his wife Mary, and one of their daughters, Mary Eliza.

Rev. Hurnall was the vicar of Eggington between 1859 and 1881; ordained Deacon in 1828, he was curate in a number of parishes in Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and the Isle of Wight before coming to Eggington. After leaving Eggington, he moved to St Helier in Jersey, presumably for his retirement, where he died in 1892.

His wife, Mary Badham, was the daughter of Charles Badham M.D. F.R.S. who apparently invented the term "bronchitis". She died in 1866; and their daughter died in 1875, also while he was the vicar here, so both were buried in the churchyard. One can assume that he specified that he wanted to be buried with them, as it must have been costly to bring him back from Jersey, especially in those days.

I wonder why they were buried in, what is now, such a remote part of the churchyard, or was it so then?

Col. Charles Ball-Acton has quite an impressive headstone. The youngest son of Lt-Col. William Acton and his wife Caroline, he was educated at Rugby and Cheltenham and entered the army in 1851. He worked his way up the rankings to become Colonel of the 1st. Battalion, King's Own Light Infantry. He married Georgina Cecilia Annesley in 1869 and they had seven children. She died in 1912.



After a distinguished career seeing action in a number of countries, he retired and lived in Northamptonshire before moving to Eggington House. He interested himself in religious and philanthropic organisations, was a vigorous supporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society and was a keen supporter of the temperance movement as he had been a total abstainer for over 20 years. He was also the chair of the Church Missionary Society in Leighton Buzzard. He died in 1897 aged 66 of acute bronchitis and complications. His body was carried from Eggington House to the church where the Rev. J. Sunderland read the service.

Paul Brown

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



Our Annual Parish Church Meeting was held after the service in Church on 18th April. With relief Julia Haviland and Sandra Brewin were able to make their declarations as Church Wardens in Church to Revd Steve instead of trekking miles across country and finding a place to park outside some unfamiliar church. This signing turned out to be much more eco-friendly. Julia and Sandra have both decided that this will be their last year as Church Wardens and that it is time for others to take over that honour. David Thompson remains as Treasurer and PCC secretary for which we are truly grateful.

Much as we have appreciated, learnt a lot and made new friends through Zooming we are pleased to be able once again to worship in St Michael and All Angels, hum hymns to Carl Moulding's organ accompaniment and then chat outside in the Churchyard afterwards. We are hoping to continue our friendships with members of CGS by meeting together, either at Greenlees School or at St Michael and All Angels. We are grateful to Marjory Grant for resuming the compiling of the monthly rota so that we are all aware of what we are supposed to be doing. Marjory is always eager to hear of those willing to take part in either interceding or lesson reading in the services. Also it would be helpful to have a few more names on the flower rota and the coffee rota, looking for the time when we can start serving coffee after the service again.

The entrance to the village hall has now been repaired following an accident (nobody hurt) several weeks ago. Already the bookings for parties and groups are slowly coming in and it is hoped by late summer or early autumn, the hall will be in full use again. We are hoping that work will start soon on building a toilet for the disabled but this depends



on a few factors being resolved. We are grateful to Wendy our cleaning lady who has faithfully made sure that the hall has been kept clean throughout the various lockdowns.

And finally:

I couldn't resist sharing this picture of the poor old Prunus tree which works so hard to cheer us up in the spring.

Sandra Brewin

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwarden: Steve Nixon



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Prayer vs action

I'm a problem solver. I love seeing a challenge, unpicking it and coming up with a solution. I also loath a problem swirling unresolved in my head and try to solve problems before they arise. I used to see this as a super power of mine. I could imagine all the things that could go wrong, and in advance have a battery of mitigations.

In the first lockdown, the daily Amazon delivery became a household joke as in comfort, I scrolled potential purchases that could solve little problems that didn't need solving as we adjusted to working from home, home schooling and being together all the time.

I now know that this 'super power' is anything but. Instead, it is an unhelpful thinking style called catastrophizing and ruminating. So, when I start to form a risk register in my mind in lieu of a trip to the beach, I take a moment to channel Elsa from the film Frozen and tell myself to just 'let it go'.

Contemplative, quiet prayer is not a natural go-to for my problems as my noisy brain is not predisposed to stopping and listening. I find hearing someone say, 'let's pray on it', really difficult to understand. If I can influence it, I want action, a way forward, a plan. How does prayer get the task done? How does prayer change an undesirable situation you are not prepared to fix yourself? Isn't prayer sometimes just a form of procrastination?

When I start to think in a black and white way about faith, I know I'm missing a trick and need to check in with our church's house group. Here I learnt that it isn't a simple choice of action vs prayer but 'God being with you in the action', using 'reflection to learn through a conversation with God' and just being 'your authentic self' as God already knows everything about you, so you don't need to formally offer it up as a tidy prayer ritual. Someone also reminded me of Mother Cate's sermon on her first visit to our church where she encouraged us to not seek to pray in a perfect way but just pray in our own way.

James said "*faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove*" [James 2: 18]. So, for me, I think my version of spiritual discernment is God being with me as I mull the problem over and as I reflect on my decisions with Him. It is also Jesus' influence over my daily interactions and choices. So, I suppose after all, I do 'pray on it', I just hadn't recognised it as this before.



Jo Bellamy

Saints on Earth

Personal accounts of the wide-range of spiritually significant men and women who have inspired and influenced us. Fr. Bernard looks at the lives of

Richard Eckersley & Derek Moody



I have chosen to reflect on two individuals who both had a profound influence on me because they were vicars of St Nicholas' Brighton, the church my family went to for the whole of my childhood.

The first, Richard Eckersley, was parish priest from 1973 to 1984. He became the parish priest when I was four or five, and is thus the first clergyman I really remember. At the time that he arrived, St Nick's was a somewhat old fashioned Anglo-Catholic church. The only altar was the High Altar, far away behind a rood screen, through which clergy and servers ventured for the holy bits of the service. As the only children in church, my brother and I sat in the back pew with Mum, who spent most of her time trying to pacify us and sidestep our childish boredom, while Dad was one of the band of servers, vanishing out of our sight behind incense and pillars. Everything seemed very distant from us: there was not much practical embodying of incarnation – of God being with us in the reality of our actual lives!

Fr Richard made a huge number of changes to the parish, the most obvious being a nave altar, but equally profound was the change he made to St Nick's culture: people began to smile, and to use each other's first names, an unheard-of innovation! He gave people nicknames, some of which I still remember (I was "the Tribes" for reasons I won't explain), and broke down some of the barriers that existed in the church, both architecturally and pastorally. In so doing he brought the Incarnation out of the realm of abstract doctrine and into the lived experience of the congregation. Reflecting on these things now, it is clear to me that Fr Richard created the positive assumptions about 'Church' that I have retained: that the Church was friendly, loving and even sometimes fun. Fr Richard became a very good family friend, and remained so up until his sudden death in 2013, aged 87.

Fr Derek Moody was parish priest from 1988 until his untimely death in 2005, aged 64. He shaped my maturing faith, showing me a God of unstinting love in the midst of a world of complicated emotions and uncertainties. He was energetic, almost restless; always willing to experiment and try new things. He became my spiritual director, and it was through him that I first experienced what we now call the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but which is still more commonly called Confession. It is a practice that varies widely in its efficacy and appropriateness, but for me, with Fr Derek's care, it provided a transforming encounter with the all-encompassing nature of God's love.

In his parochial ministry, and in his life, Fr Derek showed me what a good and faithful Christian looked like. I knew he was a person of integrity, courage and imagination: he was also a gay man, at a time when that was challenging for the Church. (Though it is perhaps the case that it would be no less challenging for many in the Church now, and it is a sombre reflection for me that I would not have felt able to write that openly if Fr Derek were still alive and in active ministry).

There are a number of similarities between the two men I have chosen. In the first place, obviously, they were Priests. Both trained at Chichester Theological College, neither of them married, and when I first met them, both lived with and looked after their elderly mothers. Indeed, it was Fr Derek who gave me the invaluable advice that when moving into a new parish, there were three indispensable assets that a clergyman might employ to settle in with the congregation: in order of usefulness; a baby; an elderly mother; or a dog! Fr Derek brought the second two: Fr Richard had Siamese cats, instead!

There were differences, too. Fr Richard was wealthy and upper class. He went to Trinity College Cambridge and served in the Royal Navy at the end of the second World War. Thereafter he spent most of his ministry in Portsmouth, latterly as a Cathedral Canon. He had the jovial and sometimes blithe confidence of many upper-class Englishman of his generation. By contrast, Fr Derek described himself as a Scouse urchin (though not if his mother could hear him!). He was proud of being from the terraces of Merseyside, and spent the majority of his ministry in Southwark, in urban south London.

One thing that they have in common is that neither has made any kind of obvious historical mark. They have not left any visible legacy behind them: no statues or monuments by which they will be remembered. Even the changes they both made to St Nick's, have either been changed again since, or have ceased to be remembered as having anything to do with them! When the people who remember them die, all memory of them will have perished also. But despite that, both of them have nonetheless left a legacy through inspiring lives of love made visible. They did not merely talk about a God of love; they witnessed to him every day, in every interaction that I and many others had with them. Thus they are among that "cloud of witnesses" "that no man could number", whose names may be forgotten, but whose legacy lives on in the lives of those they touched, even if they are largely unknown and unacknowledged today.

Of course, both of them were human, too. Neither of them was faultless, any more than we are! But I think of them as saints because I know that God sanctifies us all with His love, and I also know that I encountered that love in both of them. They made God visible to me. I pray that with their prayers enfolding me, the same might one day be said about me too!

Fr. Bernard Minton

On another musical note.....

The Story behind the Hymn: ‘Lord, for the years’

*Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.*

*Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise. ...*

This well-loved hymn was written in 1967 by the Revd Timothy Dudley Smith, who subsequently became Bishop of Thetford. He confessed: “I wrote it on a train when I was very pressed for time. I’m thankful if something I write gets picked up, but I suspect anyone who does something in a rush later regrets that they didn’t find time to apply the sandpaper a bit more!”

Dudley Smith had been asked to write a hymn for the centenary service of the Children’s Special Service Mission, now Scripture Union, in St Paul’s Cathedral. His commission was to write words that could be fitted to Jean Sibelius’s *Finlandia*, as it was to be accompanied by an orchestra with this tune in their repertoire. And so – ‘Lord, for the years’ was written. (NB: It is now normally sung to a different tune, called ‘Lord of the Years’ by Michael Baughen.)

Dudley Smith need not have worried about lack of time – his lyrics were a ‘hit’ in the cathedral on the day, and went on to become so well-loved that George Carey chose the hymn to be sung at his consecration as Bishop of Bath and Wells, and then again later, in 1991, at his consecration as Archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral.

The hymn continued to be widely sung and loved, and in 2002 Timothy Dudley Smith was asked to write an extra verse for it so that it could be sung around the time of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee.

Many of the words in the hymn are indeed true for the Queen herself, as she celebrates her 95th birthday this month. She does indeed thank God ‘for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way’...

And so indeed the ‘extra’ verse added for the Queen has also held true:

*Lord for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,
Christ and his kingdom one united aim,
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name.*

[Thanks to Parish Pump for this article]

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