

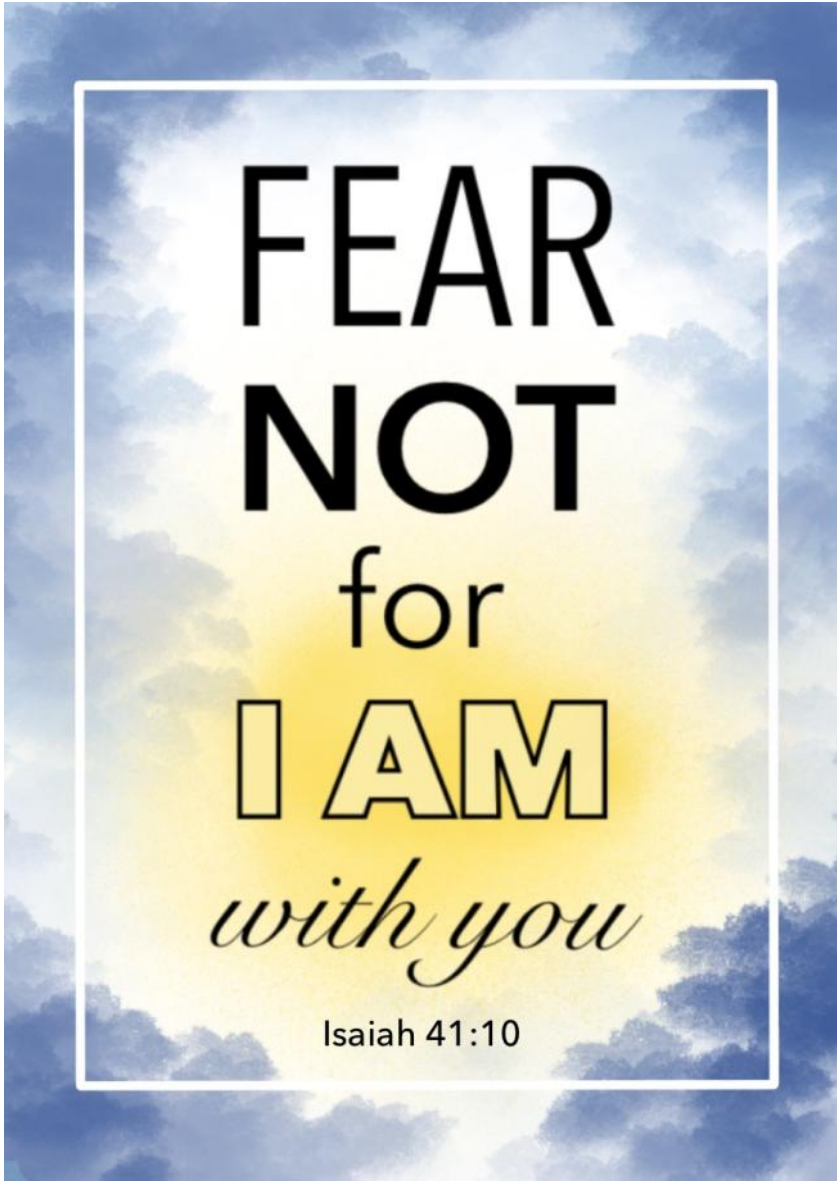


CROSSROADS

The Family Magazine of St Hilda's, Ashford, Middlesex

No. 709 May 2020

Free - but donations welcome!



The Parish of **St Hilda, Ashford** in the Diocese of London
Charity Reg. No. 1134119

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Advertising:		Contact via Parish Office

**Deadline for
June 2020 copy is
Sunday 10th May**

**Deadline for
July/August 2020 copy is
Sunday 7th June**

Post typed or written copy,
CD discs or memory sticks
at the Parish Office, or e-mail:
crossroads_ashford@hotmail.com

*An item submitted after the deadline
may be accepted for inclusion IF the
Editor has been informed by the dead-
line that the item is on its way.*

**When is the Vicar not available
in May?**

Every Saturday: day off

EDITORIAL

At the time of writing this, we have been in lockdown for more than a month. There is no indication of when this will be eased, and no likelihood of things getting back to "normal" for the foreseeable future.

This magazine has several examples of events cancelled, postponed, or replaced by virtual events. This May includes the celebration of Rogation Sunday, Ascension Day and Pentecost, when we won't be able to be physically together. However, statistics show that many more people are accessing digital church services than usually attend church. As this edition of Crossroads will only be available electronically via St. Hilda's web site, I assume you know about our streamed services - thank you, Fr. Joseph and the team.

Most of the content of this edition is from Parish Pump. It would be good to have contributions from more of our readers. Many of you currently have more spare time than usual. Why not spend a bit of it writing for next month's magazine? If your children or grandchildren are bored, ask them to contribute! How have you been spending your time? Do you have a favourite walk? Have you started a new hobby? What changes have you noticed now there is less traffic (and air traffic)? We accept photographs too!

For more serious topics, what worries do you have about the lockdown? What lessons do you think we should learn from this pandemic (personally, as a church, as a country)? Do you have a story of a good neighbour to share?

Note that the deadline for next month has been relaxed.

Here are some of my reflections (some with my environmental hat on!)

I hope that when this crisis ends we choose not to return to our old "normal". We have experienced weeks with much less traffic - and much less air pollution, and less noise so we can be aware of birdsong. Can we avoid getting back to last year's traffic levels?

We have had weeks when we can only shop for essentials. Do we miss the other things we usually buy? Can we live without them and so reduce our environmental footprint?

We have seen that many of the key workers, on whom we depend for the basics of life and health, are those in lower paid jobs. What can we do to make a more equal society, where these essential jobs are better recognised?

Once we can meet in person again, in church, in Mothers' Union, St. Hilda's Entertainers, at family gatherings, sports groups, picnics, will we remember what it was like being isolated and appreciate the renewed contact?

Meanwhile, as Fr. Joseph said: "God is not in lockdown". Let us renew our trust in him.

DIVA

Early in February we adopted a rescue dog. Derek had been wanting a dog for over a year and we had tried The Battersea Dogs' home and RSPCA but no suitable dog was found.

Ideally we needed an older dog - as we are elderly it would not have been advisable to have a young dog. Eventually Derek came across some rescue kennels in Horsham.

They sent us details of a dog called Diva. She is 10 years old, mixed breed and had been rescued in Romania. We travelled to Horsham to meet her and were immediately taken with her. Although a larger dog than we had anticipated, she is gentle and loves lots of fuss. We were visited to make sure our home and garden were suitable for Diva. They must have thought we were OK as a couple of weeks later we collected her .

The journey home was a nightmare as she did not like travelling in the car. However, we made it and after exploring the house she settled down. Just one more problem: she scampered up the stairs but then did not know how to come down. We couldn't carry her (she is about 22kg) so I got behind her and put a paw on one step at a time with Derek giving encouragement from below. She has not been upstairs since! Apart from the car and the stairs there have been no problems.

We are finding her good company and at the present time she is a boon.

Valerie Scott



ST. HILDA'S
ENTERTAINERS

CONGRATULATIONS to St. Hilda's Entertainers: their production of "*Mother of All Parties*" in May 2019 won two awards from NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) - the area Accolade of Excellence, and Best New Show for 2019 for the South East region. Well done team - and especially Neale Winter who wrote and produced the play.

The 2020 May production, "Now We Are 60" has now been postponed a year, and is now scheduled for the weekend of 14th/15th May 2021.

A LOCAL CIRCULAR WALK

This walk is for those of you who want exercise rather than a short stroll - it is about four miles long and includes short climbs up two bridges and an embankment. As far as possible it uses wide pavements and open spaces. Allow about two hours including time for nature-watching.

Start by St. Hilda's, cross Woodthorpe Road and follow Stanwell Road across the railway bridge then left to the junction with the A30 (1). Cross the A30 and continue in the same direction up Town Lane with the Staines reservoirs on your left until you reach the path between the reservoirs (beyond Clare Road). Take the fenced path up the slope and across the causeway between the reservoirs, with views to the North Downs and Heathrow Airport. At the end of the path, cross Stanwell Moor Road and turn left (2), with the embankment of King George VI reservoir on your right. Cross the road again at the pelican crossing, then when the road bends, carry straight on down the slope and follow Stanwell New Road to its end. Cross the A30 at the pelican crossing, then either cross the stile directly ahead of you onto Shortwood Common and aim half left, or turn left and use the stile near the end of the Common (3) and follow the edge of the pond. In either case, keep going until you meet the tarmac path across the Common and follow it left, through a kissing gate where the path is fenced and in almost a tunnel of trees, eventually passing the grounds of Ashford Park School on your left. At the end of the path turn right to cross the railway bridge by Bronzefield. Follow the path to Woodthorpe Road, turn left and so return to St. Hilda's.

For a short cut, turn left at (1) along the A30 to rejoin the main route at (3).

For a longer walk, turn right at (2) and follow footpaths around the King George VI Reservoir, eventually reaching the Crooked Billet roundabout and rejoining the route at Shortwood Common.

The reservoirs and Shortwood Common are part of the Staines Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The reservoirs are also part of the South West London Waterbodies site - designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention - because of their importance for overwintering ducks. Shortwood pond is one of only six sites in GB where a sedge called Brown Galingale grows. You can therefore expect to see a good selection of wildlife on the walk: birds I've seen there recently include tufted duck, common shelduck, common pochard, great crested grebe, red kite, lots of coots and mallards - including ducklings - and black-headed gulls. There are also sheep on the embankments of the reservoirs and cows and ponies on the common.

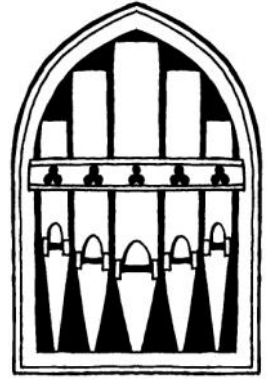
I find that this walk gives me plenty of opportunities to praise God for his creation, and prompts to pray for several schools, the hospital, and the prison as I pass them. If you try it, I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

Rosemary Greenwood

MUSIC: SINGING FOR WELL-BEING OR A CHALLENGE?

In writing this non-academic article, I have used information learned from education, lifelong learning ambitions and specific studies. However while aiming not to involve ‘lockdown’ chat, I am keen to find positive ways of resuming music-making and singing in St Hilda’s soon.

Luckily my parents paid for weekly piano lessons from age five, with a little singing thrown in when partaking in regular music-school performances. Thus ABRSM piano qualifications, among other significant achievements, and selection for the Middlesex Schools Choir, then others, successfully followed. Unsurprisingly music of all genres became integral to my life and chosen environment. 1992 brought transition to also play the organ - ‘the King of instruments.’ Thence, in 2018, I resumed music lessons when I eventually obtained an electronic home organ for essential practice.



So how come music influences one’s life?

Is musical talent born or nurtured? It is generally agreed that genetics affect both ability and the inclination to achieve musical competence. Nurturing is surely about improvement while enabling learning. But like any athlete (and wonderful musicians are that too), ‘if you want to be a better musician/singer – practice.’ But then, ‘if you want to be a better golfer – practice!’ Practice, practice, practice applies to many pursuits in which we ‘love’ to partake and excel.

Is there a revolution today in thinking we can all sing?

Recent evidence suggests attitudes may have changed, despite schools no longer using ‘the 1950 School Songbook’ daily. However many still flock to sing carols, and private schools have *enviable reputations for musical virtuoso talent*. Notably private education still ‘sings’ daily; has wonderful instruments available and expects students to take music seriously! Happily many state schools have reconnected with music studies.

Conversely, think about Gareth Malone’s successes built on ‘*anyone can sing*,’ though some protest! But perhaps only if singers want to learn and willingly practice regularly? Undoubtedly, there is an ‘X Factor’ trend too; rather like becoming a cathedral chorister used to perhaps. Yet we know that music-making can create a *strong sense of well-being*. For some; ‘big bucks’ can be earned! But...

Prima Donnas vs the Chorus;

Practice alone will get you into the Chorus.

Genetics plus practice – you can become a Prima Donna.

Genetics without practice - will only get you into the audience.

Are there proven perks to music-making and singing?

There are significant links between music and language development. After all,

singers create a shared *emotional experience enhancing cognitive function!* Such music-making workouts certainly exercise human brains, and creative, insightful, elegant ideas and solutions can result. Consider the evolution of music genres, varying widely across continents, but clearly many become world-wide successes. Significantly adolescents commonly cannot get enough of this mood regulating activity in any form available! All that sounds academic, but we know *positive moods develop* when singing, individually and/or in groups.

Physical attributes improve *in breathing, posture and muscle tension*. Moreover listening to and participating in music is integral to healing rituals and pain relief where neurochemicals, such as β -endorphin, dopamine and serotonin, are released. Importantly, research confirms that after a demanding rehearsal, stress hormones (i.e. cortisol) reduce and immunoglobulin A antibodies are significantly higher. So stress is eliminated with *mental alertness and well-being reliably improved*. Meaningfully, music therapy aids anti-social behaviours and related Syndromes/spectrums, in young and older. Amazingly, the ‘sacculus,’ (a tiny organ in the ear), favourably responds to singing frequencies, delivering a *sense of pleasure* regardless of what the singing sounds like!

Any social significance?

Music *develops the mother-infant bond*, both before and following birth. Infants seemingly being mesmerised by mothers singing, yet an infant knows no language. A fact recognised universally across most cultures through lullabies. Knowingly, if later, humans put music to particular purposes; many athletes use music during training to reinforce moods. Ergo helping to achieve peak performance. Also within music groups, vital social networks provide evidence apparently demonstrating *- more health benefits than in giving up smoking!*

Unsurprisingly, music-making and singing can have *demanding learning curves*. However achievements enhance personal and language development for all ages. Crucially, receiving *praise, from friends* once fears have been conquered, *boosts self-confidence* bringing pride and poise to all.



So let's sing again soon.
Stay safe and well.

Christina A Veasey
Music Director & Organist

FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION ON THE PANDEMIC

The following prayers on the coronavirus are by Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference. These and other prayers may be found on the Church of England website at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>

Be our hope

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through Him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Heal them

For those who are ill
Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Caring for the sick

For hospital staff and medical researchers
Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored
to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Give us strength

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.
Amen.

BLESS YOU?

People used to say ‘bless you’ if you sneezed. Nowadays they might say something ruder! We live in troubled times.

Some say that the expression started in Rome, when plague broke out. Sneezing was one of the plague's main symptoms, and Pope Gregory I suggested that a tiny prayer in the form of saying, "God bless you" after a sneeze would protect the person from death.

Sadly, that does not always work, but we can still remind ourselves of Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”

³ Surely he will save you
from the fowler’s snare
and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you...

⁹ If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;...

¹⁴ “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honour him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.”

CAN SCIENCE PROVE GOD EXISTS?

To risk sounding like a smart aleck seven-year-old, technically speaking you can only prove things mathematically. If you need to know that one plus one equals two, don't go to a chemistry lab. The natural sciences only deal with things that can be observed and measured. Science has been so successful that it's tempting to get carried away, valuing science above any other kind of knowledge, but there are other ways of knowing that are equally important. For example, art conveys ideas, experiences or emotions that provoke us to think or do something in response.

In fact, to find answers to any of the really important questions about meaning and purpose that affect us throughout our lives, we always have to go beyond science. Some scientific data might help define the question, for example a farmer facing a drought would probably like to know some details about the current weather patterns and the availability of seeds for more hardy crops before she can start asking "What is the point of trying to grow anything at all?" But in the end, she is asking a deeper question – and so are the rest of us when we go through any significant experience in life.

So rather than asking "Can science prove God exists?", what about: "Are the findings of science compatible with the existence of a purposeful Creator?" For many scientists today, the answer to the second question is yes. They have investigated the Bible's descriptions of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and found that they make sense. They have discovered that they can interact with God – especially in prayer – and that this faith has changed their lives.

Professor Christine Done, an Astrophysicist at Durham University, writes, "for me the more we know about the vast, yet intricate and beautiful Universe we live in, the bigger and more awe-inspiring is the God who made it all." (*Thinking About: The Big Bang*, <https://www.cis.org.uk/resources/thinking/>)

Some go even further, making statements like this: "the way the universe exhibits an ordered structure, which is open to science to investigate, points to a mind behind it." (Revd Dr Rodney Holder, Astrophysicist, in *Longing, Waiting, Believing* (BRF, 2014))

The question "Can Science Prove God Exists?" turns out to be a category error – trying to use science to answer a non-scientific question. On the other hand, many scientists think there is enough evidence from a wide range of sources to warrant belief in God.

Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz,

Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge.

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17th May - ROGATION SUNDAY (Sunday before Ascension)

Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Ambarvalia. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil.

In about 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, 'beating the bounds' became a Christian ceremonial.

Rogation-tide arrived in England early in the eighth century and became a fixed and perennial asking for help of the Christian God. On Rogation-tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or the priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow.

At certain points along the route - at well-known landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation is said, imploring God to send seasonable wealth, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At some point beer and cheese would be waiting.

In the days when maps were neither common nor accurate, there was much to be said for 'beating the bounds.' It was still very common as late as the reign of Queen Victoria. Certainly, parish boundaries rarely came into dispute, for everyone knew them.

(Those of us who "beat the bounds" last year know ours! Ed)

TAKE EXERCISE FOR EVEN HALF AN HOUR A DAY – AND LOWER DEPRESSION!

Here is some good news for us all: if you are feeling low, get moving. A recent study at Harvard has found that even just half an hour of exercise a day can lower the risk of depression by 17 per cent.



So – even though we are told to stay home at present, do a work-out in your living room, run around the garden a dozen times, or run up and down your staircase 20 times -anything to get your heart pounding and your body moving!

21st May - ASCENSION DAY: 40 DAYS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands - and blessed them.'

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

Prayers from the Gelasian Sacramentary (c 500AD).

Ascension

O God, we give you thanks that your Son Jesus Christ, who has shared our earthly life, has now ascended to prepare our heavenly life. Grant that, through coming to know Him by faith on earth, we may come to know Him by sight in heaven.

31st May - DAY OF PENTECOST: WHIT SUNDAY

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of Firstfruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after Easter, or 50 days including Easter.

A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit - the day the Church was born.



Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

And so, they waited in Jerusalem, praying together with His other followers, for many days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues, to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1- 9) was dramatically reversed that morning.

That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised. How's that for fast church growth!

Of course, Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament there are accounts of how God's Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ's death and resurrection, He could INDWELL them. From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

This is the oldest official prayer book of the Western Church.

Pentecost

We beseech you, O Lord, to ignite our souls with love, faith and hope by the fire of your Holy Spirit. And may the wind of your Spirit so inspire our minds, that we may proclaim your gospel to others in words which they can understand.

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR CHRISTIAN AID WEEK (10 – 16 May)

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, the CEO of Christian Aid, has written to all of those involved in helping with Christian Aid Week this month:

“Many of you will have been planning house-to-house collections and events. Under the current circumstances, sadly, house-to-house collections and delivery-only collections should not go ahead. In particular, along with many churches, events such as Big Brekkies or Lent lunches, where food is shared, cannot go ahead.

“We are working on alternative plans that will allow people to take part in Christian Aid Week in different, creative ways – by post, by text and online that strengthen our communities during this challenging time. Christian Aid Week is our single-most important fundraiser, so we would welcome your ideas on how we can creatively show love for our neighbours at home and abroad, as a community.”

As for the work of Christian Aid around the world, “Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience. People in poorer countries are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps. They also do not have good healthcare infrastructures. We will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19.

More at: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>

LAMBETH POSTPONED

The Lambeth Conference has been rescheduled and will now take place during the summer of 2021. This follows consultation between the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference Design Group, Primates and trustees of the Lambeth Conference Company.

As the website says: “This significant meeting of Anglican bishops and spouses will continue to be planned - with an exciting and engaging programme, being held in the same venue at the University of Kent and Canterbury Cathedral – just one year on.”

More at: <https://www.lambethconference.org>

While driving in the countryside, a family caught up to an old farmer and his horse-drawn cart. The farmer obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign:
‘Ecologically efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass.
Caution: Do not step in exhaust.’

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LONELINESS AT THE VIRTUAL CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW, 19th – 23rd May

All sorts of themes are chosen for the Chelsea Flower Show, but this year's theme turned out to be scarily appropriate for the Spring of 2020: Loneliness and mental health.

For, according to Sue Briggs, RHS Director General, “many feel they need gardening in their life now more than ever before, for their mental and physical wellbeing during this national emergency.”

Writing on RHS website (www.rhs.org.uk), Sue Briggs says: “This applies to everyone from those who are having to self-isolate to families planning, maybe for the first time, to grow their own food.”

And so, “for these reasons, and to do more to support the industry, the RHS will create a Virtual RHS Chelsea Flower Show, to celebrate our great horticultural industry and gardening heritage.” The Virtual Show will run from Tuesday 19th May to Saturday 23rd May.

Guy Barker, chief horticulturalist at the RHS said: “Nurturing plants can make you less lonely and release you from troubles.”

FIVE TIPS FOR TACKLING LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

The Church of England has published a leaflet giving five tips to help loneliness:

Pray. Light a candle, if safe, and pray for hope, faith and strength to keep loving and caring for each other during this time of struggle.

Talk about how you feel. This may be difficult if you are self-isolating, but do use the telephone, internet, and social media. If you need to contact a counsellor this can be arranged by your GP, or via local agencies, or privately. Samaritans are there 24 hours a day, every day, and it's free to call them on 116 123.

Focus on the things that you can change, not on the things you can't.

Look after yourself - physically, emotionally, spiritually. Plan in things that you enjoy at regular intervals during the day – a TV programme, a phone call, a book, a favourite dish, a game.

Look after others. Even if only in small ways, but do what you can: a smile, a kind word, writing a letter or an email.

Go to: <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-action/mental-health-resources/dealing-loneliness-and-isolation-five-top-tips>

8th May - JULIAN OF NORWICH: a voice from a distant cell

Many years ago, studying English literature at university, I was intrigued to be introduced to the work of Julian of Norwich. She was writing at the end of the 14th century, when our modern English language was slowly emerging from its origins in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English.

Our lecturer was mainly concerned with her importance in the history of the language (she was the first woman, and the first significant writer, to write in English). But I was more intrigued by the ideas she was expressing. She was an anchoress – someone who had committed herself to a life of solitude, giving herself to prayer and fasting. St Julian's, Norwich was the church where she had her 'cell'.

Her masterpiece, *Revelations of Divine Love*, reveals a mystic of such depth and insight that today up and down Britain there are hundreds, possibly thousands, of 'Julian Groups' who meet regularly to study her writings and try to put them into practise.

She is honoured this month in the Lutheran and Anglican Churches, but although she is held in high regard by many Roman Catholics, her own Church has never felt able to recognise her as a 'saint'. This is probably because she spoke of God as embracing both male and female qualities. *Revelations* is an account of the visions she received in her tiny room, which thousands of pilgrims visit every year.

Her most famous saying, quoted by T S Eliot in one of his poems, is 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.' These words have brought comfort and strength to many a soul in distress.

Canon David Winter

HOW WORLD WAR II STOPPED TOKYO'S OLYMPIC GAMES IN 1940

This year's Tokyo Olympic Games have been postponed for a year because of coronavirus. But 80 years ago, the Tokyo Games scheduled for May 1940 were cancelled completely, because of World War II.

Originally rescheduled for Helsinki, they were eventually abandoned, and the Olympic cycle did not restart until 1948 in London.

The cancellation proved to be a wise decision, because by the same month, May 1940, the war had escalated dramatically. On 10th May Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned and was succeeded by Winston Churchill, and between then and 28th May Germany invaded Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Also, on 10th May Germany dropped its first bombs on England, at Chilham and Petham, near Canterbury, and on 13th May Churchill gave his first speech in the House of Commons, saying: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

The next day the Home Guard – Dad's Army – was established, and by the end of the month the battle for Dunkirk was raging, with nearly 340,000 soldiers being rescued by a makeshift fleet of about 800 boats, crossing the English Channel to avoid the onrushing German army. This prompted the phrase 'Dunkirk spirit', still in frequent use today.

Tim Lenton

FROM 'LIVE' IN THE PULPIT TO VIRTUAL AND STREAMING

Not being able to go to church is causing an awful lot of people to 'go' to church.

It started in late March, when the Archbishop kicked off with the first ever national virtual service, recorded in the crypt chapel of Lambeth Palace. It was seen or heard by an estimated five million people. That figure included one million streaming on Facebook, and about two million tuned in to the 39 BBC local radio station broadcasts and BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship combined. The Facebook post had a further reach of two million and nearly 30 per cent of those watching online were under the age of 34.

That compares with average of 871,000 people attending services and acts of worship each week in 2018, the latest figures that are available.

And the Archbishop was not alone – for on the same morning hundreds of churches and cathedrals that also had their first try at live streaming services. Some attracted several thousand viewers on the stream and playback. As a spokesperson for the Church of England said: “The Archbishops said that church would have to be re-imagined. Across the country, local congregations did just that.”

The second virtual national worship service (29th March) was led by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu and recorded on an iPad in the drawing room of Bishopthorpe Palace. After opening with a traditional Ugandan call to prayer, which he delivered on drums, the Archbishop turned to Ezekiel, encouraging everyone to trust God in our current situation.

In a reference to the passage in Ezekiel – which recounts the prophet's vision of a valley of dry bones, the Archbishop told the virtual congregation: “At this present time of COVID-19 we are, as it were, set in death in exile.

“I believe the Sovereign Lord who knows it all by the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead to life eternal, the life creating power of God will bring us out of exile – out of the valley of death. Sovereign Lord we look to you to deliver us.”

See the services by searching at: www.churchofengland.org As for the future, you can explore the full list of live streaming taking place each week. Just go to: www.achurchnearyou.com

In case you have not found them yet, St. Hilda's services are streamed from the Vicarage on Facebook. You don't need to be a user of Facebook (StHildaAshford)-it is available on the home page of the web site www.sthilda.org/. The service booklet can be found on the web site under [Services | Weekly Sheet]. Ed

2020: WHO'S YEAR OF THE NURSE

When the WHO (World Health Organisation) decided to make 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, they based it on the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth on 12th May 1820. But with the arrival of the coronavirus, it is a remarkably apt year to celebrate all that nurses do for us.

As the ICN (International Council of Nurses) says: "All around the world, nurses are working tirelessly to provide the care and attention people need, whenever and wherever they need it. Nurses are central to the delivery of health care; nurses are making an invaluable contribution to the health of people globally."

Nursing as a vocation goes back to the Early Church. When plague struck the Roman world in the third century, it was Christians who tended the sick and dying, often at great personal cost. Their self-sacrifice made a huge impression on Roman society. Centuries later, in medieval Europe, it was the monastic orders that provided health care.

Still centuries later, during the Crimean War (1853-56) Florence Nightingale saved thousands of lives when she transformed the field hospitals, hugely improving the standards of care for wounded and dying soldiers. In fact, Florence Nightingale deserves the credit for establishing the modern profession of nursing and its structures of training. Although of course medical science has advanced since her time, the basic ethos of nursing care remains today close to Nightingale's vision.

Nursing is frequently described as a vocation, and it is one to which many Christians are called. Nightingale wrote of being 'called' by God, after having had a vivid religious conversion as a teenager. Writing in February 1837, she stated: "God has spoken to me and called me to His Service."

Four years before going to Crimea, she studied at a Lutheran religious community in Germany which trained deaconesses in medical skills, nursing, and theology. Many of the ideas that Nightingale adopted for her nurses came from that religious community. Thus, Nightingale's training programme was not solely devoted to secular medical sciences. Her student nurses were required to attend chapel, and her nurses read prayers on the wards.

Nightingale wrote many letters of spiritual encouragement to her students. To one, she wrote that Christ considered it an "honour to serve the poorest and the meanest... He will not give His crown except to those who have borne His cross... Enduring hardship is what He encourages and rewards."

The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally trained and worked as a nurse before being appointed to senior positions in the Health Service. She was Chief Nursing Officer for England between 1999 to 2004.

She says: "I became a Christian as a teenager and wanted to follow Christ with my whole life. Rather than having two careers, I have had one vocation: to follow Jesus Christ, to know Him, and to make Him known."

Certainly, of all the professions, nursing has one of the strongest claims to being rooted in the Gospel. Christian nurses implicitly witness to Christ in caring for others.

Parts of this are based on an article by Ted Harrison, which first appeared in the Church Times.



VE Day – the end of World War II in Europe

VE Day (Victory in Europe) – was celebrated 75 years ago this month, on 8th May 1945, marking the end of World War II in Europe. It was marked with a public holiday.

The previous day the formal act of military surrender had been signed by Germany, and celebrations broke out when the news was released. Big crowds gathered in London, impromptu parties were held throughout the country, and people danced and sang in the streets. King George VI and his family appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and Churchill made a speech to huge applause. The two princesses Elizabeth and Margaret mingled with the crowds outside.

Many went into churches to give thanks – and to pray for those still involved in the war in the Far East, because the real end of the war, Victory over Japan, would not happen until 15th August. At St Paul's Cathedral there were ten consecutive services giving thanks for peace, each attended by thousands of people.

The celebrations masked the fact that so many had lost family and friends, as well as possessions and homes. But for the moment normal social conventions broke down, strangers embraced, and love was in the air.

Tim Lenton

Spelthorne Council's Civic Service to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day which was planned to be held at St. Hilda's will now be held virtually, at 3pm on 8th May - for details see www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/19282/VE-Day-75-Join-our-virtual-celebration-

THE ENVIRONMENT – WE CAN STILL DO GREAT THINGS TO HELP



Before coronavirus, 2020 was to have been the year when the Church really made the environment central to its plans and actions. For although caring for the planet has been raised regularly at previous Lambeth Conferences, this year, Lambeth 2020 was to have brought the issues to the forefront of its agenda.

Whilst the virus has shut things down for the moment, clearly in future the Church *can* do major things on a national and international level, but so too can it achieve much locally. Every individual in every congregation can play a part. Even the space around churches can become special by providing space for members of the local community to spend time gardening, bringing benefits to both body and spirit.

When our isolation finally ends, it will be a great time for our church to find space to make room for a garden to bring people together and share the glory of nature by planting seeds to bring new life, hope and a sense of wellbeing to our world. For church space which can be seen by passers-by it will be a 24-hour sign of hope and that we are back in business.

Meanwhile, this month, May, sees the 5th anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si*, a world best seller - not least in the Church House bookshop. Whilst many proposed celebrations have been postponed it is still a publication to be celebrated for the way in the way the Pope has provided help and encouragement to people of faith and no faith alike who all share this common home.

More details at: <https://conservationfoundation.co.uk>

David Shreeve.

GROW YOUR LAWNS

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has called on people to allow flowers to grow on their lawns, instead of insisting on smooth green surfaces.

The reason is because nearly 7.5million acres of meadows and pastures rich in wildflowers have been lost since the Thirties, thus removing a vital source of food for pollinators, many of whom are now in steep decline.

The nation's 15 million gardens could help a lot in supporting bees, butterflies and other bugs looking for nectar.



FAITH IN A CRISIS

If a crisis is coming to stay
Getting worse, with each passing day
It's ever so easy
To get somewhat queasy
When normality passes away!

If the shelves are devoid of all rolls
And the internet's peopled by trolls
Don't tremble and fear,
Shed no frightened tear
For God the Almighty controls!

If your eyesight with tears is blurred
It may not quite yet have occurred
That God through the years
Has dried up our tears:
So see what it says in His Word:

The people, surrounded by sand
En route to that old Promised Land
No food did they lack
For God had their back
He had their nutrition well planned!

Jesus cared, as the family cried
For the daughter of Jairus had died
He entered her room
Said '*Talitha koum*'
And she rose and stood there by His side!

Just two of the Bible's great tales
That show us that God never fails
To come to our aid
If we've sought Him and prayed
When the devil with evil assails.

So do not be scared, but be smart -
No virus can tear us apart
From God up above
Who shows us such love
So be of good courage and heart!

By Nigel Beeton

Our Mission Prayer:

*Bless our Community.
Make its people;
Strong in Faith,
Steadfast in Hope,
And Generous in Love.
Amen.*

WANTED: used British and foreign stamps for Princess Alice Hospice, trimmed ¼" all round. Place in box at back of church or give them to

Pauline Milton



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word with you about your carbon footprint!



"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?**



U O
 N T R V
 G R A C E G O D
 B T H E L P E A C E
 T P A T I E N C E I
 J G T R U S T R J
 C R L O R D L E E
 A K I N D N E S S
 L O V E H O N T U
 M J E R O D E K S
 G O O D N E S S
 C A Y M O E L S
 O B L E S S I S
 N F R U I T G P
 D T Y H O L Y H I
 A S E L F C O N T R O L
 A U C O N S I D E R A T E O A R T M I E V E R
 E B N I N T E G R I T Y O D Y C A R E S N E
 B I C O M P A S S I O N E A C Y A N H T
 A T O L E R A N C E S I E L O E I T H
 Y G E N E R O S I T Y D T R R N S
 F A I T H F U L N E S S Y D Y T
 G O O D W I L L P

A M E N
 G C H H
 R R H E O D
 J E E E A P O
 P S E R V E V

Which
 symbol goes
 with which fruit?



- LOVE • CARE • CHERISH • JOY • DELIGHT • PEACE • ACCORD**
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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