



St Hilda's  
Ashford

# St Hilda's News



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*We are looking for more contributions from the St Hilda's community, if you would like to contribute, please either call, email or send an article to the Parish Office.*

If you would like help or to speak to a member of the ministry team please contact:

- Parish Office      Tel    01784 253525  
   Email   [office@sthilda.org](mailto:office@sthilda.org)
- Father Joseph can be contacted on 01784 254237

[www.sthilda.org](http://www.sthilda.org)

***Please note there will be no St Hilda's News next week as the editors are taking a short break.***

## All restrictions on communal worship and singing in church to be lifted in England

The new health secretary Sajid Javid has announced all restrictions on communal worship and singing are set to come to an end in England on July 19.



Making the announcement in the Commons, as part of the wider lifting of restrictions, Mr Javid addressed worship directly and said: "There will be no limits on the number of people who can attend life events like weddings and funerals and there will be no restrictions on communal worship or singing," he said.

There were noises of approval from MPs. In a press conference Monday evening, Boris Johnson also confirmed face masks and social distancing will not be a legal

requirement in England when the coronavirus restrictions ease further.

The Prime Minister's also said limits on capacity for live entertainment will go - as will the rule of six in homes.

Labour's called the plan "reckless".

The PM said he expected the final step to lift England out of lockdown would go ahead on July 19. This will be confirmed on July 12, after a review of the latest data.

The Government's top scientists have pledged to wear face masks in some situations as Boris Johnson said they would become voluntary from July 19 across England.

England's chief medical officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said he would wear a mask "under three situations, and I would do so, particularly at this point when the epidemic is clearly significant and rising."

He told a Downing Street briefing: "The first is in any situation which was indoors and crowded, or indoors with close proximity to other people."

He said he would also do so if he was asked by any "competent authority" and thirdly, as a "common courtesy" if others felt uncomfortable.

The news comes on the day findings were released of a poll carried out by Savanta ComRes showing that almost 60 percent of people supported a campaign by Premier Christian Communications (PCC) to overturn the ban on singing in churches across the country.

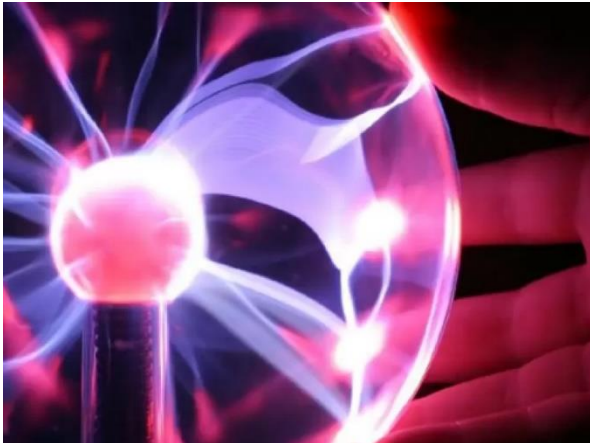
The poll found out of those questioned that by a ratio of well over 2:1, 57 percent to 24 percent, the public supported the campaign.

Peter Kerridge, CEO of PCC said: "It was thanks to your support for Premier's 'Sign to Sing' Campaign that this has been achieved. Thank you for making your voice heard!"



## Churches receive almost half a million in funding to explore relationship between science and faith

Twenty-two churches in England and Wales have been awarded funding totalling £400,000 to delve into the relationship between science and faith through the church engagement programme 'Scientists in Congregations.'



Each church has received grants of up to £20,000 to spend over the next 18 months. The churches involved will host a range of outreach activities, building on the expertise of scientists within their congregations, focusing on topics from climate change to mental health, with the aim of showing how engaging with science can lead to a deeper experience of faith.

'Scientists in Congregations' is a programme run by the research project Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS). The ECLAS project is led from St John's College, Durham University in partnership with the University of York and the Church of England. Its directors include the Revd Prof David Wilkinson and physicist Prof Tom McLeish.

Revd Prof David Wilkinson, Project Director of ECLAS and Principal of St John's College, Durham University, told Premier more about the programme: "It's a very exciting project, and this is money from the Templeton religion trust, to encourage churches and projects across the country, to engage with scientists within their local community. This may be scientists in that congregation, or it may be in a local science project within that community. And this is to break down some of the fear that exists between science and faith, but also to affirm the vocation of those within churches who are science teachers, or engineers, or working in technology, or doing research science.

"There's a lot of folk who worship in Christian churches, who are scientists, or teachers of science, or technologists or engineers. And sometimes the church doesn't see this as a Christian vocation. And so some of the vision behind the project is to encourage those who are already within the congregation, or those who are sympathetic to questions of faith in the community to get together and to use their gifts for the benefit of both church and community."

One successful project, cited so far, is St Mark's Church based in Wrexham, which has been awarded a grant of £19,965. St Mark's and the local science activity centre Xplore! will jointly run Sunday afternoon activity sessions and a holiday club for local children, giving them the opportunity to encounter key science and faith concepts.

## Has there been spiritual awakening in lockdown?

Leslie Francis and Andrew Village examine how the first months of the pandemic affected churchgoers' faith



THE pandemic offered both challenges and opportunities for theological reflection. The Christian conceptualisation of the nature of God is sophisticated, complex, and diverse. Some aspects of the Christian understanding of God may be more resilient to the

challenges of the pandemic than others.

Those who build their faith on an all-powerful creator God who intervenes powerfully and decisively on the stage of human experience might be driven to proper and serious lamentation, or to serious repentance in sackcloth and ashes. Indeed, some might drift further from belief in such a God.

Those who build their faith on a compassionate and suffering God who revealed solidarity with the vulnerable human condition, who accepted impoverished birth in the manger and humiliating death on the cross, may be driven to deep and sincere appreciation. Some may draw closer to belief in such a God.

ONE of the theories that the *Coronavirus, Church and You* survey was designed to test was the thesis that committed churchgoers (those likely to respond to the survey presented by the *Church Times*, or through some Roman Catholic dioceses) would experience the initial days of the pandemic as a time of spiritual awakening. In our research, we argue that spiritual awakening occurs as a function of changing human experience (in this case caused by the pandemic), interpreted through the lenses of lived religious tradition.

We tested this theory by including the Lewis Index of Spiritual Awakening (LISA). This index contained just four items, and asked people how they would rate the effect of the lockdown on four aspects of their spiritual experience: prayerfulness; closeness to God; closeness to the Church; and personal faith. Was the effect positive, negative, or neutral?

To address this question, we drew on data provided by 3678 lay people (who identified as Anglican or as Roman Catholic, living in England or in Wales) who had not been involved in offering ministry during the pandemic, but who had participated in online services. Of these participants, 2280 were Anglicans and 1393 Roman Catholics; 34 per cent were male and 66 per cent female; 11 per cent were under age of 40, and 57 per cent were aged 60 or over.

The data indicate that more participants experienced an improved sense of spiritual awareness during lockdown (a sense of spiritual awakening) than experienced a deteriorating sense of spirituality.

Thus, 57 per cent reported enhanced personal faith, compared with seven per cent who reported deterioration in personal faith; 50 per cent reported enhanced prayerfulness, compared with 12 per cent who reported less prayerfulness; and 43 per cent reported feeling closer to God, compared with ten per cent who reported feeling more distant from God. Perhaps as an inevitable consequence of being locked out of their churches, just 25 per cent reported feeling closer to the Church, compared with 37 per cent who reported feeling more distant from the Church.

Further analyses identified the kind of people who were more likely to experience spiritual awakening during the pandemic. Personal factors were important: women were more likely to experience spiritual awakening than men, and older people more likely than younger people. Psychological factors were important: intuitive types and feeling types were more likely to experience spiritual awakening than sensing types or thinking types.

Denomination was important: Roman Catholics were more likely to experience spiritual awakening than Anglicans. Geographical location was, however, not important: those living in rural areas or in inner-city areas were neither more nor less likely to experience spiritual awakening than those living in towns or suburbs.

How people engaged with online services also correlated with spiritual awakening. From the survey, we learned that, during participation in online services, 38 per cent prayed aloud, 34 per cent recited parts of the service, 24 per cent sung, 12 per cent lighted candles, six per cent typed in prayer requests, and six per cent took communion from their own bread and wine. Just two of these activities were associated with higher scores of spiritual awakening: lighting candles, and typing in prayer requests.

TWO main conclusions can be drawn from these findings. During the initial days of the pandemic, Christian theology, reflected in belief and practices, led to spiritual awakening rather than to loss of faith, among committed churchgoers. Forced to migrate from their local churches to online worship, committed churchgoers flourished best when they were actively engaged in preparing for and contributing to the service. Lighting candles and typing in prayers are emblematic of such active engagement.

The present data tell us how things looked by the end of July 2020. The current *Covid-19 and Church-21* survey provides the opportunity to update these findings. Please make your contribution by visiting the Coronavirus, Church and You website of York St John University.

*The Revd Andrew Village is Professor of Practical and Empirical Theology, and Canon Leslie J. Francis is Visiting Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, both at York St John University.*

# GODPARENTS' SUNDAY 2021

The godchild/godparent relationship is really special and can still be celebrated and supported during this time. Whatever the pandemic situation is, there will still be things you can do. Find resources here to help.



## WHAT IS GODPARENTS' SUNDAY?



In the past few years, the Life Events team has encouraged churches to celebrate the part that Godparents play in family life and in spiritual journeys. This year, it's more important than ever to connect with families and help them celebrate the web of relationships that surround them. This might be in person with outdoor events, or through Zoom, or, at outdoor and indoor gatherings when allowed. And for the first time, the Life Events team is partnering with Messy Church to extend the reach of Godparent Sunday even more widely.

## HOW TO JOIN IN

**Sunday July 11th is the national Godparents' Sunday date for 2021**, but you can set yours for whatever date fits in best with your church calendar, (joining in on the national date simply means your event will benefit from any national campaign publicity too).



July is national picnic month, so this year, the Life Events team is planning a food-and-fun-filled Godparent Sunday. Ideas and resources are given throughout these pages. Planning far ahead may still be difficult, but ideas given here will allow for the varying extent of social contact that may or may not be permitted by then. You can take these ideas and apply them in line with Government guidance, and your own risk assessment, when the time comes.

## Sheep and Lambs Together

### Creative and Reflective activities for All Ages

11<sup>th</sup> July 6th Sunday after Trinity

Read Mark 6.14-29

Discuss the choices Herod makes in the story

Read the story and ask people to note when Herod makes choices. Read the story again and pause at each choice Herod makes.

Think about why he makes that choice. Is he listening to bad advice? Is he following his feelings? Is he doing what is right? You might want to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to the choice. And if not sure then a horizontal thumb.

Finally, discuss what advice everyone would give to Herod.

You might like to think about some of the choices we make in everyday life and that choices can have consequences.



# Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Happy birthday from all your friends at St Hilda's to Margaret Perry who celebrates her 90<sup>th</sup> on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

## St Hilda's Parish News

***If you have any Parish News you would like to share, then please send them into the Parish Office.***

### Rota's

With the end of lockdown restrictions possibly in sight, we are starting to plan for a sense of normality and will be resuming the refreshments after the Sunday service. We need a number of members of the congregation to help with the serving of tea/ coffee each week. If you are interested in being on the rota, please contact Denise in the Parish Office.



## **Spelthorne Deanery Confirmations – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September**

Spelthorne deanery confirmation service is taking place at St Hilda's at 3pm.

Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptized. If you were baptized at a christening when you were a child, your parents and godparents made these promises on your behalf. As a young person or adult, you may be ready to affirm these promises for yourself and commit your life to following Jesus Christ. At the confirmation service, you make these promises for yourself. Friends and family as well as the local Christian community will be here to promise to support and pray for you.

Bishop Graham will lay his hands on your head and ask God's Holy Spirit to give you the strength and commitment to live God's way for the rest of your life. If you would like to find out more, please do get in touch with Fr Joseph.

## **Soup and roll**

Starting from **Wednesday 29th September**, after the service and continuing on the last service of each month.

There's something spiritual about breaking bread together. After the Eucharist, we will gather for soup and roll. It will be an excellent way to get to know each other better, to share in fellowship, meet some new faces and enjoy a delicious home cooked soup with a bread roll.

## **Hope Into Action**

Homelessness has been a key element of St Hilda's missional engagement and St Hilda has started to support Hope Into Action:

*"We provide not just shelter and housing know-how but also friendship. Together with over 70 churches, we provide direct support to people whom others have often given up on. Our vision is for every church to lovingly provide the homeless with a home. The tragedy of homelessness is in every community"*

There are two blue wheelie bins, one in church and one in the church hall to take donations of clothes, belts and shoe. It will all be sold, and the proceeds donated towards the partnership with Hope Into Action. Please – clean clothes, paired shoes, and belts only. We cannot do anything with bedding, towels, curtains, and other soft furnishings.

## **YCCN RELAY - Can you help?**

The Young Christian Climate Network relay is well underway, and should be in Exeter when you read this. We have invited them to stay at St. Hilda's when they come through Ashford on Monday 2nd August, and we need more help. I will be with the walkers, and Bobbie is organising the catering. We need other people to help:

- "Meet&Greet": someone to be in charge of greeting the walkers, and others to support this person.

- "On call support": one or more people with cars to be available on the Monday or Tuesday to pick up walkers in an emergency, or to transport bags from Windsor to Ashford (Monday) or Ashford to Twickenham (Tuesday)
- Walkers: at the moment seven people are signed up for the Monday and three for Tuesday in addition to two Lead Walkers. If you feel energetic, please join in!

For these roles, please sign up on the YCCN web site <https://www.yccn.uk/>

- people to help Bobbie - please talk to her
- people to publicise this - everyone can do this. See their web site for ideas.
- people to pray for the relay, and for the world to wake up and take action on climate change and climate justice - everyone can do this, too

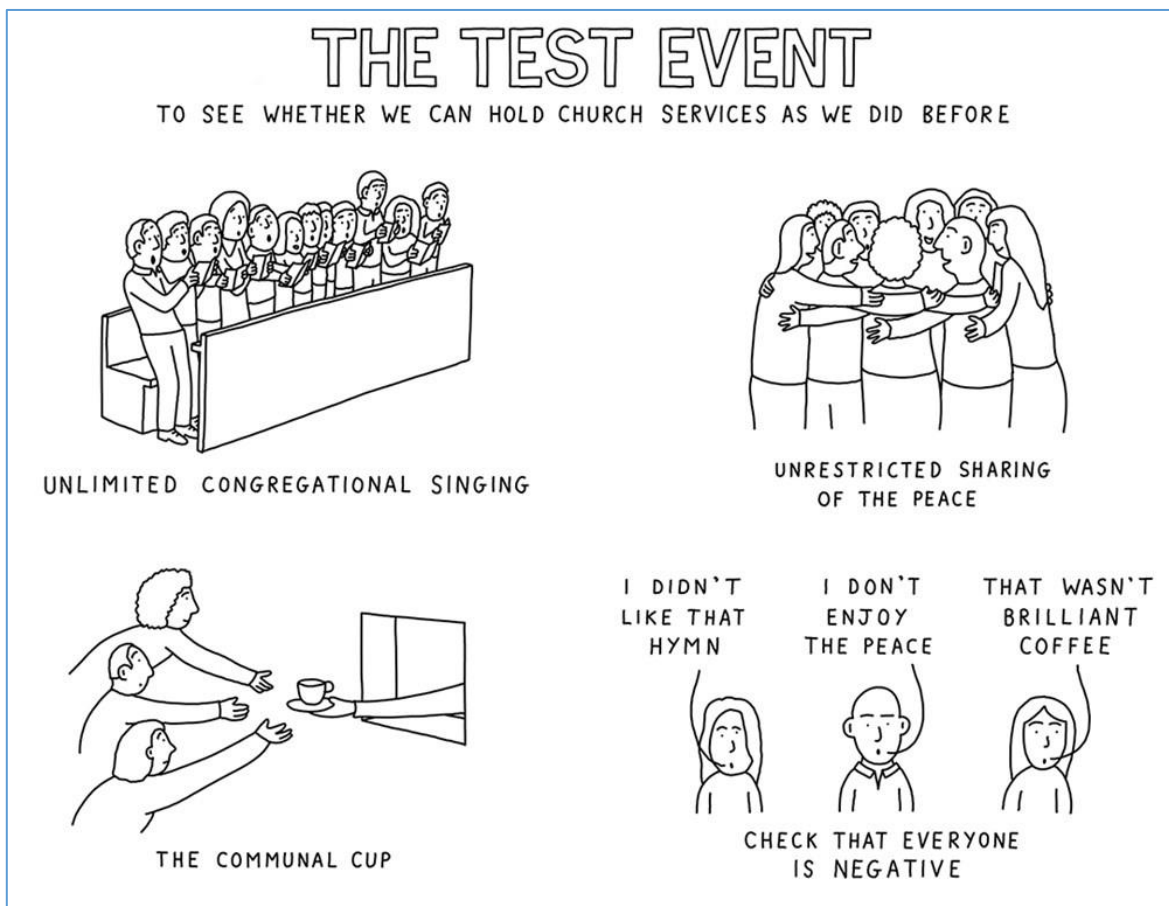
Please help if you can.

*Rosemary Greenwood*

For more details, see  
 the web site: <https://www.yccn.uk>  
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/YCCNetwork>  
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/YCCNetwork/>  
 Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/yccnetwork/>

**Wanted**

If anyone has any spare threads, embroidery threads and wools, please place in the box at the back of the church for use by a local charity. Thank you



**Canaan Ministries** are open for any of your needs. Just simply phone or email them and they will look after you. They also offer a delivery service.

Any other information can be found on their website [www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/](http://www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/)

### Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not rely on your own  
insight.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your  
paths.

## This weeks services

### Sunday Eucharist – 11<sup>th</sup> July @ 9.30am

This service can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda's Ashford), and Twitter.

### Wednesday Eucharist – 14<sup>th</sup> July @ 9.45am

Tickets can be booked for this week's services via the links on our website and Facebook page or by contacting the Parish Office by 5pm Friday for Sunday's service and 12pm Tuesday for Wednesday's service.

**Please remember a face mask must be worn whilst in the church.**

## Tea and Chat after Sunday Service

We would like to invite you to join us for a virtual Tea and Chat after the service on **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 11.15am**. See below on how to join.

The meeting is hosted by Zoom.

- Download the Zoom app – [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)
- Click – Join a Meeting
- Enter the Meeting id – **926 9856 0942**
- Enter password – **114216**



**Please hold in your prayers and thoughts this week those who are affected by the Corona Virus as well as the family and friends of those below.**

### **The Sick**

James Bedford	Eileen Gilbert	Riley Shaw	Jo Wood
Darren Burkin	Alison Griffiths	Elsie Stone	Erin
Robb Clarke	Jean Iddiols	Roy Stone	George
Daniel Cohen	Jane Johnson	Sandra Swain	Izzy
Rebecca Cohen	Pat Kyle	Rev. Peter Taylor	Marion
Mary Congdon	Libby Mills	Carla Wells	Nic
Ann Considine	Raymond Nation	Sheila West	Baby Reuben
Julia Cowley	Pat Parish	Philip Willerton	Bob
Michael Dixon	Elizabeth Savill-Burgess	Chick Wilson	Margaret
Peter Garner	Delphine Scrivener	Peter Wilson	

### **The Recently Departed**

William Loveridge	Ronald Winslade	Paul Harvey	Daphne Roberts
Kenneth Wingrove	Margaret Reid		

### **Prayer**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
 by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church  
 is governed and sanctified:  
 hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,  
 that in their vocation and ministry  
 they may serve you in holiness and truth  
 to the glory of your name;  
 through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,  
 who is alive and reigns with you,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever.

Amen