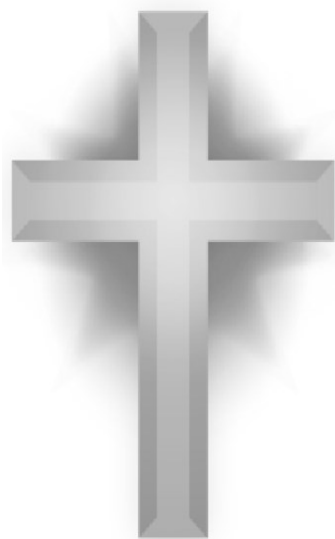
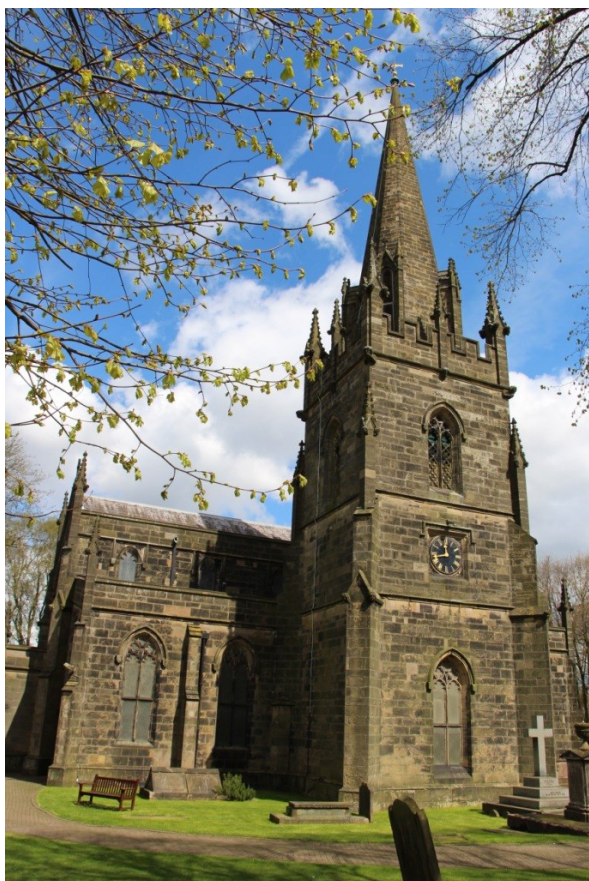


THE BEACON

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS, SEDGLEY
ST. ANDREW'S THE STRAITS & ST. PETERS UPPER GORNAL

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

July/August 2020

PARISH WIDE WHO's WHO

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
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| Team Vicar | Rev Catherine Mitchell | 01902 677897 |
| Licensed Lay Minister | Canon Jan Humphries | 01902 661275 |
| Ordinand and ALM | Claire Cox | 07812 010108 |
| Parish Safeguarding Officer | Barbara Baker | 01902 882847 |
| Pastoral Care | Tracey Bate | 01902 880727 |
| | Jackie Hewlett | 01902 295164 |
| | Sarah Parker | 01902 885570 |
| Worship Leader | Suzanne Bradley | 01902 880055 |
| Youth Leader and Youth Group | Laura Robinson | 01902 678572 |
| Singing Angels | | 07812 010108 |
| | Claire Cox | |
| PCC Secretary | Kath Apperley | 01902 663253 |
| PCC Treasurer | Sheila Moss | 01902 893570 |
| Parish Office | Gail Griffiths | 01902 540289 |
| Web Editor | Martin Jones | 01902 884461 |

St Peters

Who's Who

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Parish Warden | David Moss | 01902 893570 |
| Parish Warden | Edward Grist | 01902 682786 |
| Treasurer | Sheila Moss | 01902 893570 |
| Children's Advocate | Suzanne Bradley | 01902 880055 |
| DCC Secretary | John Powell | |
| Uniformed Organisations | Please Contact David Moss | 01902 893570 |

St Andrew's

Who's Who

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Warden | Paul Cox | |
| Children's Advocate | Carol Haynes | |
| Treasurer | Alan Turner | 01902 670938 |
| DCC Secretary | Rosemary Reed | 01902 679007 |
| Little Angels Baby & Toddler Group | Canon Jan Humphries | 01902 661275 |
| Singing Angels | Claire Cox | 07812 010108 |

All Saints Who's Who

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Vestry Clerk | Chris Williams | 01902 672880 |
| Parish Wardens | Keith Tomlinson | 01902 673366 |
| | John Anderson | 01902 677666 |
| Treasurer | John Anderson | 01902 677666 |
| DCC Secretary | John Anderson | 01902 677666 |
| Caretaker | Pam Pugh | 07860 256535 |
| Junior Church | Barbara Price | 01902 676591 |
| Bell Ringer | Keith Williams | 01902 672585 |
| Organist | Martin Platts | 07941 173252 |
| Youth Leader | Laura Robinson | 01902 678572 |
| Brownies | Heather Churm | 01902 674709 |
| Ladies' Society | Geraldine Baker | 01902 674608 |
| Men's Society | Roger Berry | 01902 881374 |
| Mothers' Union | Liz Williams | 01902 672880 |
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| Server/Verger | Len Millard | 01902 676339 |
| | Steve Castle | 07971 899072 |
| Noah's Ark | | |
| Parent & | | |
| Toddler Group | Linda Edwards | 01902 672556 |

Funerals

1st June - June Pauline Bennett - Gornal Wood
 1st June - Pamela Margaret Wheeler - Gornal Wood
 3rd June - Albert Kenneth Jones - Gornal Wood
 3rd June - William James Thomas Aston - Gornal Wood
 4th June - Sheila Ray - Gornal Wood
 6th June - John Perry - Gornal Wood
 10th June - David Venables - Gornal Wood
 11th June - John Harold Fell - Gornal Wood
 15th June - Joan Perry - Dudley Borough Cemetery
 19th June - Barbara Mary Sadler - Gornal Wood
 23rd June - Irene Elizabeth Caswell - Gornal Wood

High Days & Holy Days for July

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1 st July | Theobald – choosing God, not money |
| 2 nd July | John Francis Regis– patron saint for relief workers |
| 3 rd July | St Thomas the Apostle – confused and doubting |
| 4 th July | Elizabeth of Portugal – compassion for prostitutes |
| 6 th July | Thomas More, Reformation martyr |
| 7 th July | Boisil of Melrose – patron saint for ordinands |
| 7 th July | Willibald – the first ever Anglo-Saxon travel writer |
| 11 th July | Benedict – author of the famous Rule |
| 14 th July | Camillus de Lellis – patron of the sick |
| 15 th July | St Swithun (or Swithin) – saint for a rainy day |
| 16 th July | St Helier – losing a loved one to violence |
| 19 th July | St Macrina the Younger– a sister in a million |
| *NEW | July 22nd The Other Mary |
| 22 nd July | St Mary Magdalene – the woman with a past |
| 22 nd July | St Mary Magdalene – patron of repentant sinners |
| 22 nd July | St Mary Magdalene – What do we really know about her? |
| 25 th July | St James the Apostle – apostle to Spain |
| 25 th July | St James the Great |
| 25 th July | St Christopher – patron saint of motorists |
| 27 th July | The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus – proving a nap is good for you! |
| 29 th July | St Olaf – king & patron saint of Norway |
| 30 th July | William Wilberforce, Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson |
| 31 st July | St Joseph of Arimathea – the man who buried Jesus |

THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis please contact:

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

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admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 21st August

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: **www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk**



Church Opening

As this magazine was published we have been given permission to open our Church buildings for services, if it is safe to do so. At this time we will open All Saints for one hour for private prayer on a Sunday afternoon from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. **This is constantly under review** and we hope to open all 3 church buildings as soon as we can safely do so. It is bound to be limited for now and so please call the Clergy or check the web site for more information.

Weddings and Baptism's We have had to re-arrange those weddings and baptisms disrupted by the Covid-19 situation. For now there will be no Vestry Hour at All Saints to deal with wedding and baptism enquiries. So to enquire about a baptism or wedding please contact: Chris Williams chriswilliams550@btinternet.com or the Parish Clergy

We Can't Go Back...to Preserving Bricks & Mortar

by the Ven Nikki Groarke, Archdeacon of Dudley and Member of General Synod – this article was originally produced on <https://viamedia.news/>

A small group of beleaguered disciples, tired, fearful and disappointed, uncertain about the future, meeting behind closed doors, wistfully reminiscing about the crowds who had at one time gathered with them. Now it's just the faithful remnant.

The Holy Spirit comes, and they are transformed, heading out into the public arena, living life fully as Christ's followers, drawing others to join them by their love for each other and their neighbours, and their accessible, amateurish but heartfelt teaching and worship.

We have all reflected recently on a story something like this over Pentecost. However, what I am describing is not the early church, but rather what I have seen played out in many small congregations across my diocese in these last few months. In multi-parish rural benefices and urban teams, where previously ten to fifteen committed long term members met in multiple locations for worship, now a hundred or more gather online together, energised and engaged each week, making new friends and attracting others. It's easier to join a crowd than a clique.

For many years across the country, weary church wardens have with dogged determination, fought to keep regular Sunday services going in their church building, not wanting to betray their predecessors by allowing the church to die on their watch. Failure and local wrath have been constant threats. Then, overnight in March, the doors of every church building were closed, unilaterally. And they were not responsible. It was not their fault. A Kairos moment?

Lockdown was dramatic and shocking for church communities. Emerging from it will be far more nuanced, and no less difficult. Already MPs and journalists are politicising the 'draconian' refusal to permit the use of church buildings for private prayer and funerals. Bishops across the country are tweeting (including my own)!

Passions and anxieties are running high amidst uncertainties and swathes of guidelines for ‘whenever we can reopen’.

Churches will soon be allowed to open again, and that is right. But please let’s not rush back to opening them all. Church buildings are different, have different purposes and callings, and can sometimes get in the way of God’s people truly being church. And we have too many of them. It’s very easy to say. “Open your church building from tomorrow” to gain some support from vocal campaigners. But what about the tiny rural church with no mains water, where handwashing isn’t possible? How do you clean an ancient building with nooks and crannies when you can’t slosh the bleach around? How do you safely open a huge cathedral with multiple entrances and many chapels, when staff are furloughed, closure of cafés and shops and no tourists has caused a financial crisis, and most volunteers are vulnerable or shielding? Practically there are many issues to be overcome. The challenges will be met of course. Clergy and church members will rise to the occasion creatively, just as they have adapted to the constraints of recent months with resilience and faith. But what about the opportunities of this Kairos moment? Strategically is it right to go back to dispersed, fragmented and often insular worship in every place? Surely this is the time to courageously ask the questions few previously dared voice.

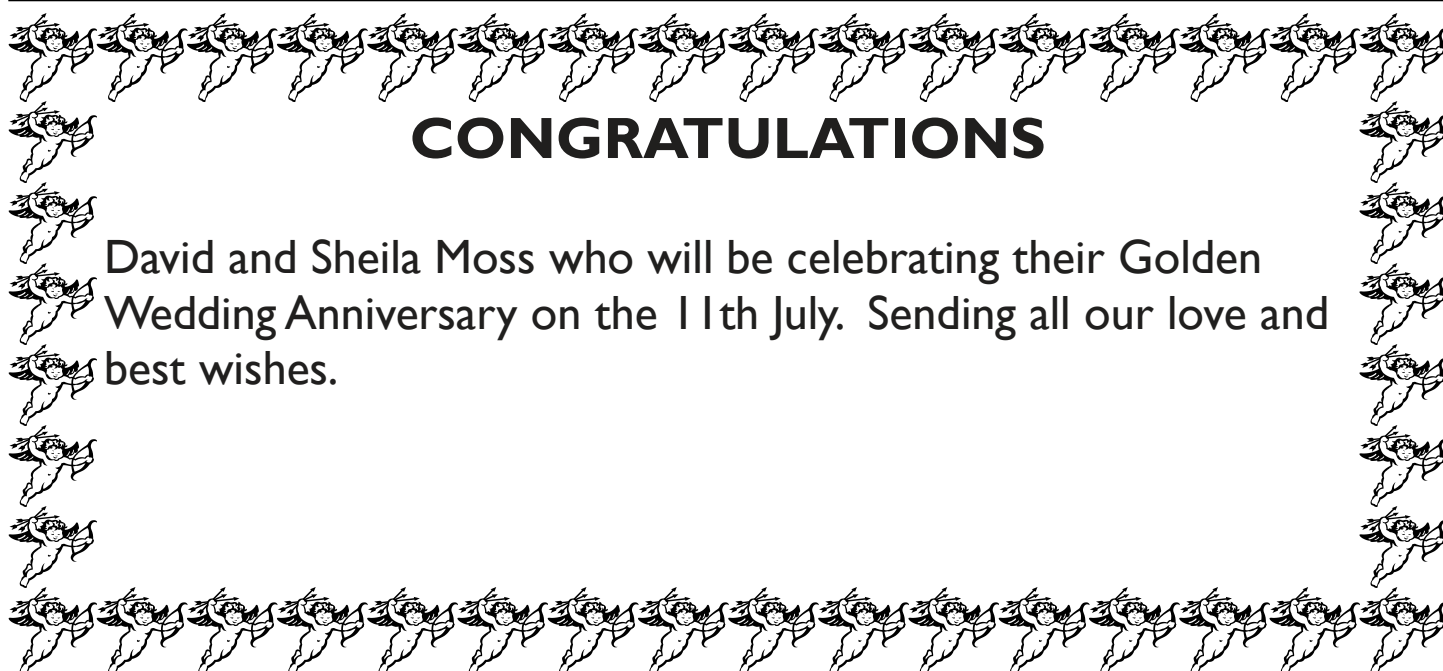
Should this church be used for worship each Sunday in the future? Can we re-designate for occasional use – weddings, funerals, harvest and Christmas? Can we formally close, and recognise the building’s importance as a local heritage asset, treating it as such rather than trying to meet unrealistic expectations of it becoming a vibrant community hub when we all know in our hearts that this role is filled adequately by the village hall or pub? Dare we contemplate allowing our building to become perhaps a beautiful ruin?

Place is important of course, and prayed in places are undoubtedly holy. It is important to have sacred space where we can gather, celebrate the sacraments, reflect amidst beauty. Buildings where key life events have been marked hold special significance and will always be places of

pilgrimage. But not every church building is beautiful, many are not fit for purpose, they are often in the wrong places where settlements have moved. Some were built for dubious reasons – as follies or status symbols. One size does not fit all, and we need to grasp the freedom the current closure gives us to treat each case individually.

If congregations and weary wardens can be released to be church, rather than being burdened with the responsibility of preserving bricks and mortar, maybe the new life we have seen emerge in lockdown might blossom and flourish – not forever online – heaven forbid! But in vibrant Christian communities meeting in the most appropriate church building in a grouping, or even in a school hall, focussing their energies and enthusiasm on serving their communities, fed by corporate worship with many others, sharing gifts and skills as they grow in discipleship together.

My theological college principal often reflected that policy is usually at least ten years behind practice in the Church of England. Re-designating masses of church buildings can, if we are brave to seize the moment, be trialled instinctively as we begin to embrace the new normal. The legislation to make it formal will take Chancellors and Archdeacons and General Synod many years and tie us all in knots, but let's not be deterred. We cannot go back to a uniform approach to church buildings draining the life from the church. Let's invest in some, reinvent others, and dare to let some quietly stay closed for ever.



CONGRATULATIONS

David and Sheila Moss who will be celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 11th July. Sending all our love and best wishes.

From Guy Hewlett

During the lockdown Jackie and I were on a walk in Sedgley, coming down from the 7 Corn Fields towards Alder Coppice woods, at the end of our walk. As I looked down the lane, I saw a small boy and a man, somehow obviously son and dad, running up the hill in a race, with real joy on their faces! And then I realised why they looked familiar – it was our 5-year-old grandson racing his dad, our son-in-law – and little way behind them being much more sensible was our daughter and granddaughter! It was our turn to have joy on our faces!

We would usually start this walk in Alder Coppice itself and then walk up past Colton Hills Community school and then across the fields to the Wolverhampton Road end of the Northway, and then back to Alder Coppice.

For some reason on that day we had done the walk in reverse. Had we gone our usual way, the way, which was familiar, we would never have seen our family and would have missed the joy of seeing them there.

When we do things differently, or take a different way, we have a chance of seeing things in a new way and perhaps seeing things for the first time.

Lockdown has been very difficult for all of us in many different ways. Amongst many other things some have been physically ill and have had to be in hospital without visitors, others have felt the mental strain and have been poorly and many have felt lonely in isolation. Many have grieved the loss of a loved one and others still have grieved not being able to be with or to help others in ways that perhaps we had taken for granted.

Zoom aside, as church many of us have not been able to meet each other to share in worship of God and to simply catch up and be with each other. Oh, for a cup of tea, a biscuit and to laugh together without fear of catching the virus!

None of us would have wanted all that has happened in the first half of this year – despite the quiet roads, the beautiful birdsong, the sunshine and for some a chance to rest.

Halfway through June we were given permission to open our church buildings, if, and only if, it was safe to do so. Perhaps soon (after our July and August magazine has been printed), we will have had permission to meet physically again for worship – not that it could be what we have been used to.

So far this year we have been down a road that none of us has travelled before. What have we found by chance which has given us joy? What have we rediscovered that has surprised us?

After Jesus's crucifixion and death, the disciples returned for a while to what they had known before they met Jesus – the fishermen returned to fishing. After Jesus's resurrection the disciples were surprised by joy – they had been down a 'road' which had caused such pain and suffering, yet now, after the resurrection, the joy came and after the coming of the Holy Spirit they embarked on a whole new way – 'The Way', as it was called.

How might we use this road, down which we have been compelled to journey, to live differently?

I am reminded of one of my favourite poems,

The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Vicars Ponderings July 2020

Back in March it was with great sadness that we had to close our church buildings; the pandemic was taking hold in our communities and it was just not safe for us to gather in church. Thankfully we as a country and local community, we have moved a long way from those first uncertain weeks. We've learnt how to do church differently, with thankfully the aid of so many resources available today, from Zoom services and gatherings, Facebook, emails, telephone conversations and worship, and also resources on the radio and television.

We are at the moment starting to take those first tentative steps to get back to normality. Shops are starting to open and soon restaurants, café's, pubs... and thankfully hairdressers!

As I write the Standing Committee, and the re-entry task team have been preparing to open All Saints for private prayer for one hour a week on a Sunday afternoon, hopefully by the time you read this we will have had our first taste of having the church building open for over three months!

There has been a desire to open church buildings for some time now, and each church and context, in the diocese and country, will be making, like us, their own risk assessment to determine if, and how, this can be done safely.

As a Standing Committee, we have a desire to open our own buildings for private prayer, and are taking a cautious approach, wanting to make sure that we have made it as safe as we can for visitors and volunteer

teams as possible. And we will be equally cautious as we seek to potentially open St Peter's Hall and St Andrews church for private prayer, funerals and gathering for worship, when we are of course allowed to by the government and the Church of England.

I saw the following quote on a Facebook the other week, which I think encompasses our approach -

“Being cautious about re-gathering church during Covid-19: It's not about faith of fear, it's about love.”

Love is a constant theme throughout the Bible, I just did a quick count, not physically! But using Bible gateway, and there are 731 results for “love” in the Bible....With so many references we cannot ignore the importance of love, as the people of God.

This is not about romantic love, it's about the love that cares for others and allows them to flourish. There are many passages that I could quote from, and I'm sure you will all have your own favourite passage. The one that often comes to my mind is 1 Corinthians 13, you will know it well.....

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. This is the love that God has for us, and manifestly reflected in Jesus' own life and teachings. We too, as followers of Jesus, seek to reflect the love that we have received through Jesus in all that we do, and it this love that drives us to do the best we can as we prepare to open our churches, in the coming weeks and months.

Catherine

The Frailty of Life

According to one survey, during the lockdown, a quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service and one in 20 have started praying. While the majority of people who contract Covid-19 survive, it reminds us that we are much more frail and weak than we like to think. As the prophet Isaiah says:

‘All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures for ever.’ (Isaiah 40:6-8).

Isaiah’s words really resonate at this time. In more normal times we can avoid facing up to our vulnerability, but this pandemic has forced us to recognise our weakness and fragility.

However, this shouldn’t lead us to despair or fear; rather it is an opportunity to worship and praise for His constancy and care. In Peter’s first letter he quotes this passage from Isaiah and says, *‘For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God’* (1 Peter 1:23). Peter contrasts our mortality with the eternal Word of God, which bring us new birth and life through the power of the Spirit. Jesus died for our sins and rose again to make us right with God, so that through faith in Him we can know eternal life. We don’t need to be afraid of our frailty, for God is a dependable foundation on which to build our lives and face eternity.

‘We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree. And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.’ (Immortal, invisible, Walter C Smith).

New style of prayer

Our minister is still getting used to live streaming our church services. Last Sunday he invited us to join him digitally in prayer by saying firmly: “Let’s bow our eyes and close our heads.”

Why sometimes you need a broken heart

There is a Hasidic tale which evokes Deuteronomy 10:18, and seems especially apt for now:

‘The pupil comes to the rabbi and asks, “Why does Torah tell us to ‘place these words *upon* our hearts’? Why does it not tell us to place these holy words *in* our hearts?”

‘The rabbi answers, “It is because as we are, our hearts are closed, and we cannot place the holy words in our hearts. So, we place them on top of our hearts. And there they stay, until, one day, the heart breaks, and the words fall in.”

It’s often the case that our own breakthroughs seem to happen when we, ourselves, break open, isn’t it?

This has been, without doubt, a time of breaking open; if not for us personally, then almost certainly for some of those we know and love.

And we’re all affected, in different ways. We’ve all experienced disorientation. We’ve all lost direct contact with people we love. Many still have no physical contact with others. There’s a place for keeping calm and carrying on, but there’s time enough to honour sorrow, too.

The words of the Aaronic blessing have flowed so beautifully through the world, in song, this season. So often, it’s when ‘all is well’ that we perceive God’s blessing in our lives. But how resonant, those words, from within a place where all is *not*?

Perhaps we can treasure those words that may have rested gently on our hearts, awaiting the time they fall a little further into place. May we thus be open, within this historic opening. And may, indeed:

‘the LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face towards you
and give you peace.

Mothers' Union

Just before 'lockdown' we had our 'Make a Mothers' Day' appeal which raised £50. This was match funded by Worcester Diocese Mothers' Union so £100 was sent to enable women, children and communities worldwide tackle the challenges they face. One example is Delphine in Burundi who joined the Mothers' Union literacy and numeracy programme where she learnt to read, write and count.

'When I was young I never had the opportunity to go to school. School was for boys, not girls, and so my family didn't think it important for me to go to school. Before I joined the programme I realised I never had any self-confidence but now I can check my change in the market, and other things, I am so happy.'

Our knitters have been busy making fiddle muffs, teddies and hearts. Denise Bayliffe, who runs the Prison Project in the diocese, sent out a plea for knitted masks for the teddies she has. The hope is that 'family visiting' may start up again in the prisons, possibly in July, and Denise wanted to give each child (or send home with the family member visiting) a teddy with a mask. I have sent 40 knitted masks to Denise thanks to our knitters.

Many of us were due to go to Pershore Abbey, in July, for our Diocesan Festival. This promised to be a wonderful occasion as bishops from around the world, who were attending the Lambeth Conference, would have been joining us. Many of the bishops' wives are members of the Mothers' Union. However this, like so many things, has had to be cancelled. There is talk of producing a Diocesan service and if so I will make sure you all have a copy.

As I write this article the Williams family would have been in Dartmouth but, like for everyone, holidays are on hold. We did however have a Dartmouth day at chez Williams, which included a cream tea and watching Agatha Christie's 'Deadman's Folly', set at Greenway on the River Dart.

I would normally have been looking forward to Wimbledon – housework and meals working around the TV coverage!

However, ... but wait, ... I see the BBC are showing tennis recordings from Wimbledon throughout the two weeks, strawberries and cream at the ready for 50 hours of tennis !!!

In these strange times we have come to appreciate those things we have so often taken for granted.

I wonder how we will look back at our time in lockdown, both worldwide, nationally and personally?

I leave you with this question;

‘If the lockdown was over and all restrictions were lifted, what would be the first thing you would do?’

Take care.

Liz Williams

Open the Book

The Open the Book Team have missed going into Woodsetton and Cotwall end Schools during these last few months and though we are still far from a time when we can resume our visits we are holding the children and staff in our prayers:

A Storyteller’s Prayer

Father God, I place my Open the Book schools in your hands.

I give you all the teachers and staff who work there.

I trust you with all the children and families who belong there.

May they remember the stories of you that we have told them, as they face these uncertain days.

Please strengthen them and protect them all from anxiety, fear and illness.

Help them to grow in faith, hope and love.

Provide parents with patience, energy and creativity.

Give our communities understanding, generosity, sympathy, and love for each other.

Grant the leaders of our nation wisdom, compassion and courage.

May we all put our trust in You. Amen.

A Reflection on Anthony of Padua

(Priest, Doctor of the Church)

John Grosvenor

On the 13th June we commemorated **St Antony of Padua** (who lived from **1195** until **1231**).

Saint Antony was first an Augustinian monk, but he was so impressed by the martyrdom of five Franciscans who had been spreading the faith in Morocco that he himself became a Franciscan friar, so that he could also preach the gospel in Africa. Illness forced him to leave Morocco, and on the way from there a storm drove the ship to Sicily, so that he found himself participating in the 1221 General Chapter of the Franciscans, where he met Saint Francis of Assisi himself. Anthony's preaching career then took him to northern Italy and southern France, then a stronghold of the Albigensian heresy (on which I shall not elaborate here).

Later he returned to Padua (in Italy) where he was an outstanding preacher, and the first Franciscan theologian. His sermons are full of gentleness, but he reproved the wicked with fearless severity – especially backsliding clergy and the oppressors of the weak. His shrine is a centre of pilgrimage, and he is also the patron saint of the lost and found.

The **first reading** appointed for this day is in the **prophecy of Isaiah**, chapter 61, verses 1 to 3.

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord,
a day of vengeance for our God,
to comfort all those who mourn and to give them
for ashes a garland;
for mourning robe the oil of gladness,
for despondency, praise.

Whilst these words are probably familiar to most of us, I think we probably associate them more readily with the Gospels.

Luke (4: 16-30) is the only evangelist to tell us where we hear that in:

“... Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his custom.”

“... was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.”

“... gave it back to the assistant and **sat down.**”

Sitting down indicated that Jesus was going to teach.

“... all eyes in the synagogue were gazing at him. He began to speak to them, “**Today this Scripture is fulfilled as you listen.**””

Matthew 13: 53-58 and Mark 6: 1-6 both only refer to this as an incident in passing, “... began to teach in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said ...”

No mention of the scripture he had been given to read, or what teaching he had drawn from it to cause such offence to the congregation.

We are fortunate in this Gospel passage: Luke tells us that Jesus was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

So often in the Gospels Jesus quotes from or alludes to the Old Testament, as does Paul in his epistles, without giving the reference. It wasn't necessary -

Jesus was a Jew talking to Jews
they knew their scriptures.

These days when so many of us only attend church for the Eucharist we do not hear the readings appointed for Morning and Evening Prayer and are not, therefore, so familiar with the Old testament scriptures (especially in those congregations which use only one of the appointed readings before the Gospel proclamation at Eucharist!).

So, let's consider what Jesus said in this homily.

“Today”: is used several times by Luke (as when telling the shepherds about the nativity, in the Zacchaeus story, to the penitent thief). Today conveys urgency, immediacy

it is **today**

not yesterday – in the past

not tomorrow (sometime, perhaps never)

but **TODAY! NOW!!!**

“this Scripture”:

Read it again. Ponder it in your heart (following Mary’s example); you may find it helpful to read different translations (as I often do when preparing to read in church).

What other scriptures does it bring to mind?

Leviticus 25: 8-17 (the year of jubilee)

I Samuel 2: 1-10 (Song of Hannah)

Luke 1: 46-55 (Mary in response to Elizabeth’s greeting)

Micah 6: 8 etc.

“fulfilled as you listen”:

“as you listen” It’s happening **now**, today

Here, in the Nazareth synagogue, as you listen!

Let us not forget the opening line of “this Scripture” –

“The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me” (New Jerusalem Bible)

This also is being fulfilled today in the Nazareth synagogue for Jesus is Christ,

the Anointed One,

Messiah,

Redeemer.

As the Nazareth congregation think about what Jesus is saying in this short homily:

How would I have reacted?
How would you have reacted?
Why?

“Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
We confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved thee with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbour as our self.
In thy mercy,
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with thee, our God. Amen.”

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Pancakes

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, five, and Ryan, three. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the chance for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.’”

Quick as a wink, Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, “Ryan, you be Jesus!”

Churches soon to lose a friend in the media?

Are British Christians in danger of losing their best friends in the media?

One of the many casualties of the coronavirus shutdown has been the country's local and regional newspapers.

As businesses have closed or cut back, they have withdrawn advertising in local titles. Sales have dropped as people in lockdown can't venture out to get a newspaper.

In response, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has called on people to buy a paper to help local, regional and national publications survive the coronavirus shutdown.

Speaking at a Downing Street briefing, he said: "A free country needs a free press and the national, the regional and the local newspapers of our country are under significant financial pressure."

The thousands of local papers and their associated websites and social media feeds have often been – alongside parish magazines – the best ways for local churches to promote their services, activities, and events to the community around.

Local titles have often given the best coverage to grassroots church projects and been open to publishing regular Christian comment columns.

But now the outlook looks increasingly bleak. Even before the lockdown, local titles were facing major challenges with much advertising revenue going to Facebook, Google and other digital platforms. People are increasingly consuming their news free online, with often the originators of the news receiving little or no payment. Research shows that people value local news. Objective, professional reporting cannot be replaced by community Facebook or WhatsApp groups. The local and regional media play a vital role in holding elected officials to account, and keeping people informed of decisions being taken in their name. They highlight the work of numerous local charities from food banks to debt counselling services and publicise their fund-raising. They promote voluntary groups that bring people together.

Christians can play their part by paying for their news – online or in print – promoting support for the local media in their church networks and supplying them with news and information

MANY HAVE FOUND THIS HELPFUL!

DAILY HOPE 0800 804 8044

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus.

Daily Hope, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England's Communications team such as Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer, updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service.

A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled 'Hymns We Love', provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by the Connections group.

This may be helpful for those who cannot access services and resources online, please share information with your friends and family.

Guy Hewlett

Lost in translation

Last year, some friends took their six-year-old on a car trip to France. To help pass the time on the way down to the Channel, they encouraged their son to practise his new reading skills by calling out road signs.

He fell asleep just before they entered France. When he awoke, he saw the French motorway signs and rubbed his eyes. In a worried tone he whispered, "I think I forgot how to read while I was asleep."

Buttercups – treasure in our countryside

Buttercup! What a delicious name! Rumour has it that, as they were frequently to be found in meadows where cows grazed, they were responsible for butter's yellow colouring. So the name was an obvious choice.

However, since buttercups are poisonous and therefore are avoided as far as possible by our four-footed friends, this is somewhat unlikely. But surely, we all remember having a buttercup held under our chin to see whether the reflection proved that we liked butter! The shiny surface of the petals actually has two real purposes. Firstly, to help attract insects and secondly to act as a kind of mirror to aid the temperature regulation of the plant's reproductive organs.

We are fortunate that buttercups do not suffer from the same unpopularity as other poisonous plants, because if eaten, not only do they taste nasty, but the poison will also cause blisters in the mouth of the consumer. Extensive handling can also damage the skin, but presumably the size of bunch that many of us picked as children did not count as 'extensive'. Fortunately, Health and Safety experts do not yet seem to have forbidden this source of pleasure for little people. Incidentally, the poison is reduced as the plant dries, and hay that includes buttercups is safe for cows and horses to eat.

Buttercups help form the traditional view of the British countryside. Differing varieties range in height from small to quite tall and although at their peak in early summer, the golden blooms can often still be seen in mid-autumn. Jan Struther, who wrote 'Lord of all hopefulness' also wrote a children's hymn entitled 'Treasure' It starts:

*Daisies are our silver, buttercups our gold;
This is all the treasure we can have or hold.*



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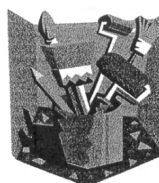
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Remembering the man who founded Barnardo's

It was 175 years ago, on 4th July 1845, that Thomas Barnardo, the humanitarian and philanthropist, was born in Dublin. He founded Barnardo's, a charity which continues to care for vulnerable children and young people.

The son of a furrier, he worked as a clerk until converted to evangelical Christianity in 1862. He moved to London, intending to study medicine and become a missionary in China. He never qualified as a doctor – despite being known as Dr Barnardo – and soon decided that his real calling was to help poor children living on the streets of London, where one in five children died before their fifth birthday.

He opened his first home for boys in 1870 and soon vowed never to turn a child away. Most Victorians saw poverty as shameful, associating it with poor morals and laziness, but Barnardo refused to discriminate. He made sure boys were trained and found them apprenticeships.

When Barnardo died in 1905, he left 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 vulnerable children, including those with learning difficulties. Because he believed that children should ideally grow up in a family setting, in 1887 he introduced an early form of fostering – boarding out children to host families

Over-65s go shopping online

When you can't go out, go shopping. That seems to be the decision of many people over 65.

Record numbers of over-65s have signed up for online banking, according to recent data from Halifax. And they are now shopping online twice as much as a year ago, after being forced to stay home during lockdown.

Overall, the proportion of transactions being made online by those over the age of 65 has doubled, climbing from 20 per cent to 40 per cent

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My dear Nephew Darren



When producing material for your magazine or church services, beware the computer spell-checker. We once let our own system check a Christmas carol sheet and, on the night, found ourselves obliged to sing “away in a manager”, mangers apparently being unknown to our machine.

If you use special sheets regularly, it seems a law of nature – as with metal coat hangers – that they all intermingle while no one is watching. Thus, on Easter Day, half the congregation will have been issued with sheets for Harvest, which will only become obvious once the service begins. The first hymn will be entirely lost while sidesmen scuttle about looking for replacements only to find that there won’t be enough of them anyway and then the second hymn will be lost while others helpfully wander about church donating their sheets to those looking helpless and then trying to find someone to share with.

Never, ever, print on them ‘Do not take home’ as this will only ensure everyone does so. I have sometimes wondered if the instruction ‘Take this sheet home for reference’ would ensure that they stayed neatly arranged in the pews after the service. And if it is a service where babies are likely to be present, be assured that many of the copies will be returned half chewed and coated with bits of whatever the infant had for breakfast. There must be a market for paper treated with a child-repellent flavour for such occasions.

Anyone who thinks we are an unimaginative nation should visit a church after a special service to see how many places members of congregations can invent to hide the booklets: under kneelers, neatly folded and hidden inside hymn books, among flower arrangements and behind heating pipes so that no one can quite reach them. They then lurk there reproachfully for the next ten years until mice solve the problem.

No, stick to large, hard bound books. They are resistant to teeth and are too substantial to be hidden in pockets. Their only drawback is that they tend to fall victim to the pull of gravity at the quietest moments.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

The man who created Sherlock Holmes

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the multi-talented writer who created Sherlock Holmes, the world's most famous detective, died 90 years ago, on 7th July 1930 at his home in Sussex, probably of a heart attack. He was 71.

He had been born in Edinburgh to a prosperous Irish-Catholic family with a dysfunctional father and a loving mother who had a talent for inventing stories. He spent seven years in a Jesuit boarding school in England, which he loathed, and qualified as a medical doctor at the University of Edinburgh. He added 'Conan' to his name at that stage.

He wrote the first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, in 1887. In all, he wrote nearly 60 novels or short stories involving Holmes and his sidekick, Dr Watson. He did not regard them as his best work – he wrote prolifically on many subjects – but their characterisation and ingenious plotting made them by far the most popular.

He was married twice – first to “gentle and amiable” Louisa Hawkins, the sister of one of his patients, and then, after she died of tuberculosis in 1906, to the “strikingly beautiful” and talented Jean Leckie. Towards the end of his life he developed a strong interest in the occult and spiritualism. He was knighted in 1902



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The NHS – bearing one another’s burdens

‘Save the NHS’ was the slogan chosen by the British government when the coronavirus began to spread. Meant to evoke public compassion, and compliance with emergency regulations, it sounded as though the NHS was an endangered species. In fact it was the public themselves whose lives were in jeopardy; the National Health Service existed solely for their benefit. The slogan did manage to stir gratitude for a service which had been taken for granted, as well as appreciation of its 1.5+ million staff, many of whom were now putting their own lives at greater risk.

The idea for a countrywide medical service came from the Beveridge Report, instigated by the coalition government during World War II. “Medical treatment covering all requirements will be provided for all citizens by a national health service”, is how it was defined, though it had to wait until 1948 for its implementation to begin.

It was part of a programme for reconstruction, aiming to eliminate Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. Sir William Beveridge, who gave his name to the report, was close friends with two other social reformers: R H Tawney, and William Temple, who was to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Today’s Archbishop, Justin Welby, wrote this about the trio: “Drawing on Christian understandings of justice, generosity and human dignity, they described the kind of country that they felt reflected God’s values better.”

St Paul couldn’t have thought he was providing a slogan for a welfare state when he wrote, “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ”, but that is a neat summary of the way the National Health Service works. We all pay in when we can and we all benefit when we need.

One estimate of the cost of the NHS today is £158.4 billion, which in real terms is 10 times as much as in 1950. In the meantime, it’s no longer completely free for all. Prescription charges and dental fees have been introduced. The development of ever-more sophisticated life-saving drugs and medical procedures will inevitably mean higher costs – and a heightened moral dilemma. Must there be further limits to the provision of “medical treatment covering all requirements”?

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

SHARED WORSHIP

As we come out of lockdown, we are gradually and safely opening up our buildings. As this magazine is published All Saints will open for private prayer on a Sunday afternoons from 2.30pm to 3.30pm; we hope services in the other buildings will follow. Please check the web site or speak to the Clergy for up to date details. We will continue to meet (in the virtual sense) for prayer and fellowship. The following gatherings and services will take place on Zoom or Facebook. For Zoom services and meetings an invitation will be sent to all 3 email News Groups.

Sunday

9:30am Holy Communion – this will be ‘live’ on Zoom .

10:30am prayer/worship - praying through the Sunday liturgy individually but hopefully at the same time! – This is available through the email News Groups and includes links to hymns and a printed sermon and is usually emailed out on the Saturday before.

11:30am Zoom coffee fellowship – bring your own coffee to your computer and see and hear some of your church friends; for about 40 minutes.

2.30pm to 3.30pm All Saints Church building open for private prayer

4 pm Singing Angels having a break for the summer!

6:30pm Compline on Zoom, about 20 minutes. A quiet and reflective service.

Tuesday

2:30pm Prayer meeting on Zoom – about 30 minutes following the Prayer in Isolation leaflet.

Thursday

8pm Fellowship Group on Zoom and open to all. We will spend some time with each other and reflect on a scripture reading. We are likely to take a break in August.

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday -9:15am Parish Prayer on Zoom – an informal time of prayer as when we’re meeting in our buildings, where we share the Gospel reading for the day and pray quietly for about 15 minutes.