

# THE THREE DECKER

## CHURCH NEWS

APRIL 2021

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Vol. 139 No. 4



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# The Three Decker

Berkswich Parish Magazine  
www.berkswich.org.uk

APRIL

## A Letter from Fr. Graham



### Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

I am sitting down to write this letter the week before the anniversary of the lockdown, and who would have thought this time last year how things would have turned out.

As a parish, we began thinking about how Coronavirus would affect us back in January 2020 – updating our risk assessment to consider how we ensure proper hygiene during the distribution of communion (the novelty of sanitising your hands when walking into a building!); teaching the congregations British Sign Language as an alternative to a handshake when sharing the peace; and, some weeks before lockdown began, making the decision to suspend the distribution of the chalice. I have to confess to wondering at the time whether we were taking things too far – little did we know how things were to develop!

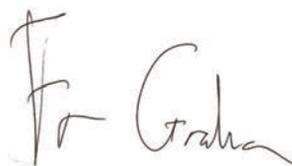
The journey from Lent into Easter is one from darkness into light. Our faith doesn't pretend that all is well with our lives or with our world – we don't deny the shock and the pain of the death of Jesus, we don't pretend that it doesn't exist, or that it is all wiped out on Easter Day (Jesus, remember still bore the scars of the nails on his hands and feet, the hole of the spear on his side). Those events shaped who the disciples were and how they, as the early church, developed and grew.

As we look towards the light of Easter hope, with the vaccines and the drop in infection numbers we are also looking in hope towards the light of the end of lockdown. But that doesn't mean that the events of the past year will be wiped away. After lockdown is lifted, we will still carry the events of this year with us - they will shape what we as a church, a nation and a world will look like.

However, we are Easter people, we live in the light of the Resurrection, not the darkness of the cross. As Pope Francis said last Easter: "With you, Lord, we will be tested but not shaken. And, whatever sadness may dwell in us, we will be strengthened in hope, since with you the cross leads to the resurrection, because you are with us in the darkness of our nights; you are certainty amid our uncertainties, the word that speaks in our silence, and nothing can ever rob us of the love you have for us."

As pilgrims in search of hope, we cling to the Risen Jesus. Let's carry our Easter message of hope to our community and world.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!



**PARISH OFFICE:** For Baptisms, Marriages and other enquiries, please telephone the Parish Office on 01785 253111 (Weekdays 10 am to 12 pm except Bank Holidays) or email: parishoffice@berkswich.org.uk  
Berkswich Parish Website: www.berkswich.org.uk **(Closed at the present time.)**

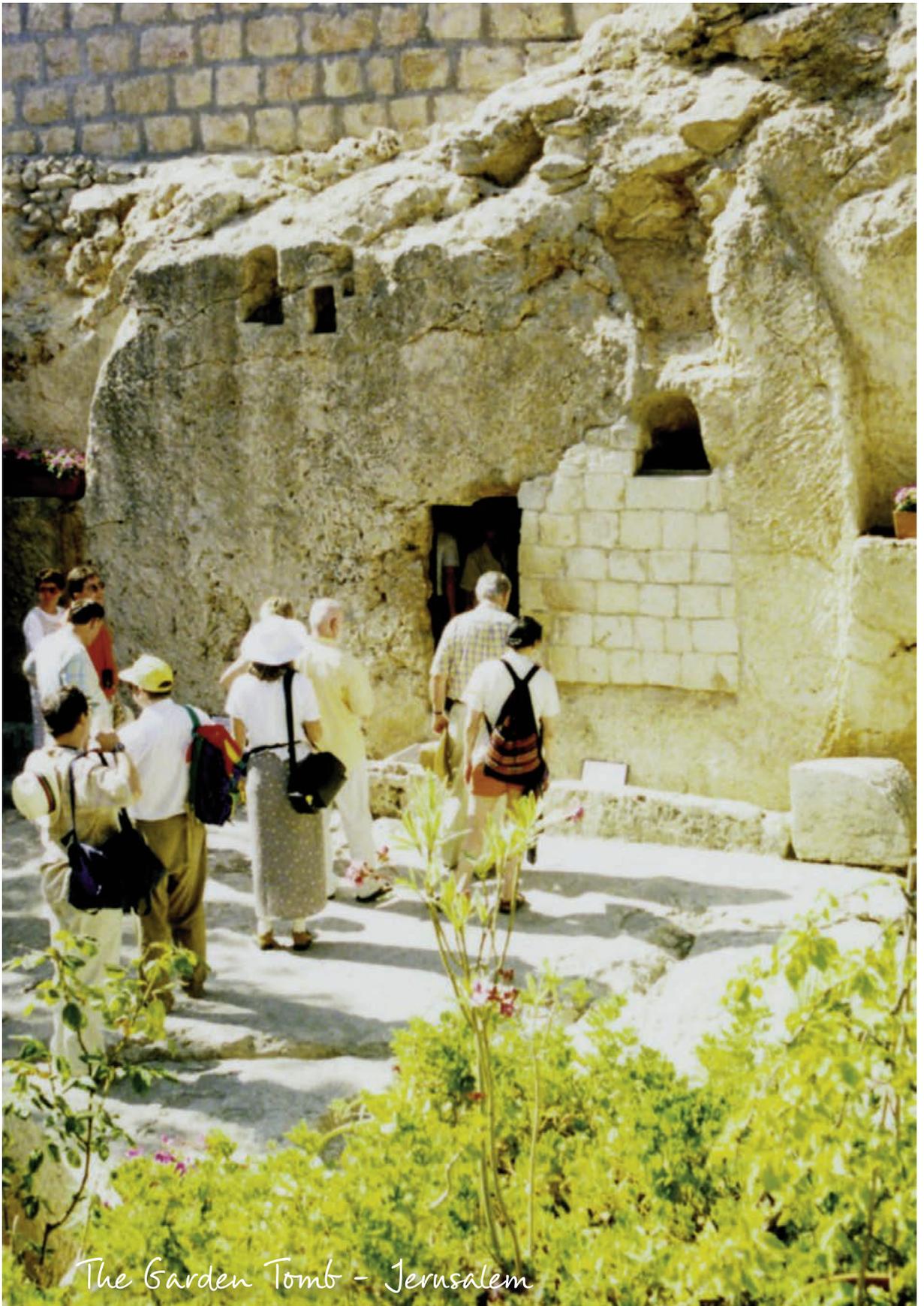
# SERVICES April 2021

<b>4th April Easter Day</b>	10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Holy Trinity and On Line	<i>Acts 10. 34 - 43</i> <i>Ps. 118. 1-2, 14-24</i>
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	On Line	<i>1. Corinthians 15. 1- 11</i>  <i>John 20. 1 - 18 or</i> <i>Mark 16. 1 - 8</i>
<b>7th April</b>	8.00 pm	Compline	On Line	
<b>11th April 2nd Sunday of Easter</b>	10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Holy Trinity and On Line	<i>Acts 4. 32 - 35</i> <i>Ps. 133</i>
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	On Line	<i>1. John 1 - 2.2</i> <i>John 20. 19 - end</i>
<b>14th April</b>	8.00 pm	Compline	On Line	
<b>18th April 2nd Sunday of Easter</b>	10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Holy Trinity and On Line	<i>Acts 3. 12 - 19</i> <i>Ps. 4.</i>
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	On Line	<i>1, John 3. 1 - 7</i> <i>Luke 24 36b - 48</i>
<b>21st April</b>	8.00 pm	Compline	On Line	
<b>25th April 2th Sunday of Easter</b>	10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Holy Trinity and On Line	<i>Acts 3. 12 - 19</i> <i>Ps. 4.</i>
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	On Line	<i>1, John 3. 1 - 7</i> <i>Luke 24 36b - 48</i>
<b>28th April</b>	8.00 pm	Compline	On Line	
<b>2nd May 2th Sunday of Easter</b>	10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Holy Trinity and On Line	<i>Acts 8. 26 - end</i> <i>Ps. 22. 25 - end</i>
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	On Line	<i>1. John 4. 7 - end</i> <i>John 15. 1 - 8</i>
<b>5th May</b>	8.00 pm	Compline	On Line	



## Parish Contacts

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## ONLINE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

### The Berkswich Lockdown Stations Station XV is our front cover for April *Jesus is raised from the Dead*

The images used for these stations were made especially for the Parish last year. They are created by Vicki Adamson from some of the detritus – fabric, choir music scores, etc. from items which would have been used as part of our Holy Week services if the first lockdown hadn't happened. In offering them to God, they remind us that God walks with us through all of our lives – even parts which to us seem wasted or worthless.



### Community Art Project: Lamentation and Hope

This month sees the 1 year anniversary of the first lockdown. To help the community mark this occasion, we are planning to launch a community art project based on and around the Lychgate. Words of hope and words expressing the pain and loss we have experienced will be hung above the gate, with prayer flags flowing from those words along and around the wall. If you would like to express lament for what the year has given or hope for what we might be facing in the future, blank flags for you to be able to fill in with a felt-tip pen will be available in a box on the lychgate.

## Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

At the time of writing Berkswich Branch have not met together as a group for 12 months. However, we thank our members for their continued support and payment of their annual subscriptions. Our members are active in 84 countries and work tirelessly to serve their communities whilst offering Christian care for families regardless of faith or background.

When we return to some sort of “normality” we will continue to meet monthly and our programmes include a variety of guest speakers, social events and lively discussions – including a lot of fun! However, we would like to attract new people to the group and hope some of you would consider joining us. Remember, you don't have to be a “mum” to be a member of Mothers' Union.

If you are interested, please contact Anne Parkes, our new Branch Leader, whose telephone number is at the front of this magazine, or speak to anyone you know to be a member. Your support will help us to end violence, end poverty and end injustice. Thank you.

*Christine Gilson*

### Weekday Services during Holy Week

**Maundy Thursday 12noon:** Online Lent prayers using the Rosary, via Zoom or Facebook Live, Zoom ID: 843 6807 0507  
Password 309696

**8pm:** Online reflective service for Maundy Thursday, via Zoom or Facebook Live, Zoom ID: 885 9961 6910  
Password 837743

### Good Friday 12pm

Love Stafford Good Friday Service  
Zoom and Facebook details to follow

**8pm** The Cross of Christ - an online devotion with music by Berkswich Virtual Choir  
Available online via Youtube and Facebook

### Holy Saturday

Online reflective service for Holy Saturday  
via Zoom or Facebook Live,  
Zoom ID: 821 5358 3019 Password: 873059

# As the days lengthen – spirituality for springtime

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I am grateful to Jeremy Sylvester, vicar of Darlaston, for reminding me that the word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word Lencton which was the word for ‘spring’ and literally meant ‘lengthen’. Our lives and that of our crops are governed by the seasons of the sun and as we pass the midwinter solstice around Christmas, the days grow longer until the Spring Equinox, this year March 20th. This is often seen as the first day of Spring which therefore ends with the Summer solstice around June 21st. Personally it makes more sense to follow what is often called a Celtic pattern that sees the shortest and longest days as marking the middle of Winter and the middle of Summer and thus the equinoxes marking the middle of Spring and Autumn. So, for me Spring begins at Candlemas with the snowdrops and first buds and ends on May Day. But whenever you count each season’s beginning each has a spiritual character that sets a rhythm to the year that in many ways matches the rhythm of the seasons of our lives.

Spring is the time of new birth and exuberant youth. It emerges from the darkness of winter as a seed aroused from sleep, at first slowly amid the darker days and the cold of winter but like the snowdrops it rears its new life from out of the apparently lifeless sleeping earth. From these small beginnings the days lengthen until at the Equinox we pass from the dark half of the year to the light half and day becomes once again longer than night. The sun rises higher in the sky and its warmth draws closer and new shoots become full

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blossoms and trees come into leaf. The promise of new life becomes a fullness promising summer and autumn fruitfulness.

Easter is often near to the Equinox, indeed in the early church there was a belief that the first Easter fell on March the 25th which was in the old Roman calendar also the date of the Equinox. It still is the date of the Annunciation when Gabriel came to Mary with the promise of Jesus’ new life to come. These festivals remind us as they come in the springtime that God is the one who brings new life in the times when our lives have entered Winter. For many this year the Covid 19 pandemic will feel like a long winter and this spring is a time of waiting for life to return as the days lengthen towards mid-summer on June 21st. If that winter is one many of us share, there will also be many individual winters, times of lost hope, grief, illness and many other ways that our lives can feel trapped, on hold or deeply dark that we long to emerge from. For those who feel they are in winter the new shoots of spring remind us of God’s gift of new life wating in the tomb, in the earth to rise up. For all of it is time to reflect and ask God what new life God wants to bring in us, and how from small beginnings like seeds sown great things come.

Revd Steve Hollinghurst is the diocese’s Evangelism Enabler with an environmental focus



## INTRODUCING A 'SEASON OF PILGRIMAGE'

St Chad's Day 2nd March 2022 marks 1,350 years since the saint's death in 672. To prepare for this event Bishop Michael is launching a 'Season of Pilgrimage', in which the people of Lichfield Diocese, together with our ecumenical partners and all with an interest in spiritual journeying, are invited to join with in several different ways.

### The Two Kingdoms Way

The centre piece of the 'Season of Pilgrimage' will be the initiation of a new pilgrim route from Lindisfarne to Lichfield, marking the missionary journey of St Chad from Holy Island in Northumbria to Lichfield Cathedral in Mercia. Small groups will walk this route between summer 2021 and March 2022 in a staged relay. The pilgrimage will begin on Lindisfarne following the unveiling of the new statue of St Chad at the Cathedral in June and will end at Lichfield Cathedral on St Chad's Day 2022.

Lichfield Cathedral has commissioned local sculptor and its Artist-in-Residence, Peter Walker, to create a major new public sculpture of St Chad.



### Two focal events

As well as a celebration in March 2022 to mark the 1,350th anniversary of St Chad and the story of his mission to Mercia, in June 2021 a new statue of the saint will be unveiled with a new 'hope garden' in the Cathedral grounds. These two events will also become focuses of Pilgrimage throughout 2021 and into 2022. You can find out more about the statue and the cathedral's plans here.

### Many Pilgrimages

As part of the 'Season of Pilgrimage' we are encouraging local church groups to walk parts of the several pilgrimage routes that lead to Lichfield crossing different parts of the diocese. A special focus of these local pilgrimages is invited arriving at Lichfield Cathedral to join the two focal events in June 2021 and March 2022. However, these can be done at any time, and could be done locally earlier in the year in line with staged relaxations of Covid restrictions. Churches may also want to organise pilgrimages

locally, for example within their deaneries as part of praying for the 'Shaping for Mission' process.

### Virtual Pilgrimage and online resources

The idea of 'virtual pilgrimage' sounds like something developed in the age of the internet, and certainly in a time of lockdown or restriction internet-based spiritual journeys can be an imaginative way of accessing the pilgrimage experience. However, there have always been those unable to travel the pilgrim routes because of health or because they were part of religious orders whose vows did not permit them to travel.

For centuries pictures and relics enabled virtual pilgrimages to be done in heart and mind if not on the road. To accompany Lichfield's 'Season of Pilgrimage' we will be producing resources to enable those who cannot physically join a pilgrim group to join them in virtual pilgrimage. These will involve maps and images and ideas to use as well as a video diary of the Two Kingdoms Way as it is travelled for the first time so those at home can join in with the pilgrims on route. In addition to this we will also be producing resources to enable church groups and individuals to undertake their own pilgrimages across the diocese.

### A message from Bishop Michael

A season of pilgrimage, on whatever scale and in whatever register of reality, is a timely opportunity for us as our churches and communities prepare to open up physically and to reach out again. Pilgrimage links us up with one another, reminds us of those who have gone before us, and points us to the future hope to which our God invites us. Whether we travel physically or in other ways, as we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad I hope that this can be our prayer:

*You call us, Lord,  
to leave familiar things and to leave our places  
of security.  
May we open our eyes to new experiences,  
may we open our ears to hear you speaking to us  
and may we open our hearts to your love.  
Grant that our time spent on pilgrimage  
may help us to see ourselves as we really are  
and may we strive to become the people you  
would have us be. Amen*

# Poems for Easter

## EASTER MORNING - (John 20:1-18)

Who is it you are looking for?  
Who?

Mary,  
Looking for her Lord,  
Early in the morning,  
While it was still dark,  
Looking for Jesus,  
Expecting His death-wrapped body,  
Finding, instead, the stone of surprises and loss.

The men come and go,  
But Mary stays and weeps  
For the love of her Lord.  
Looking, looking into the darkness,  
She weeps.

Angels in white turn her to the light,  
And the possibility of grace.

And in the speaking of her name, the world changes.  
Mary.  
Looking, looking no longer,  
The Lord lives, gloriously,  
For Mary.

He lives for all who look.  
Who is it you are looking for?  
Who?

*By Daphne Kitchin*

*Nigel Beeton writes: The opening verses of John chapter 14 are very special to many of us, they certainly are to me. They bring us great comfort in this time of fear and uncertainty, and I hope that this little reflection upon them might do the same for others:*

### THE WAY

Come, still your hearts, let troubles go  
For you believe in Me,  
And I am with you, I will show  
The way ahead of thee.  
My Father's house has many rooms  
You know my words are so!  
My Spirit and my Word illumines  
The way that you shall go.  
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life  
Believe and you shall see  
The way through tempest and through strife  
To My eternity.

*Nigel Beeton writes: 'I'm sure for many people isolated at home the time since Christmas has hung heavy. It can be challenging to make the most out of every day, and it is perhaps always a worthwhile exercise to consider our priorities:*

### CAN IT BE EASTER ALREADY?

Can it be Easter already?  
Can that be really so?  
The carols and the Christmas tree  
Don't seem that long ago!

Can it be Easter already?  
Do April showers splash?  
The weeks gone by since Christmas day  
Have gone in just a flash!

Can it be Easter already?  
The time of Lent has passed  
The forty days and forty nights  
Went by so very fast.

If it is Easter already,  
That time has sped away.  
Perhaps it's time to ponder, pause  
And savour every day!

*by Nigel Beeton*

### A PRAYER BEFORE THE CROSS

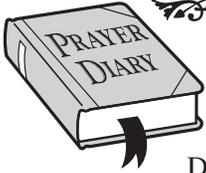
(Thoughts on the Passion of Christ)

Dear Lord, my sin is mine and mine alone:  
That folly of my humanness which I must own  
As having moved against the best-self  
You, Lord, worked within my heart,  
'til now my worst-self forms the greater part  
Of what I see, and you must judge.

My Lord, it is no more than I deserve  
For I indeed do let old Adam hide  
Within the New Man you would forge.  
So, Lord, my sin, in each and every part  
Betrays that loyalty displayed upon the cross  
Before which I, in penitence, now plead.

Dear Lord, forgive my fall from grace  
And as I look into your eyes  
Restore to me the robe of love you gave  
That I may walk, full face, along your way  
Towards our Father's house  
Wherein a joyful welcoming will say -  
'My child, now you are home at last.'

*by Sam Doubtfire*



## Easter Prayer

Dear generous, loving Father,  
How can we thank you for the precious gift of your Son Jesus, for His life of obedience and servanthood, for His choosing to die that agonising death on a cruel cross, so that we can be forgiven, and most of all for His death-defeating resurrection on the first Easter morning and the gift of His Spirit to those who put their trust in Him?

We can't possibly thank you adequately Lord, but we want to try! Thank you, thank you Father, that Jesus, our Servant-King is alive, Lord of heaven and earth - and yet still serving us, so that we too can live and serve.

Help us to be your Easter people and live lives of faithful witness to the living Lord, empowered by your Holy Spirit, building in all that we think, say or do for your kingdom to come. Hallelujah! Amen.

*by Daphne Kitching*

## LORD OF LIFE

We pray for all who bring your word of life  
As a light to those in darkness  
For those who bring your word of peace  
To those enslaved by fear  
For those who bring your word of love  
To those in need of comfort  
Lord of love and Lord of peace  
Lord of resurrection life  
Be known  
Through our lives  
and through your power  
Christ the Lord is risen to-day  
Alleluia!

We are often not the Easter People  
that we should be,  
living in the certain knowledge  
of your great mercy and love.  
Distracted by the world around us  
we fail to hear your voice,  
or hide when faith is challenged  
as we wander off the path.  
Forgive us, we pray;

restore the love that we first had,  
a faith that can endure.  
We will keep our eyes fixed on you, Lord,  
and with you at our right hand  
we shall not be shaken.

## Easter Proclamation: The Exultet

*The "Exultet" is an ancient hymn of the church, an Easter proclamation which recounts the saving acts of God in the Old and New Testaments. Historically, the Exultet was sung only once each year at the beginning of the Paschal (Easter) Vigil Service. Once again there will be no Easter Vigil in the Parish. This happy and joyous song was last sung during the Easter Vigil of 2019 where we were privileged to have the Bishop of Lichfield at our service.*

Rejoice, heavenly choirs of angels.  
Rejoice, all creation around God's throne.

Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!  
Sound the trumpet of salvation.

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,  
Radiant in the brightness of your King.  
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!  
Darkness vanishes for ever.

This is our Passover feast when Christ,  
the true Lamb, is slain,  
whose blood consecrates  
the homes of all believers.

This is the night when you, Lord our God,  
first saved our ancestors in the faith;  
you delivered the people of Israel  
from their slavery  
and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when Christ broke  
the chains of death  
and rose triumphant from the grave.  
This is the night truly blessed, when heaven is  
wedded to earth,  
and all creation is reconciled with God.

Therefore, Father, in the joy of this night,  
receive our sacrifice of praise and  
thanksgiving.

Let us sing with joy,  
joining the mighty chorus  
of all God's people!



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## A sermon for Mothering Sunday (2021) from Rev John Sterling

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Two years ago I took a service in a village outside Stafford on Mothering Sunday. I asked all the perfect mothers in church to raise a hand. Not a single shoulder moved. The lovely acrostic poem (one verse for each of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet) at the end of the book of Proverbs gives the description of the perfect wife and mother of that particular time and place. It begins “aysheth chayil” which is translated as “capable wife” in today’s Old Testament reading. However, in the King James version it reads as “virtuous woman” and the same phrase in the book of Ruth is used of Ruth by Boaz, her future husband, and is translated as “worthy woman”.

Boaz was impressed by Ruth’s support of her mother-in-law, Naomi, and that as a young widow she had not sorted out a young man to marry her. “Aysheth” can mean either wife or woman in English and “chayil” can mean strength, efficiency, wealth or army depending on context. In our Proverbs passage it means moral strength, capability in looking after her husband and family, organising her household and servants, running a business and performing acts of charity to those in need. The virtuous woman is wise, kind and her fear of the Lord is praiseworthy. What child would not love such a mother

But, although we may not claim to be perfect mothers (or fathers for that matter) we know that we have strengths and characteristics which our families recognise, value and love. At one in

three funerals for mothers in the Potteries I would say: “She was well known for her meat and potato pie”. Other mothers had made dresses for their daughters when they were young, grew beautiful roses and were always there when you needed them. They passed on down the generations their love of embroidery, reading, and music. Some were quiet, some extrovert, like the former pub landlady whose party piece was to stand on a table and sing: “My old man said follow the van and don’t dilly-dally on the way”. They looked after grandchildren while their daughters went to work and were loved by their young charges. They weren’t perfect, any of them, but as individuals they all had strengths as well as weaknesses and generally they loved, to the best of their ability, the children and grandchildren for whom they were responsible. In terms of giving and receiving love they were “good enough” for their children and grandchildren to learn how to do the same.

Looking back at our own lives we can see how much we have to thank our mothers for. We know that our own basis as human beings comes from what, by nature, we have directly inherited from them and how, by their nurturing of us, our lives have been shaped. We owe our mothers so much. In return we give back to them the love we have received and pass it down the generations. We may not be perfect parents or children but we are “good enough”. Our mothers share with us the wisdom and

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knowledge they have learned from their experience of life. We value that wisdom and apply it appropriately in our own lives. Our matriarchs are rich sources of how life should be lived, the difficulties and dangers they have faced and lived through may be similar to the ones we face. We can learn from their successes as to what works and from their failures what doesn't. From their joys and happiness we learn too and try to ensure that such knowledge is passed on to our own children and grandchildren.

Helped by God, our partners, families and friends, we seek to express our love and care to our mothers and our children. We all have memories of what our mothers have done for us and what we, as children, have done for them. Our children receive that love and have memories of their own as we continue the chain of love and in return they help us when we need it. Who, of my generation, does not need help from our grandchildren with the information technology of our day?

So, if instead of asking: "How many perfect mothers are in church today?" we ask: "How many good enough mothers (and fathers) are in church today" in all honesty, most if not all of us can raise a hand. We do, and we have done, our best. We ask and receive forgiveness from God for the mistakes we have made. But, above all, we thank Him that in Jesus Christ, we have been enabled to both give love and to receive love from our mothers and fathers and our children. In a moment of quiet, let us remember our mothers, treasure our memories and thank God for the blessings of love.

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## **Proverbs 31:10-31 NRSV** **Ode to a Capable Wife**

- 10 A capable wife who can find?  
She is far more precious than jewels.
- 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
and he will have no lack of gain.
- 12 She does him good, and not harm,  
all the days of her life.
- 13 She seeks wool and flax,  
and works with willing hands.
- 14 She is like the ships of the merchant,  
she brings her food from far away.
- 15 She rises while it is still night  
and provides food for her household  
and tasks for her servant-girls.
- 16 She considers a field and buys it;  
with the fruit of her hands she plants a  
vineyard.
- 17 She girds herself with strength,  
and makes her arms strong.
- 18 She perceives that her merchandise is  
profitable. Her lamp does not go out at  
night.
- 19 She puts her hands to the distaff,  
and her hands hold the spindle.
- 20 She opens her hand to the poor,  
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid for her household when it  
snows, for all her household are clothed  
in crimson.
- 22 She makes herself coverings;  
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the city gates,  
taking his seat among the elders of the  
land. She supplies the merchant with  
sashes.
- 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing,  
and she laughs at the time to come.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and the teaching of kindness is on her  
tongue.
- 27 She looks well to the ways of her  
household, and does not eat the bread of  
idleness.
- 28 Her children rise up and call her happy;  
her husband too, and he praises her:
- 29 "Many women have done excellently,  
but you surpass them all."
- 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to  
be praised.
- 31 Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,  
and let her works praise her in the city  
gates.

## **Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest**

I like the story of the vestry noticeboard of a church in Hampshire: after a Holy Week performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion', the choirmaster wrote: "The Crucifixion" – well done, everyone!' Later that day, someone had added, 'The Resurrection – well done, God!'

For the two disciples treading the road to Emmaus, there was no such sense of victory and celebration. Their minds and hearts were numb with the sense of loss and failure. They had seen their Lord tried and crucified. As Luke recounts that walk in his Gospel, he shows how it began with absence and loss, but journeyed to presence. It was a road that took the disciples from blindness and despair to sight and insight. They talked over past events with the stranger who joined them, and Luke uses ten different Greek words to describe that conversation – all stages in their understanding. And when they share a meal with the stranger, who becomes the host, taking the bread and giving thanks, then the understanding becomes vision and insight.

That meal is the theme of Caravaggio's painting of 1601, 'The Supper at Emmaus.' Caravaggio had a reputation for being a violent, irrational artist, given to bouts of anger and forced to spend part of his life in exile in Naples and Sicily. His paintings as well as his lifestyle shocked and provoked comment. This portrayal of Jesus with a plump, youthful face and his depiction of the apostles as ordinary labourers upset the church authorities. But by giving Jesus a beardless face, Caravaggio was trying to show Him in the new likeness of Resurrection – an Easter image of our Lord. The light from that Easter Jesus

fills the scene as the two disciples look on, astonished and finally understanding.

When we read the Gospel, we are drawn into the scene. For Caravaggio the movement is the other way: the scene reaches out to us from the canvas. Look at the outstretched hand of Jesus, the elbow of one disciple and the left hand of the other: they are being projected into our world. And that basket of fruit, full of apples and figs and grapes, symbols of the fall and the eucharist: it is about to topple off the table and into our laps. It is an Easter encounter two thousand years ago, reaching out to us through light and shade and the skill of the artist.

In many ways the Gospel story in Luke is of an ordinary encounter between travellers and a stranger. But it is made extraordinary by the transforming power of the risen Lord, talking with the disciples in the open air and then going inside for a meal. However, the doors are not shut to us. For Caravaggio shows how that special moment of encounter for the two disciples can reach out to enter our world. And he shows the hand of the risen Lord beckoning us to step into that Easter world of sacrament and new life.



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# PARISH POETS

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## SPRING

I woke this morning - Spring is here,  
The sun is shining, the air is warm,  
I'm pleased to leave the comfort of my bed.  
The birds are singing - winter has gone!  
My heart is light with thoughts of  
Summer days ahead.

*Poet: Cynthia Shum*



## TIME

Time as a child slips slowly by  
Each day is full of fun  
We remember only happy times  
No clouds in the sky, just sun.

Time in youth is of no concern  
We enjoy each day, as we live and learn.

Time moves quickly as we mature  
With families of our own  
Trying to solve our problems  
With little time to call our own.

Time as we reach retirement  
Enjoy these peaceful days  
Time to renew old hobbies  
Time to relax and laze.

And as we move on to meet old age  
Hoping to reach our goal  
We pray that time lasts forever  
In the kingdom of our soul.

*Poet: Cynthia Shum*

## Another Ditty from our Roving Poet Caroline Evans

### A WALK IN LOCKDOWN (3)

The sun is out, oh happy day  
Which way today will I foray?  
Down the road to Stockton Lane  
A path leads to a grassy plain

The sky it is a lovely hue  
Enjoy the panoramic view  
An easy footpath now to follow  
Then you reach the Bluebell Hollow

The path leads up to Milford Road  
Don't forget the Green Cross Code  
Go up the steps so well spaced out  
A challenge- what it's all about!

At the top a choice of route  
Pick the one the day will suit  
Oldcroft Road and lovely flowers  
Nature sure has all the powers

Down the road and to the right  
A bridle path comes into sight  
Playing fields on either side  
What a joy these fields provide



## Feeling Isolated IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYBODY



Something bad happens in your life and you mention it to nobody. The longer you keep it to yourself the bigger it grows in your mind. The longer ago it happened the harder you think it will be to talk about it. This can lead you to thinking that nobody would understand anyway and you are completely alone.

### Isolated.

It is never too late to talk about an issue that is causing your emotional health to suffer..

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**Alan Alecock – outreach coordinator  
Stafford Samaritans**

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*Editor: By the Revd Tony Horsfall of Charis Training. More details at: [www. Charistraining .co.uk](http://www.Charistraining.co.uk).*

## WALKING AND TALKING

During the pandemic, I have enjoyed walking. In many ways, getting out daily for a good walk has not only helped me physically, but also bolstered my mental well-being. Often, I have arranged to walk with a friend, and we have enjoyed good conversation and fellowship.

Today I was walking alone, and I noticed it seemed further and to take longer. When you are walking and talking, you hardly notice the distance or the time. I am not usually able to think much when I am walking alone, but today the reminder came into my head of a saying: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

It made me thankful for all the friends who have encouraged me this year and helped me to keep going. We can walk alone, and sometimes that's a good thing; but it is easier to be able to walk through life with others.

## SUMMER FETE – 2021

### 1.30pm Sunday 12th September at Milford Hall Cricket Ground

Only 23 1/2 weeks to go! It seems a very long time since I last used that phrase!!

As you can see from the above heading, this year's Fete has been deferred by nearly 3 months as we do not consider that its usual date of the 3rd Sunday in June(20th) is achievable due to Coronavirus restrictions. Fortunately, Milford Hall Cricket Club has been able to offer us a later date so our Fete this year will take place on

### SUNDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER

*Hopefully with all our usual 'ingredients'*

The main purpose of this article is to advise you in good time of the revised date in the hope that you will highlight it on your calendar and make every effort to be with us for a long-awaited opportunity to share some good, traditional fellowship. Perhaps you could also spread the news among your friends and neighbours.

The cajoling, nagging, begging and details will, of course, follow in subsequent monthly articles. For now, please pray for a fine day and that the pandemic situation does not prevent our staging this much needed event.

Please ring me if you have any queries.

Bye for now.

**Bob Moore (664302)**



Who has walked with you this year? Do they know that you appreciate their companionship on the journey?

*Editor: Reader, do let us know if you have enjoyed any good walks during the pandemic.*

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*More Jokes from Mark Dudek...  
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*My wife asked me to put peanut butter on the shopping list. Now I can't read any of it.*

*I paid a joiner upfront to make me a nice double bed, but he's done a bunk.*

*I've been diagnosed with the "Peek-A-Boo" virus I'm being transferred to ICU.*

*eBay is so useless. I searched for "cigarette lighter" but it only came up with 24,735 matches.*

*Moses led his people through the desert for 40 years it seems that even in biblical times men were too stubborn to ask for directions*

*A soldier has survived mustard gas and pepper spray. He is now a seasoned veteran.*

*I used to play the triangle in a Jamaican reggae band, but I left because it was just one ting after another.*

*I went to see my psychiatrist and told him I could see into the future. He asked "When did this start?" I replied "Next Tuesday."*

*I dreamt that I nearly drowned while swimming in a giant bowl of muedi. I was pulled under by a strong curreant.*

*I'm not sure what the best thing about Switzerland is, but their flag is a big plus.*

**National Garden Scheme**

**2021 OPEN GARDEN DATES AT THE GARTH, MILFORD**

Subject to Coronovirus restrictions David and Anita Wright are hoping to open our garden to visitors again this year as part of the National Garden Scheme when we would love to see you all.

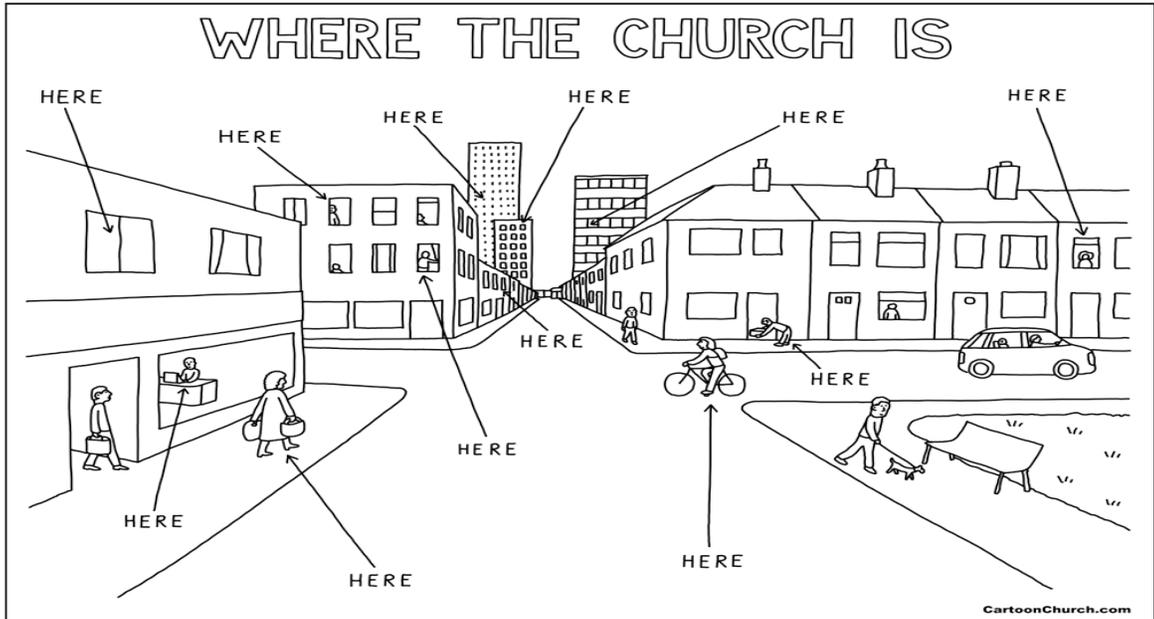
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## BERKSWICH W I

I must give my apologies for advertising the Annual meeting as taking place in March as it has always been the case in the past. Well this year it was changed to April so I do hope no one has been inconvenienced by the error.

The March meeting, held on Zoom, was well received by the members who took part. President Ann Lee conducted business and afterwards the members enjoyed a good chat and a laugh. A quiz followed, conducted by Secretary Diane Hinton, which caused much serious thinking, head scratching and amusement.

Hopefully we see light and the end of this tunnel caused by Covid and it will be lovely to meet everyone again soon.

The next meeting takes place by Zoom on Wednesday evening 7th April at 7.0p.m. Besides it being the Annual meeting there will be a speaker Tamar Kinnons who will tell her tales of being an entertainer. Please ring the Secretary on 01785 620938 for more information.

*Olive Preston*

## BROCTON W I

The members of Brocton W.I held a Virtual Annual Meeting on Wednesday 10th March 2021, when a new President was duly elected. Val Boulton, our dedicated President of four years, remains as a committee member.

The committee is made up of eight members who are holding regular Zoom Meetings.

Due to present Covid Restrictions no date has been set for our next meeting at Brocton. However, we are eager to resume, when safe conditions apply. Members will be kept up to date.

Best Wishes go out to our members, Berkswich W.I and all the residents of Stafford.

*Anne Macleod.*

### HILDA CASWELL RIP

Hilda Caswell,

16th October 1921 ~ 24th February 2021

**H**ilda, formerly of Cannock Road, passed away peacefully in her sleep, at her Care Home, after a brief illness caused by a stroke.

## Parish of Berkswich Virtual Coffee Morning

**Saturday 17th April  
10am - 12 noon**

**RAFFLE, CAKE SALE, AUCTION,  
A FUN CHALLENGE  
& QUIZ**





## Looking for Lizards

April is one of the best times of year to search for reptiles such as lizards as they are getting active in the spring but need to bask a lot to warm up and so can be quite easy to spot. Reptiles are poikilothermic, meaning that their internal temperature varies, depending on the weather, as opposed to homeothermic animals like us, who can maintain a nearly constant internal temperature. These characteristics used to be called cold or warm blooded. In the spring reptiles need to be warmed in order to be active, but later in the year, when the weather is hotter, they do not need to come out into the open where predators might find them and may actually need to shelter to cool down.

Churchyards can be brilliant for all reptiles because they contain a mixture of warm places to bask such as stones and short grass, which are usually close to places where they can shelter such as gaps and cracks within stone walls, long and tussocky grass, uneven ground with holes and also larger gaps within the joints of monuments such as chest tombs. Churchyards are also rich in invertebrate food, in part due to the absence of chemicals such as pesticides.

When searching for lizards look several metres ahead of where you are walking, going slowly



and quietly. Reptiles can pick up vibrations from sudden movement and are aware of shadows falling on them. Search on flat stones and south-facing banks of short grass, close to good hiding places. First light is the best time, when they are cold and need the warmth of the sun. Lift flat stones and pieces of wood to search for slowworms (a lizard without legs), who often ‘bask’ underneath something that will transmit heat. Roofing felt is a favourite and you can put half metre squares of this out if you want to search for slowworms. Give them a few weeks to discover the felt squares then peep under them at the start and end of the day. Please let us know if you spot any of these fascinating reptiles in your churchyard.

*All the best* **Harriet Carty**  
Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor  
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### ADULT GROUPS

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Brocton: Kathryn Mann 665303

**Townswomen's Guild-** Mary Burton 663340

#### Flower Clubs-

Chaseside: Mrs. Anita Wright 01785 661182

#### Walton Music Circle-

Mr. M. Jones 661622

#### G.R.O.W.-

Mrs. B. Sanders 664402

#### Berkswich History Society-

Bob Morton 664613

Rachel Mason 665464

### GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

#### Parent and Toddler Group-

##### Play Groups-

#### Rainbows

#### Brownies

#### Guides

} Sally Clementson 660301

#### Beavers

#### Cubs

#### Scouts

} Mrs. D. Smith 664155

#### Sea Scouts

#### Sea Cubs

#### Sea Beavers

} Mr. J. Popple 664508

#### Baswich Library, Lynton Avenue 663355

Monday: 2.00 - 7.00 p.m.

Wednesday and Friday: 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Thursday: 2.00 - 7.00 p.m.

Saturday: 9.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

#### Mobile Library- 01785 278369

Visits: Brocton - Monday 9.30 - 9.45 a.m. fortnightly.

#### Christian Audio Magazine-

Hannah Morris - [info@thebeaconchurch.com](mailto:info@thebeaconchurch.com)

### CHARITIES

#### Bible Society-

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#### Children's Society-

Brocton:

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