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## CHURCH NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Vol. 138 No.9



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# The Three Decker

Berkswich Parish Magazine

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SEPTEMBER

## 'From the Parish'

### A Letter from Mary Moss



How do you write a letter and change the news or topic in these strange days we are living in? The situation we are in brings to my mind our Parish pilgrimage several years ago to the plague village of Eyam in Derbyshire. A most moving place to visit with chilling name plaques on the walls of houses with names, some whole families, who had not survived the 1665/67 plague after a flea infested bundle of cloth arrived from London for the tailor. As the disease spread the villagers turned for leadership to their Rector, the Reverend William Mompesson. He and the Puritan minister, Thomas Stanley put precautions in place: families to bury their own dead, relocation of church services to a natural amphitheatre, allowing villagers to separate themselves and so reduce the risk of infection. The best-known decision was to quarantine the entire village; no one allowed out and no one allowed in, any exchange of coins was soaked in vinegar. This saved several lives in the village and stopped the disease spreading to neighbouring communities.

How many of us have made good use of our time in lockdown whilst our normal routine and activities have been suspended? Sir Isaac Newton moved from Cambridge University back home to the relative safety of the countryside in 1665 and worked on his theories of calculus, optics and the laws of motion and gravity. He stressed that these enforced absences from university life were the most intellectually

fruitful of his whole life. Whilst most of us are unlikely to come up with theories that change science and the world as we know it, it is inspiring what can be achieved, even in periods of isolation and change.

Recently the Bishop of Norwich commented: 'during lockdown I sense that Church of England communities have asked less, 'Will you come to this?' 'Will you buy that?', and more, 'How can we help?' 'What do you need?' 'Can we pray for you?' He goes on to say that 'far from being absent we have been more present serving our neighbours'.

I agree we have needed to make a much more conscious effort to keep in touch with each other, we have encouraged and supported one another through this time. We have benefited from our three church communities coming together to worship online and from the social get togethers of the virtual coffee mornings. We need to look towards something new and different, collecting and taking with us the best of the past traditions and adding innovations.

'And remember', Jesus tells us, 'I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matthew 28.20). What words could be better, more needed and more relevant for today than those?

With hope and prayers

Mary Moss

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**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.)

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

### **Sunday September 6th - 13th Sunday after Trinity**

10.30 – Live-streamed Eucharist with Hymns sung at home (Holy Trinity & Online)

18.30 – Online Evening Prayer

### **Sunday September 13th - 14th Sunday after Trinity.**

10.30 – Live-streamed Eucharist with Hymns sung at home (Holy Trinity & Online)

18.30 – Online Evening Prayer

### **Sunday September 20th - 15th Sunday after Trinity**

10.30 – Live-streamed Eucharist with Hymns sung at home (Holy Trinity & Online)

18.30 – Online Evening Prayer

### **Sunday September 27th - 16th Sunday after Trinity**

10.30 – Live-streamed Eucharist with Hymns sung at home (Holy Trinity & Online)

18.30 – Online Evening Prayer

### **Sunday October 4th - 17th Sunday after Trinity**

10.30 – First Eucharist of Rev'd David Clark

Live-streamed first Eucharist of Rev'd David Clark (Holy Trinity & Online)

18.30 – Online Evening Prayer

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## SPECIAL SERVICES

### **Monday 21st September – St. Matthew**

20.00 - Online Eucharist

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## WEEKDAY SERVICES

### **Each Wednesday**

16.00 Short Said Eucharist for those who have been shielding (Holy Trinity)

20.00 Online service of Compline, or night prayers

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## WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

### **Tuesdays and Thursdays**

10.00- 12.00 Online Drop-in Coffee Morning

### **Wednesdays**

10.30 – Online Bible Study

14.00 – Online Trinity Ark members group. Chat, song and story

**GOD**

is our

*refuge*

and

**STRENGTH**

*a very present*

*help in trouble*

*therefore we will **not** fear.*

Psalm 46:1



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## A LETTER FROM FR. GRAHAM ON THE OPENING OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH FOR WORSHIP

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I am thrilled to say that Berkswich PCC have begun the process of returning to our buildings for worship.

Right from the start of lockdown, we have still managed to 'gather' in praise and prayer, albeit in our own homes and over the telephone or computer rather than face to face in a church building. This has helped us to continue to worship and give thanks to God, however we cannot pretend that it has not also been painful to have not been together worshipping in our buildings.

While we are now delighted to be starting to return to the buildings, in following church and government guidance, we cannot yet return to 'normal' and will only be able to accommodate about one fifth of our normal Sunday attendance into our building for any service. Because of this, people are still going to be able to join in with our worship at home – and indeed many of the prayers, readings and sermons will be led by people at home.

As the largest of our church buildings, we are starting this process with two services a week in Holy Trinity – our 10.30am Sunday morning Eucharist with hymns sung at home, and a shorter said Eucharist for those who are or were shielding held at 4pm on Wednesday. Only when we are sure both, that it will be safe, and that we have the resources to do so, will we expand our worship further. The online service pattern we have maintained through lockdown will continue throughout this period.

Despite being our largest building, we can still only accommodate twelve households into the building, and we know how disappointing it would be for someone to arrive to worship and have to be turned away because we have met capacity. While we know that no system is going to be perfect, we have made the difficult decision of establishing a reservations system which will hopefully give as many people as possible the opportunity to worship with us.

This will be done using something called Eventbrite, which you may have used already to reserve spaces at Shugborough National Trust or for concerts or theatre events pre-lockdown.

Reservation spaces will be made available each week from the Monday for that coming Sunday's service, and can be booked either online at <https://parishofberkswich.eventbrite.co.uk/> or by calling Christine Gilson on 660010

Please do consider how frequently you wish to attend in order to allow the opportunity for others to also worship in the building with us. When you arrive in church, you will find things remain different. Again, we know this is difficult, but hope it will give people the confidence to attend.

These are some of the changes and procedures we have had to put in place to follow government and church guidance:-

- Pew cushions have been removed - you may wish to bring your own
- Current government guidance requires masks to be worn during worship (removed to receive communion). If you are unable to wear a mask, you may still prefer to join us online, however if you wish to come please ensure you sit against the wall of the pews to ensure you are fully 2m away from the aisle
- Currently the Eucharist will be distributed in one kind only (the wafer)
- No singing in church is yet permitted, although music for the hymns will be played for those at home to sing along to
- You will be asked to sanitise your hands on the way in and out of church, plus before and after receiving communion
- Only limited copies of the liturgy will be available on the day - if you can, please print out your own copy at home and bring it with you. Alternatively, you can view that week's liturgy on your phone at <http://www.berkswich.org.uk/sundaymorning.html>. Please take any sheets you have used home with you
- When moving around the building, please ensure you keep 2m distance from other households
- The toilets will be available, but for your own safety and peace of mind you may wish to 'go before you go'

- If you are shielding, you may prefer to come to the 'shielders only' service on Wednesday
- If you develop any Coronavirus symptoms, or find you have to quarantine after booking tickets, if possible please let Fr Graham know so we can reallocate the tickets to others

I continue to give thanks to God for all the support, love and encouragement you have shown to each other and our community during these difficult times. There are many things which you have done through this time which has helped to show God's love to Berkswich – including picking up prescriptions and shopping, but perhaps most importantly keeping in touch with people, just picking up the phone for a 'chat' and to find out how they are. Please keep up this good work and, if there is anything we can do for you, do let us know.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr Graham & the Wardens.*

*Editor: Dear readers would you like to share a tune which triggers a big memory for you? Send your memory, saying why, to the editor and we will publish in the October edition of the Three Decker*

### MUSIC AND MEMORY

Have you ever heard a certain song or tune that immediately takes you back to your youth? It can be a very poignant moment.

When researchers at the University of Westminster examined the choices of 80 different guests on the BBC radio show Desert Island Discs, they found that most guests had chosen music which dated back to when they had been between 10 to 30 years old. This time span was identified as a 'self-defining period' in their lives.

The research concluded: "The music we know and love between the ages of 10 to 30 will play a significant role throughout our lives, connecting us as individuals to other people, places and times that become central to our identity."



### MARY BURTON WRITES...

I saw the prayer from St. Peter's Chapel On the Wall in the Prayer Diary of the June magazine. The words 'We thank you for the ever- changing skies, the blessed winds and the earth beneath our feet' are so vivid when you are standing out in the wild and close to the sea. Tony and I visited his Godfather when he was vicar of Bradwell for a time, and we walked down with him to the chapel.

Built by St. Cedd in 654 AD and one of the oldest chapels in our land, it is still active today and cared for by St. Thomas' Bradwell on Sea. In normal times there is a service every Thursday morning and special services at Easter and Christmas. During the summer there is a Sunday evening service throughout July and August. An annual pilgrimage takes place on the first Saturday in July, when clergy, Bishops and people from all over Essex make the 2-mile journey from Bradwell to the chapel, sadly not this year. It is a very moving experience and a weekend celebration for many.



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## A Journey Through Bishop Sarah's pastoral letter for September 2020

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I recently watched a film called 'Patriots Day', a dramatic retelling of the events surrounding the Boston Marathon bombing of April 15th, 2013. I felt a deep connection with the events depicted in the film and over the next few days I began to process what was going on in my own mind and emotions. I come from Manchester and on December 3rd, 1992, two bombs were detonated in Manchester city centre, one of them very close to the Cathedral where, later that month, Peter and I were married. On June 15th, 1996, whilst I was involved in an event at the church where I served my curacy, the IRA detonated a lorry bomb in Manchester city centre, only 2.5 miles away. All of us at the church fete heard and felt the huge explosion and saw the dust cloud rise over the city. These traumatic events were a public and a private tragedy for our city and for individuals and families.

The watching of this film had brought to the surface again some of the emotions I had felt when these events had occurred. It took some time to recognise this and to begin to think and pray through. I was greatly helped by articles produced by the 'Tragedy and Congregations' Project. The purpose of this project is to resource Christians to respond with integrity, courage and compassion to the impact of tragedies, local and global. At this time, as we journey through the COVID-19 pandemic, when we are all dealing with and processing the effects of a world-wide tragedy, their resources speak directly to our situation and the challenges we face and I commend them to you.

'So, what of this Covid 19 situation? In a sense it's the trauma that keeps giving. Or like an earthquake with aftershocks. We do not know yet what may happen further down the line. The problem is that there are no maps available to us to help us navigate through this crisis...

'In response to the initial phase of the pandemic, we have certainly seen heroic and inspiring responses; amazing self-giving in those

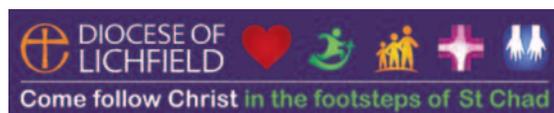
who have volunteered to help neighbours and communities, healthcare and frontline workers, clergy and congregations serving those who are in need and ministers learning to record and live stream services and finding many creative ways to engage with congregations and local communities. Many are now tired, emotional, increasingly frustrated with the loss of liberties, with the denial of the usual comforts of contact with families and friends, of going out and just being normal. Losses are mounting up and realities are hitting home. ...Some just want to get back to normal and others are fearful of coming out of lockdown too quickly.

'And it is at this point, when energy levels are depleted, that we as communities and churches are being asked to be creative all over again in finding ways to develop a 'new normal', which may only be temporary, to cope with requirements of social distancing, and won't feel 'normal' at all. Perhaps this is a transitional phase in which we try to function as best we can with the uncertainty of not knowing if we will be on a gradual trajectory out of this crisis or find ourselves back in lockdown again.

'This is where we are at the edge of our known world so far. ... It will be important for us to chart our journeying and to be kind and forgiving to ourselves and one another, for there is much to learn and endure as we travel, and we will need time and space to reflect on and integrate our learning. Wiser living is not a final destination, but it is the fruit of hope, trust and love shared amongst companions on the Way.'

'Mapping the journey communities are taking through COVID', Hilary Ison, June 2nd, 2020. May you know God's presence, peace and blessing as we continue to journey through this time together

*+Sarah, Bishop of Shrewsbury*



## Favourite Quotations

*Editor: I asked our readers if they would like to share their favourite quotations and was delighted with the response.*

**Rev'd David Clark has chosen:**

*“Be kind to people; trust in Our Lord, and say your prayers.”*

This was given to us as ordinands by Bishop Michael on our ordination retreat last year. They were words that his ordaining Bishop said to him some 35 years previously so they have a good provenance.

It strikes me that they can apply to all of us, lay and ordained, with +Michael's additional comment

*“Straightforward but not always easy”.*

**Henry Birtley has chosen:**

*By the grace of God I am a Christian man, by my actions a great sinner, and by calling a homeless wanderer...*

These opening lines from the anonymous 19th century Russian classic *The Way of the Pilgrim* tell me much of what I need to know about myself. It is fair to say that reading these lines several years ago changed my perception of myself forever. They have remained my favourite non-biblical quote since then. I say non-biblical in the sense that if you opened your bible you certainly wouldn't find that quote laid down in quite that way, but that one sentence is crammed full of biblical truth, and Christian theology. By the grace of God I am a Christian man, and as such heir to all that Christ has won for me by his life death and resurrection, by my own actions (self-evidently) a great sinner. In one sentence any identity anxieties I may have are calmed, and put into a mental box marked 'irrelevant', my arrogance challenged (regularly!!), and strength given for the next part of the journey toward that day when God's Kingdom finally comes. That's a fair bit from one sentence. Whenever I am asked to introduce myself I am tempted to do so

using these lines, as they say far more about me than my name, marital status, class, etc. ever could.

**Elaine Lyne says:**

My favourite is **“This too shall pass”**.

Apparently it is from the medieval Levantine (Persian, Hebrew, Turkey) around 1200AD. Abraham Lincoln said, “It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him with the words

*“And this too shall pass away”*

I also like

*“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”. Matthew 6:34*

**Christine Hammond has chosen:**

*“I remember I used to half believe and wholly play with fairies when I was a child. What heaven can be more real than to retain the spirit world of childhood, tempered and balanced by knowledge and common-sense.”*

*Beatrix Potter*

*“How do you spell love?” asked Piglet, “You don't spell it you feel it”. said Pooh.*

*A A Milne*

My favourite quotations are taken from children's authors which I seem to read a lot of in babysitting duties (or used to in the days before Covid 19).

**Anne Parkhill's thoughts turned to poetry.**

*I will arise and go now and go to  
Innisfree, and a small cabin build  
there, of clay and wattles made:*

*While I stand on the roadway, or on the  
pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

### **THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE**

*by W B Yeats (1865-1939)*

I would like to share this poem as it brings back memories of childhood holidays in Co Sligo when we would pass the small churchyard of St Columba's Church at Drumcliff nestling below the mountain of Ben Bulbin where the Irish poet W B Yeats is buried. His paternal great grandfather was Rector of Drumcliff. It was while walking down Fleet Street in London in 1888 that the inspiration for the poem came to Yeats from a sudden memory of childhood holidays in Co Sligo.

*I will arise and go now and go to Innisfree,  
and a small cabin build there, of clay and  
wattles made:  
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace  
comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where  
the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a  
purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by  
the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the  
pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

**Margaret Johnson shares a thought**

*by Benjamin Franklin:*

**'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.'**

Benjamin Franklin, an 18th century statesman, diplomat, writer was one of the most talented men in colonial America. He wrote many essays on the importance of the abolition of slavery and of the integration of black people into American society.

As a teacher this quotation resonates with me as it says much about how children learn best; by developing a good relationship with the teacher and being an active participant in the learning process.

I love this one too for its imagery:

**'I have only to break into the tightness of a strawberry, and I see summer – its dust and lowering skies.'**

*From 'The Bluest Eye' by Toni Morrison.*

**Chris Bowen writes:**

'My mind goes back to that epic early 60s film 'Greatest Story Ever Told'. The film reaches its deeply emotional climax with Jesus on the cross breathing his last when the camera turns to the centurion on the hill and John Wayne in his best American Western drawl announces,

**'Truly this man was the son of God'.**

It is very unchristian of me, but for some reason I break out in giggles every time. Watch it back on YouTube if you can and see if you agree.

But my very favourite quote originates much nearer to home when my wife, responding to my protests many years ago stated,

**'I only nag you to make you happy!  
Very deep and accurate when you think about it!'**

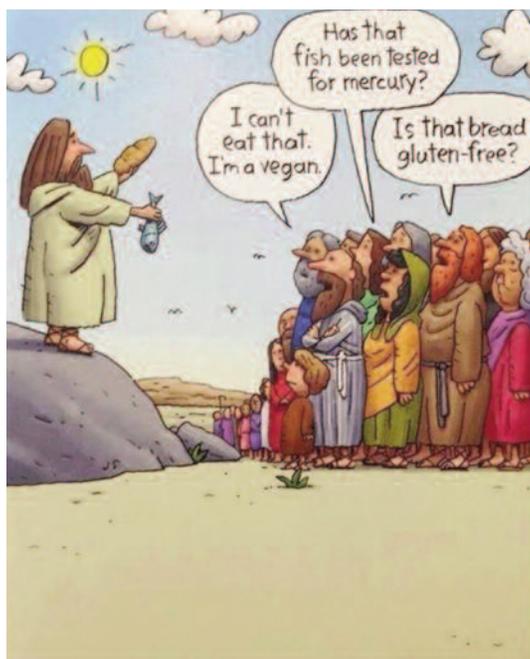
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## A sermon for the 8th Sunday after Trinity preached by the Rev'd David Clark

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### ROMANS 9:1-5; MATTHEW 14: 13-21

Someone sent me a card with a cartoon of our Gospel miracle today. Jesus is standing on a rock holding up a loaf and a fish. There is a crowd looking up at him and there are speech bubbles: "I can't eat that, I'm a vegan", "Has that fish been tested for mercury?", and my favourite, "Is that bread gluten-free?"



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Apart from reminding us that you can't please all of the people all of the time this cartoon also makes another point. The feeding of the five thousand is so well-known that a picture of a man, with a loaf in one hand and a fish in the other can be the basis for humour with no additional words of explanation required.

The Gospel writers all include this miracle or variations on it. Matthew has an additional version involving four thousand people and Mark, John and Luke all write of the miraculous multiplication of bread, and sometimes fish. In each case, what is barely enough for a couple's picnic, feeds thousands.

With such a well-known episode we need to be just a little bit careful that we do give the passage our full attention. It is very easy to skim read because we think we know the story backwards. I want to suggest that there is much more in our readings today than a miraculous feeding event.

Compassion, the compassion of Jesus, is a word that is common to most of the scenarios that feature the feeding of the multitude. One definition of compassion is 'a deep feeling of concern for the suffering and needy people'. It is explicitly one of the characteristics of Jesus, but we can also see it in Paul's distress at the Israelites' refusal to accept Jesus as Messiah. It clearly grieves Paul that the Israelites, adopted as God's chosen people, have been blind to the true teaching of the prophets and the patriarchs. Later, in the letter to the Romans, Paul expresses the sure hope that, in God's plan, the Jews will be saved. Nevertheless, he is pained that they are still apart from the source of salvation, Jesus. The same Jesus who was born in the line of David and came from Israel, "according to the flesh."

Jesus' compassion is an immensely powerful force in his life and takes precedence over his own safety, as well as his physical and emotional needs.

The context of this passage is that Jesus has just received the news that his cousin, John the Baptist, has been executed by Herod. Needing time to process this information and to grieve and pray, Jesus takes himself off to a solitary place, "a desert place apart" as the KJV has it. I am sure that many of us will be able to identify with Jesus' need for peace and quiet and time with God following the receipt of devastating news. But on this occasion that solitude and time to be alone was denied him. The crowds managed to anticipate where he was going and got there first.

It would have been possible, and perhaps

---

understandable, for Jesus to have told his disciples to send the crowds away; after all they wanted to do that by the end of the day anyway. But Jesus' 'deep feeling of concern for the suffering and needy people' overrides his own needs and he spends the day curing the sick. As evening was approaching, the disciples, concerned for the crowd, but also for Jesus, want to dismiss everybody so that the people could find food. I imagine their desire to send the crowds away was also motivated by the disciples' own need for food and rest after a full and emotionally charged day. Jesus though, as so often, chooses a different way and in doing so teaches the twelve, the crowd, and us, some important lessons.

Rather than disperse the crowd, encouraging them to drift away in their small family groups, friendship groups or even alone, Jesus unites them. He has the crowd sit down and includes all of those present. Not just those who 'count' in Jewish society but the women and children too. They are all joined together in the communal eating.

What they eat is also important. It is not manna, but the allusion to that food, provided by God's hand in the wilderness, would surely not have been lost on these descendants of Moses.

Jesus doesn't magically conjure up food from nowhere. There is no magic porridge pot like in the fairy tale, nor even, as in Elijah's day, a jar of flour that never empties. Much more significantly, Jesus prompts the disciples to use the things that they have already. You can hear them thinking, "Well five loaves and two fish aren't going to be much use in the face of so many hungry people". Jesus though, takes the sparse offerings of the disciples, and uses them to do the seemingly impossible. Notice though that it was prayer that was so important here. First he prayed and blessed the food, before giving it to the disciples to distribute.

Not only was there enough for everyone, but

God's love is so generous, so abundant, that twelve baskets of scraps are left over.

The disciples have two key roles to play in the feeding part of the passage. They initially, at Jesus' prompting, provide some resources. After prayerful intervention and blessing they act in faith and distribute the bounty to all of the people. Jesus involves his closest followers and has them participate in the miracle so that they will learn and remember.

So, what might we learn and remember?

I think there are three particular lessons for today.

Be careful of, and be awestruck by, scripture. Careful, because we can easily hear familiar passages without listening; we can recite the words without reading the meaning. Awestruck, because God always speaks to us through scripture. This morning I've shared what God said to me. God may say something different to you. What God leads us to hear today, what the Spirit points out to us will not be the same as the last time we heard it nor will it be the same when we read it in the future.

In times of grief, sorrow or hurt we may need to go somewhere quiet, just us and God. This may be physically removed or perhaps by drawing on the gift of inner stillness and contemplation in our own homes. It's ok to feel like that, to have that need; Jesus did.

God does miraculous things with the apparently ordinary. Never be afraid to offer even the smallest thing to God because God's economy is not ours. The feeling that our individual contribution cannot possibly make a difference is wrong. By prayer, faith and the power of the Spirit, miracles, happenings that are contrary to our understanding of nature, can and do happen.

*Keep the faith. Amen*



## MU'S 'THANK YOU KEY WORKERS' APPEAL

The Mothers' Union wants to help families of key workers by offering them a range of free day trips/experiences and short breaks. It is appealing to MU supporters to help make this possible.

As a spokeswoman for MU explains: "There has been an outpouring of compassion and care during the crisis from our hospital workers to our delivery drivers, carers to cleaners and our refuse collectors to bus drivers. But because of their personal sacrifices, quality family time has not always been possible.

"Therefore, we are extending our existing Away from it all Programme (AFIA) to say a special 'thank you' to key workers in these unprecedented times.

"Any donation will help provide a range of day trips/experiences and short breaks for families of key workers, especially for those who have been kept apart or who are on low incomes - families who would generally be unable to have experiences like this."

If you would like to send a donation, go to:  
*Say thank you to a keyworkers family today -  
Donate now*



## FROM OUR ROVING POET CAROLINE EVANS

### A Walk in Lockdown

Down to Baswich I did go  
across the Playing Fields.  
I had the time to stand and stare,  
What a joy my survey yields.

A vast expanse of well-cut grass,  
Circles of plants rise up between.  
The bramble bushes run around  
in this peaceful land of green.

An ecosystem of its own  
The humble bramble reigns supreme,  
Nurturing all that lies within.  
A Nature Lover's perfect dream.

Big black berries hang in clusters,  
Nature's super fruits abound.  
I fill my boxes with these treats  
and make my way, homeward bound.

*Note: The public spaces around all the areas  
In the vicinity are so well cared for.*



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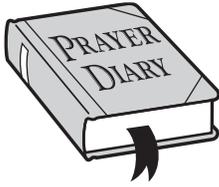
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Before you start praying, take a moment to become aware of yourself and what's around you... Open your eyes, breathe deeply, let all your senses come alive and ask God to help you sense God's presence.

*Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater (BRF, 2019)*

We pray for children and teachers starting the new school year after the disruption of their education.

### **A Prayer for our schools**

Dear Lord of all our questions and answers,  
Who opened minds through parables  
And touched lives with healing compassion,  
Help all those who are called to teach,  
Granting them creative ideas for learning  
And sensitive hearts to the needs of each  
child in their care. Amen

God of all people, children and grandparents,  
Teenagers and elderly, young adults and  
godparents,  
The working and retired, the single and parents,  
Help us to honour and celebrate each other,  
in communities of grace and love  
For your glory. Amen

### **We pray for Christian writers**

As we open our Bibles, let us open our lives to  
your truth.  
As we open our lives, let us open our minds to  
learn your ways.  
As we open our minds, let us open our hearts to  
know your presence and reveal your love  
Wherever we are and wherever we go this week.  
Amen



The heavens declare the glory of God;  
The skies proclaim the work of His hands...  
Their voice goes out into all the earth,  
Their words to the ends of the world.  
Psalm 19:1,4

### **We pray for God's work in and through us in this world**

Lord of the skies above and the galaxies beyond,  
Lord of the oceans deep and the mountains high,  
Lord of all green and growing things and animal  
life,  
Lord of all that you have made,  
Teach us again how to be your creation carers,  
Bringing life to your planet and your people  
By your grace. Amen

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,  
Especially through my Lord Brother Sun.  
Praise be You, my Lord through Sister Moon and  
the stars.... through Sister Water.... through  
Brother Fire...  
Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks.  
'The Canticle of the Sun' attributed to St. Francis

Lord of heaven and earth,  
As Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in  
prayer,  
Give us patience and courage never to lose hope,  
But always to bring our prayers before you;  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

### **A Prayer for those to be ordained to the Priesthood**

Please pray for our curate, David Clark, and all  
those in the Lichfield Diocese who are to be  
ordained to the Priesthood at the end of this  
month.  
We pray for a rich outpouring of God's grace for  
them and the whole Church. Amen



*Editor: As he prepares to be ordained to the Priesthood at the end of this month, our curate, the Rev'd David Clark, writes about Priesthood.*

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## A DEACON'S PERSPECTIVE ON PRIESTHOOD

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On my journey towards ordination I began to explore a calling with no real idea of what I was being called towards. During the months of discernment that followed, I and others were guided to understand that it was to priestly ministry that I was being called. In as much as I am soon, God willing, to be ordained priest I acknowledge that part of what it means to be ordained priest in the Church of England is to do with obedience to God's call. There is also the not insignificant matter of the oath of canonical obedience which I duly took before my ordination as deacon and will repeat before priestly ordination.

The place of obedient ministry is nowhere more clearly exemplified than in Jesus' passion. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prays the very human prayer that the cup be taken from him, but he goes on, "yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22: 42). This we echo every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. So part of what I understand my priestly ministry to be about is surrendering, in faith, to the purpose of God, particularly as it is to be worked out in this place and at this time.

There is also a strong sense of being called out, from amongst the gathered people, to serve. This service is not necessarily, or at least not directly, to serve the congregation in Rickerscote from where I was called, and who were instrumental in preparing me for my response to the call. Rather, it is to be the servant of the wider church and to share in the cure of souls in this parish.

In the Ordinal there are, by some reckonings, twenty-eight different but related tasks or roles that a priest is called to undertake and inhabit in cooperation with the Bishop and fellow ministers. These may be grouped as teaching, leading worship, including administering the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, blessing, absolving the

penitent and declaring forgiveness of sins in the name of Christ, discernment and encouragement of others' ministries and pastoral ministry to all in any kind of need. It is only in the strength of the Holy Spirit, supported by the prayers of the faithful and sustained by the Eucharist that one may even contemplate undertaking "the greatness of the trust... [of serving] Christ's own flock, brought by the shedding of his blood on the cross."

These words serve as a clear reminder that the person of the priest is not possessed of characteristics that set her or him above their fellow Christians. In many of the tasks alluded to above, all Christians are called to participate as part of their calling to the priesthood of all believers, but there are some elements that are reserved to those ordained priests for a variety of reasons, some pragmatic and practical, others spiritual and theological.

In the Church of England there are a variety of views of what a priest is and some Christian denominations reject the concept of individual priesthood. I have come to understand my priestly ministry as being what some have termed a "walking sacrament". The act of being ordained by our Bishop confers authority and responsibility to live a life marked out as "a token of Christ," notwithstanding my human shortcomings and failings. A key part of this life is prayer. Prayer in public and private, prayer in saying the daily offices, prayer in reading scripture, prayer for and with those who are in need, those who are rejoicing, those who are bereaved, those who are celebrating and for and with all of us who are just getting on with our daily lives. Some of this will be obvious to parishioners and to our congregation, some of it will be in the company of one or two others, but much of it will be in private. In the quiet places of church building or clergy study the work of prayer is to

## 14th Sept - Holy Cross Day

On Holy Cross Day the Church celebrates the Cross as a symbol of triumph, as the sign of Christ's victory over death. Holy Cross Day goes right back to 14 September 335, and we have the mother of a Roman Emperor to thank for it.

Helena was a devout Christian, and after her son, Constantine, was converted, they agreed that she should travel from Rome to Israel, and seek out the places of special significance to Christians.

Of course, much of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans around 135 AD. But even so, Helena finally located what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial (and modern archaeologists think she may well be correct). The sites were so close together that she built one large church over them - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

That church, built in honour of the Cross, was dedicated on 14 September 335.

The sign of the Cross has been used by Christians since early times. Tertullian, writing his *De Corona* (3:2) around AD 211, noted that Christians seldom did anything significant without making the sign of the cross.

What is its significance? Well, people often put their initials or some sort of personal mark on something to show that it belongs to them. The Cross is the personal mark of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we mark it on ourselves as a sign that we belong to him. Even in the book of Revelation, we read that the servants of God are 'sealed' or 'marked' on their foreheads as a sign that they are His.

A preacher once put it this way: if you were explaining to someone how to make a cross, you would say: "Draw an I." That is you standing before the Lord, saying, 'here I am'. Then cancel that vertical stroke with a horizontal stroke – as if to say: "Lord, I abandon my self-will and make you the centre of my life instead. I abandon myself to your love and service."

On Holy Cross Day, we recall Jesus' wonderful promise: "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

be undertaken, and yes, it is the work of the priest, as much as visiting the sick, conducting funerals, weddings and baptisms, leading public worship. Indeed, without prayer none of the other roles could be undertaken as they should be.

I have mentioned, above, that celebrating the dominical sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are distinctive elements of the priestly role and it is Eucharistic presidency that seems to me to be especially essential to being a priest as opposed to a deacon or an unordained Christian. In my understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist in our relationship with God in Christ, enabled by the Spirit, I don't view the liturgy as being only a memorial, or a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice, although there is an element of this and some Christians assert that is all there is. Rather, I believe that the priest is called to the altar to publicly witness to the saving sacrifice and glorious resurrection that is at the heart of Christian faith by stepping "...into the place of Christ himself, to do what Christ did" as Austin Farrer puts it. Former Archbishop Rowan Williams adds to the image when he describes priestliness as being "...bound up with faithfully occupying the area where divine and human action decisively overlap in Jesus and making sure that the human world knows there is such a place".

As Deacon of the Eucharist it has been my privilege to stand close to the Communion Table and witness to that place where the priest acts as a conduit or a conductor for the Holy Spirit, through the grace of God and as a result of the ontological action of that same Spirit at the time of ordination.

If priests are called to shepherd God's people, and they are indeed called to this ministry, it is only by being soaked in prayer and the Eucharist that they can enter the sheepfold through Christ who is the gate (John 10: 9) and thus begin to lead, care for and have the cure of souls of the flock. So please pray for me and all who are to be ordained priest.

Farrer, Austin *Walking Sacraments* P 102

# Christian Aid

## MAKING MASKS IN MYANMAR

In Myanmar, thousands of families were forced to flee their homes, to reach camps in Bangladesh - a region now home to over 850,000 Rohingya living in 34 cramped refugee camps making physical distancing just impossible.

33% of people living in the camps do not own soap and lack water, making regular hand washing difficult. As a young Mum, 35-year old Razia knows that life in the camps is challenging.

Razia's husband was brutally killed back home in Myanmar and she escaped with her family to a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Crammed conditions and lack of clean water and toilets mean Razia and her son are already at risk of diseases like cholera and are even more vulnerable to coronavirus. Razia understands the danger and hoped they could protect themselves with masks, but there just aren't enough to go around.

Razia had learnt to make baby clothes in a project run by one of our partners and asked if they could make reusable face masks instead. Now they're not just making masks but training more women to do the same.

*They've now made over 42,000 masks!*

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## Chaseside Flower Club

Chaseside Flower Club has decided it will not re-open until February 2021, if it is safe to do so then!

Meanwhile, members please keep in touch by visiting the Chaseside Flower Club website at [www.nafas.org.uk/clubs/chaseside-flower-club](http://www.nafas.org.uk/clubs/chaseside-flower-club) or by contacting any member of the Committee.

With best wishes to everyone as Summer passes into Autumn. Take care and we look forward to seeing you in February if possible.

*Love to all Anita Wright,  
Chaseside Chairman*

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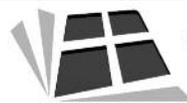
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## God in the Arts

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*The Rev Michael Burgess considers 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael. It hangs in the Uffizi in Florence.*

He gave us eyes to see them: 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael

The weeks and months of lockdown have been difficult and testing times for many of us, but they have also provided the opportunity to look afresh at the world of nature. With less traffic on the roads, less air pollution, and less noise pollution, the sky has somehow seemed bluer and the bird song more joyful and confident.

It is appropriate that we focus this month on one such bird noted for its liquid, tinkling song - the goldfinch. In this month we also celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8 September, and so the painting is 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael.

Raphael was only 37 years old when he died in 1520, but his work is marked by maturity and great beauty. No more so than in this painting which shows Mary with a young Jesus and John the Baptist. You could easily miss the tiny bird which is carefully held by John and gently stroked by Jesus, who has one foot resting on His mother's. It is an intimate, tender scene which was painted in 1505 as a wedding gift for Lorenzo Nasi. It was badly damaged by an earthquake in 1548, painstakingly restored in the early part of this century, and now hangs in the Uffizi in Florence.

As we look, we rejoice in the grace and simplicity of the scene. We look again and ask ourselves 'Why a goldfinch?' The bird has a red spot on its head, and legend tells

that the goldfinch flew down to the cross of Calvary to take a thorn from the crown of thorns. As it pulled the thorn in its beak, its head was splashed with a drop of blood.

And so, this painting of gentleness and innocence opens out into a wider canvas of redemptive love. Our thoughts move from infancy to the cross. Mary, sat on a rock, is reading 'The Throne of Wisdom', and the artist is inviting us to ponder where true wisdom is found. Here, as we look at the wonder of nature and new life with a mother and children, but also as we look ahead to the 'wisest love' of Jesus who is our Redeemer.





## Time to Make Hay

There's a brilliant plant that can really help you to manage your wildflower meadows; it's called Yellow Rattle and September is a good time to sow it. Yellow Rattle, or Hay Rattle is a British wildflower, also known as the Meadow Maker due to its ability to suppress grass, encouraging wildflowers to thrive.

Yellow Rattle is partially parasitic on grass, tapping into the roots of grass plants and extracting extra nutrition (as well as photosynthesising like most plants). This weakens the grass to such an extent that an area of grassland containing Yellow Rattle has a visibly shorter sward than the neighbouring patch without. So, less chance of flowers being overtopped and squeezed out, less grass to cut and fewer heavy grass cuttings to rake up and remove. It is an annual plant so doesn't overwinter but it sets seed in June or early July so seed will have scattered by the time you cut your meadow, once established it spreads itself. Listen for the 'rattle' of the ripe seeds in their pods.

Yellow Rattle can be tricky though, it needs a little care to get it established but is well worth it:

- 1) Cut the area where you will be sowing really short, giving it a firm raking to pull out any dead grass that may be lodged there. Get down to the soil!
- 2) Sow Yellow Rattle seed from now until the end of November, making sure the seed reaches bare soil by scraping away the turf in small patches. Sprinkle a few seeds onto the soil and press down with your foot.
- 4) Give the area another short mow in the spring so the germinating plants have some sunlight. March or April are good times to cut.

*All the best Harriet Carty*

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

[harriet@cpga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cpga.org.uk)

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

*Editor: Readers look out for gorse this month, and send in pictures of any you find in your locality.*

## Gorse – cheerful and perfumed, but prickly!



The old saying 'Kissing is out of season when the gorse is not in bloom' is based on the fact that it is a rare time of year when a flower or two cannot be found. The bush itself, growing on heaths and moors is well-known for its vicious spikes. This is its answer to the problem of producing leaves that will withstand wind, rain and hungry animals.

The golden yellow flowers are at their absolute best in spring when the bushes, growing often to a height of seven to ten feet, seem to glow in the countryside. They attract bees and other pollen-seeking insects and many of us enjoy the rich coconut-like perfume as well as the joyful colour. The sharp foliage gives protection to several species of bird as they nest deep in these bulging bushes, and larger animals such as sheep and cows, if grazing nearby, will take advantage of gorse as a very effective windbreak.

In the past, gorse, also known as 'furze' or 'whin', was used as fuel as it burns very readily when dry. This has caused many serious moorland fires in recent years, but gorse is fortunately a resilient species and quickly sends up new shoots from the burnt stumps that remain. It is also apparently somewhat susceptible to frost, but will recover quickly with new growth. A member of the pea family, its seeds are set in brown, somewhat unattractive pods, which on a hot summer's day can be heard popping, or they may be provoked into doing so when held in a hot hand. However, what might surprise us even more is that in the past, in country districts, it was used for drying washing, as the thorns would allow nothing to escape, even in the strongest of winds!

*Kirsty Steele*

## BERKSWICH WI

The Committee have been holding Zoom meetings which I believe proved to be successful, once everyone had mastered the art of zooming. During the month of August two meetings for members were held in the gardens of Committee members Kathy Browne and Jane Capron. Both events had a maximum of ten people who all socially distanced and they enjoyed a chance of venturing out and having a good afternoon of chatting to friends. The weather was lovely for Jane's afternoon but the weather for the one at Kathy's was dreadful. We all sat beneath large umbrellas and made the best of it. Despite the weather we all had a lovely time. Many thanks to Jane and Kathy.

The bad news from the National Federation is the announcement of their plans to close the WI's Denman College in Oxford. Many members past and present have been to Denman and enjoyed the educational courses and also appreciated staying in the fine accommodation offered in such a lovely old house and grounds. This is a terrible blow to many WI members.

The first batch of Knitting done by members for premature babies has now been sent to both the Royal Stoke and the Neonatal Unit at Birmingham. Letters of appreciation have been received from both hospitals.

Kathy Browne has been kept very busy making jam from the fruit supplied by members for the Rising Brook Food bank.

The death was announced this month of one of our longest serving members,

Mrs. Barbara Hinsley who had been a member for more than 60 years. Our thoughts are with her family.

It would be lovely to think that our monthly meetings would resume as normal but I am afraid this is not possible yet. So we must do our best to stay in touch by phone or email.

Berkswich WI welcome new members and anyone wishing to know more about our activities please ring the Secretary Diane on 01785 620938.

*Olive Preston.*

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

Although life has seen many changes in recent months, Berkswich Parish Council has continued to work.

Meetings had to be halted until legislation allowed for the holding of 'virtual' meetings and the first of these took place in July. Meetings are likely to continue in this format for some time but apart from this different platform, it is now pretty much business as usual. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings via 'Zoom' and a link to the meeting and meeting ID and password are available from the Clerk.



*The bishops had formed a  
'support bubble' all on their own.*



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