



**The Parish Magazine
St Andrew's Church
Old Headington**



May 2020

50p

PARISH DIRECTORY

www.standrewsheadington.co.uk

Enquiries about marriage and baptism should be made directly to the Vicar, by telephone or email.

The Clergy will gladly visit and (if requested) bring Holy Communion to people who are ill at home or in hospital, by arrangement.

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THE NORMAN ARCH is published on the last Saturday of each month.

The parish magazine is named after the splendid Norman chancel arch in the church.

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Deadline for next issue: 20th of each month

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From the Vicar.....

Greetings as we continue our journey through the Easter season!

While public worship is suspended we will provide a liturgy to help you worship at home, and feel connected to others who are doing the same.

A couple of weeks ago we sent out a liturgy booklet for the Easter Season which we invite you to continue to use throughout the 50 days of Easter. In addition each week we are sending out the readings and music the Sunday, as well as an introduction to the readings and a homily. All this is posted on the website and sent out electronically via the parish e-mailing list. If you are not on the email list please send an email to parishoffice.headington@gmail.com and you will be added. Printed copies of all the materials will be available in the church porch from Friday mornings. You're most welcome to collect these for yourself or for others as part of your daily exercise. I am really grateful to those church members who are delivering copies to isolated members each week.

We also encourage you to join in the service broadcast by the Diocese of Oxford at 10am each Sunday. All four Oxford bishops are working together to share this service from their own homes. You can find it here:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

If you do not have internet access you can listen on the phone. Dial 01865 920930 to hear the latest service (press 0 for a short service, 1 for the full service). Normal call rates apply.

Even in this time when we cannot gather to celebrate this service in church together, we believe that Christ is with us in his Word, drawing us together by his Spirit as one before God. And we believe and trust that the gospel of Christ gives us strength amid distress, and comfort in the face of our sufferings.

With my love and best wishes,

Fr Darren

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or Sub Editor. No responsibility can be taken for advertising statements published.

The Trees

by Philip Larkin

The trees are coming into leaf

Like something almost being said

The recent buds relax and spread

Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again

And we grow old? No, they die too.

Their yearly trick of looking new

Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh

In full-grown thickness every May.

Last year is dead, they seem to say,

Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

LENT CHARITY 2020



restore
working for mental health

It has been a difficult time for our Lent Appeal. We will close the appeal at the end of May so if you can send a cheque payable to St Andrew's if you would like to support Restore in the current climate or contact Fr Darren for our parish bank account details if you would like to make an on-line donation.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Christian Aid Week
10th – 16th May 2020



www.christianaid.org.uk

Christian Aid is an international development organisation that works with local partners and communities to fight injustice, respond to humanitarian emergencies, campaign for change, and help people claim the services and rights they are entitled to.

Christian Aid has for more than 70 years provided humanitarian relief and long-term development support for poor communities worldwide, while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

As I mentioned in last month's Norman Arch, every year more than half the money raised in Christian Aid Week comes from house to house collections. But this year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there can be no such collections. This comes on top of an already challenging fundraising environment, and several overseas programmes will soon have to be shut down or operate through a regional base rather than in-country. At present, the charity works in 27 countries through 13 country programmes, and three regional programmes in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Considerable job losses from the charity are now planned.

Yet Christian Aid's work remains as vital as ever. COVID-19 is creating a perfect storm for the world's poorest people, who live in regions with the weakest healthcare systems, with often rudimentary or non-existent social welfare to fall back upon if people fall sick or are unable to work due to virus-related lockdowns. Please pray for them, and give what you can at this time.

Current Christian Aid appeals include:

Coronavirus Emergency Appeal. Some of the world's poorest countries, with the weakest health systems and most vulnerable people, will be exposed to this deadly virus. For instance:

In Bangladesh, over 850,000 Rohingya refugees live in cramped camps in Cox's Bazar district, making them very vulnerable to COVID-19. Christian Aid is already taking action. Working together with partners, they are informing people about the risks, offering hygiene and hand-washing sessions, ensuring that health facilities in camps have triage and isolation spaces in order to receive suspected cases, and providing training to health personnel and key frontline aid workers.

In Nigeria, Christian Aid has been working in camps in Borno state since 2016, to provide essential food to internally displaced people. They have provided food to 48,550 people, including children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, and continue to deliver life-saving food on a monthly basis. The Nigeria team is working hard to ensure they can continue this essential work without putting people living in the camps, or those delivering aid, at risk of getting COVID-19. All staff and volunteers delivering aid are wearing protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, and regularly using hand sanitisers. They have set up hand washing points in the distribution sites, to enable displaced families to wash and sanitise their hands before they arrive at the distribution site, and again when they leave.

South Asia Floods Appeal. Millions of people have been displaced across India, Bangladesh and Nepal due to torrential rains that have caused floods and landslides. Besides shelter, the biggest challenge is access to safe drinking water. There is a high risk that diseases will spread due to poor sanitation.

Syria Crisis Appeal. 6.6 million people in Syria have had to flee their homes, and more than 5.6 million people are now refugees. Christian Aid is working with partners in Syria and Lebanon providing support to some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees. In Lebanon, their partner Association Najdeh provides aid to Palestinian refugees from Syria, to recover from traumatic situations, while Mouvement Social ensures refugee children can continue their education, as well as access psychological support to come to terms with their experiences. Lebanese organisation Kafa – which supports women who have experienced exploitation and domestic violence, or who are at risk – works with female refugees in the Bekka Valley. Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health (REACH) has also provided vocational training to some of the most vulnerable refugee communities living in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, to help them find a way to make a living. Within Syria, Christian Aid has supported local

partners to provide hot meals to people recently displaced.

We have created a special website for members of St Andrew's to donate:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/CAW2020>

You are also welcome to post envelopes with cheques made payable to Christian Aid or cash through my letterbox (30 Mark Road, Headington) if you prefer not to give online.

Rather than taking part in the usual house-to-house collection, please consider whether you would like to undertake a sponsored fundraising event, which could be anything from a baking challenge to a sponsored walk. It is likely that your event would need to be held later in the year when social restrictions associated by COVID-19 have eased.

The main thing is to raise money so that Christian Aid can continue with their vital work. I myself will be traversing the Aonach Eagach ridge later in the year.

Thank you
Nigel Voak
(tel: Oxford 750084)

'Let us love, not in word or speech but in truth and action' (1 John 3.18)



Mothers' Union Bible Study

Meetings have naturally been suspended until we are allowed to meet again in small groups. We are keeping in touch with each other by phone and letters and emails – not everyone is on-line. We are happy to expand this group during this difficult time. Do let me know (see phone number below) if you would like to join us. We are still studying the Bible on our own and are committed to praying for each other, the local community and the wider world. The self-isolation enforced upon us means that we all have much more time to pray.

Alison Bennett
01869 343760

Art at St Andrew's 2020



A Virtual Festival! Amazing Art in wonderful places.

Explore art from your sofa this year as Oxon Artweeks goes online from Saturday 2nd to Bank Holiday Monday 25th May.

Each day will have a new themed art-trail and a new video of images drawn from all the online artists' galleries across the County.

Look out for themes such as 'a trip to the coast', 'fantastic beasts and other fairy tales', 'elements of the earth' and 'portraiture, pets and people'.

As you may imagine, we had all been working and preparing for a physical exhibition in May and Oxon Artweeks has come up with a very innovative answer to the closure of this year's event.

You can see this year's Art at St Andrew's artists at <https://www.artweeks.org/festival/2020/art-st-andrews>

You can browse the festival guide flip book at <http://online.fliphtml5.com/zjysj/jyqs/>

You can look at each day's theme at www.artweeks.org and support our County wide event.

I hope you will be uplifted and cheered by knowing that our creative life continues.

"He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers." Exodus 35:35.

Julie Ifill

The Curate's Column



Just a few months ago, who would have imagined that we would be where we are today? Like an earthquake, coronavirus has shaken the ground beneath our feet. Things we assumed we could count on – meals together with friends, going to church, seeing the grandchildren, watching the football season unfold – have been cancelled or postponed. And those are only trivial matters compared to the trials and suffering faced by many. Jobs have disappeared. Young people are missing out on their education. Loved ones have been hospitalized, and some have died.

Earthquakes are frightening because they shake what we assumed was strong and stable. In the same way, coronavirus has shaken our assumptions, and many of us are struggling to find our feet. We're off-balance, disoriented, uncertain and grieving. So, at this time, it's particularly important to consider and celebrate those things that coronavirus can't touch; the unchanging, unshakeable realities that, according our faith, cannot and will never change. These things were true before coronavirus. And they will remain true long after its departure.

Here are just four that come to mind:

1. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The Bible tells us that God is unchanging in holiness, righteousness and glory. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come", He says (Revelation 1:8). With Him, "there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). He will outlast the heavens and the earth (Psalm 102:26) and His promises to us in Scripture are as sure and firm now as they have ever been (Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 24:35). We do not need to fear that coronavirus has somehow taken Him by surprise.

2. God is working out His purposes, however it might seem to us.

The Bible never promises that we won't suffer. On the contrary, it warns us that we should not be

surprised when trials and challenges come our way, some of them very severe indeed (1 Peter 4:12).

But at the same time, the Bible never allows us to infer that God is not in control, even during times of suffering and trial. Time after time, it gives us stories of men and women who felt that God had abandoned them, only to discover later on that He had been working out His purposes all along: think of Job, think of Naomi, think of Esther, or think of Joseph, who was able to say at the end of his tumultuous and painful life: "God intended all these things for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20).

Of course, it's not easy to see that when we're in the midst of suffering. Our two young children have been processing the events of recent weeks in their own way, as we all have been. Lately, my daughter has been asking me the question: "why did God allow coronavirus to happen?" What can we say to that? In what way has God been working out His purposes through this pandemic? It's very hard to find an answer. And yet, there is something we can say ...

3. God's promises are always "yes" in Jesus.

Whenever we look despairingly at God, whenever we are tempted to doubt His providence, whenever we look to the heavens and ask "why?", the answer we receive is always the same ... look to Jesus Christ. For although there is so much pain and suffering in this world, the Bible tells us that God did not abandon us to it. Amazingly, Christianity teaches that He came to earth, in the person of Jesus Christ, and became subject to grief, pain and suffering Himself. He even went as far as to die on a cross for us (Philippians 2:8). And in that act, Christians believe that God demonstrates His absolute, total and unwavering commitment to our good (Romans 5:8).

Why not pick up your Bible from the shelf again? Open it at any page and start reading. You will find promise after promise after promise: "the Lord will be on your side; you need only be still" (Exodus 14:14); "the Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak" (Isaiah 40:29); "I will never leave or forsake you; so do not be afraid or discouraged" (Deuteronomy 31:8); "I have plans for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). Let these words be your comfort and your peace at a time like this. But most importantly, as you read these promises, look again at Jesus Christ and ask yourself how they are sealed and secured by what He has done for you. For "all God's promises are yes in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor 1:20).

4. *The end is still the end.*

Coronavirus is reshaping our journey. But it cannot alter our destination. Our hope is just the same today as it was yesterday.

So what are we to do? Christians are not called simply to be more stoical than other people, as if we might know how to do that! No, all we are called to do is think about what is still to come, what we know has been secured, and that will be ours in the future, namely, "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" (1 Peter 1:4). And as we do that, we will find a resource for strength and perseverance that nothing in this world can touch, no – not even coronavirus.

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who, along with her father and other family members, helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. She was imprisoned for her actions and was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. She was eventually released at the end of the war. In one of her later writings, she compared her life to a tapestry. On the underside, the various strings pulled through the cloth and tied in knots looked random and disorderly. It didn't make sense. But when the cloth was turned around, the beautiful design of the tapestry became apparent. "This", she liked to say, "is what God can see".

Can we trust God's providence, even in the midst of these terrible times? Can we remind ourselves of these unchanging truths, even when so much around us is in flux? Can we begin to see how God might be weaving out of these times a design that He can see, even if (for now) we can't?

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colours
He weaveth steadily.

Of't times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.

Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.

Extract from The Weaver, by Grant Colfax Tullar.

The clergy are always available should you wish to talk further about anything during this time.

Fr Tim

May Readings

3rd May

Old Testament
Psalm
New Testament
Gospel

Easter 4

Acts 2.42-end
23
1 Peter 2.19-end
John 10.1-10

10th May

Old Testament
Psalm
New Testament
Gospel

Easter 5

Acts 7. 55-end
31.1-5
1 Peter 2.2-10
John 14.1-14

17th May

Old Testament
Psalm
New Testament
Gospel

Easter 6

Acts 17.22-31
66.7-end
1 Peter 3.13-end
John 14.15-21

24th May

Old Testament
Psalm
New Testament
Gospel

Easter 7

Acts 1.6-14
68.1-10
1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11
John 17.1-11

31st May

Old Testament
Psalm
New Testament
Gospel

Feast of Pentecost

Numbers 11.24-30
104
Acts 2.1-21
John 20.19-23

WALSINGHAM PILGRIMAGE 2020



14th – 17th September

Approx. £170 half board (not including transport)

CHURCH GARDEN MAY



'Morning has broken, like the first morning.

Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird'

How beautiful this month has been! I can't remember a warmer or sunny April, with more blue skies. I am woken by the sunlight and bird song. I make my morning coffee, take it into the garden and look at the sparkling dew on the grass and brave spring flowers. These words come into my mind, and I can't help but feel how apt they are, and I sing along in my head. The whole hymn is lovely and makes me smile. I also remember from my childhood the songs from 'Oklahoma' and Curley singing 'Oh what a beautiful morning', and, yes, we are certainly having beautiful mornings. The world in the morning feels like the new day brings a freshness and a fresh start. In these strange times, taking pleasure in the simple things keeps us connected to our world when we are so separate from those who matter to us. Despite everything, we are lucky people to be in Headington, with our community and green spaces. The 'lockdown' has had some unexpected bonuses. The usual stream of cars trying to get past by the White Hart is a trickle. The air smells cleaner and the rumble of traffic is no more. The birds seem to be singing more loudly. Our world has had a reprieve from the damage caused by our behaviour. Perhaps we will reflect and some changes will be long lasting.

The Church cannot be open. I read somewhere that this last happened in the 14th century. But our Church Garden is open. Each time I pass, I see someone walking along the paths, taking photos or just sitting on the bench. I rarely recognise anyone, which must mean that the Church Garden is appreciated and used by the wider community, which is as it should. An oasis of green, peaceful calm. Our beautiful restored Tower now takes pride of place in Old Headington with its special Thursday evening tribute to the NHS and key workers. To be able to spend time in close proximity to St Andrews

lifts our spirits, supports us and encourages forward. For now, the inside has come outside. I look forward to the time when our fabulous flower arrangers can bring some of the flowers and foliage from the garden into Church. I was hoping this year, to have a small Young Church garden and try to grow some more flowers for decoration. Sadly, this won't happen any time soon, but it will perhaps allow more thoughtful planning.

I hope that many of you were able to enjoy the daffodils, which flowered over a surprisingly long time. I hope they will naturalise and spread. The border is coming into flower. There is aubretia, sweet allysum and wallflowers, buttercups, daisies and dandelions. New leaves are pushing up through the soil, the names, as yet unknown to me, but I shall watch with anticipation. The Hawthorn trees (I thought we called them 'May' trees) are bursting into flower. The grass has been cut, and even though our 'Working Party' did not happen, I think it looks pretty good. There are bluebells which are also known as wood bell, fairy flower and wild hyacinth. There has been much concern that hybridisation with the Spanish bluebell would threaten the existence of our native species. Interestingly, recent research from the RHS has shown that English bluebells are more fertile and set more seeds and that the Spanish bluebell. This bluebell may already be a hybrid, and though it can spread locally it is unlikely to cause extinction of our native plant by hybridisation. So, we don't need to worry, and honestly, I am happy to see any type of bluebell growing on banks and verges! We also have primroses and cowslips. What a spring feast for our pollinators. The old renovated lilac is shooting well, and a white clematis will establish and scramble over the stumps. Roses are putting up new shoots, and perhaps when June comes, they will be in flower.

I hope that you all keep safe and enjoy our garden, perhaps even more now our time outside is limited. So please do come in, relax and allow nature to re-energise you. And do keep looking and watching, and please let me know the little or indeed bigger thing that you notice – perhaps nesting birds, a toad or a hedgehog family. Our Church garden is for all.

Happy gardening!

Jane

jane.shepherd1955@gmail.com

PS I still have seeds if anyone would like some.