

St. James's, Dursley & St. Mark's, Woodmancote



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The Messenger

JUNE

2020

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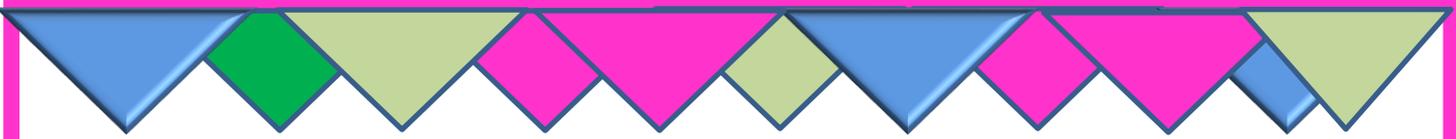
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JUNE

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Message from the editors:

Any opinions expressed in the magazine are personal views only...

Marlene, Judith Valerie and Jenni

**DEADLINE FOR THE JULY 2020 ISSUE IS
SUNDAY 14th JUNE**



Dear friends

As the severe restrictions on our lives remain, I continue to be very grateful and also very moved and impressed by all the ways in which people have responded to the challenges posed by the lockdown. In our communities, people are being checked on - the phone is much more in use - and volunteers are preparing and delivering food parcels, shopping for others and running errands. It is so encouraging to see the ways in which people are genuinely showing concern for others in the local community and also beyond as people sew scrubs for health workers and make protective masks.

One of the very sad things for me on returning from sabbatical has been to see our churches locked. I did need to go into St James to collect some things for our virtual communion service and it looked as though everyone had literally got up at the end of a service, locked the door and left. The church building was still in Lent; purple altar frontals and hangings and no Easter flowers or Easter candle. The thing that was most obvious though was that the church had been closed to the people and this emphasised for me what we say so often, that 'the Church' is not the buildings but the people. We are 'The Church' - God's Easter people - and we are still very much being 'The Church' during these extraordinary times. Prayer and worship carry on, in people's homes, and Jesus' commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you' is being lived out in our communities. We are talking a lot at the moment about being 'The Church without walls'.

And yet, having said that, I know how much people are missing the church buildings and whilst these current times emphasise that the Church is the people, we are also being reminded of the enormous significance that our buildings hold. Sacred spaces that for centuries have been places where prayer and worship have been offered, significant life events celebrated and

where the people of God have met together to share in the Eucharistic meal that is central to our Christian faith. Our church buildings also hold a very significant place in our communities, physically speaking of permanence, of continuity, and of God present amongst us. We know how many people, when our churches are open, value being able to pop in for some quiet space, perhaps to pray, perhaps to light a candle. The great sadness for us all at the moment is that this is not possible and I am also thinking especially at this time of those who are unable to have the funeral of their loved one in church and are having to delay the celebration of their life until the time when everyone who wants to can come together to do that.

We have now been given new guidance about the church buildings which we are told is the first step towards eventually being able to use them again. This small step allows me as the incumbent, or one of my licensed colleagues, to enter the building to offer prayer privately on behalf of everyone or to record or live stream a service. The next step, when guidelines have been drawn up and it is considered safe to do so, will be to open the church buildings for others to enter for private prayer. We pray that soon that might be possible.

So we are now beginning to look forward. To have hope that we will soon be allowed to emerge from this period of enforced enclosure. We are all wondering what that will be like. We are recognising that we will all have been changed in some way by this experience and that things will not return to be just as they were before the virus. We are talking, with hope, about the things that we are looking forward to doing when we are allowed out again. I look forward to being able to meet again, face to face, and to sharing together in worship, not in our homes but in our church buildings. Churches transformed by flowers and Easter candles and, most importantly, filled with people who have been transformed by this experience and who come together to worship God, who in the risen Lord Jesus, has been present with us throughout these very difficult times and has promised that he will be with us always, until the end of time.

With my prayers,

Canon Michael

Sabbatical – the next instalment.

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola which I followed during my 30 day retreat at St Beuno's in North Wales, were first published in 1548, based on a Spanish manuscript which Ignatius himself worked on and corrected. They have been hugely influential in Christian spirituality ever since. Ignatius was born into a wealthy Spanish family and became a knight, taking part in various military battles until he was seriously wounded and had to undergo a long period of convalescence. It was during this time that he experienced a spiritual awakening that led to him writing his spiritual exercises and using them to help others on their spiritual journey. He went on to found the Jesuit order and St Beuno's is a Jesuit retreat house staffed by a community of ordained and lay Jesuits.

As I explained last month, each of us undertaking the spiritual exercises had a guide whom we met with each day. Using the English translation of Ignatius' exercises, the guide took us through each of the 30 days, helping us to review our experiences of praying the exercises and then giving us the focus for our day of prayer. Most days were divided into 4 prayer periods, with suggestions for our prayers that usually included Bible passages but would sometimes also include some reflections or instructions from Ignatius himself.

Occasionally Ignatius would recommend an optional 5th prayer period that was to be taken in the middle of the night, after having slept for a while and then, if possible, going back to sleep for a few more hours. This happened for the first time when we began, on the 4th day, to consider sin. We began with Ignatius' meditation on 'the three sins', including the sins of our first parents; Adam and Eve. Most of the prayer periods included what Ignatius called 'a colloquy' which he intended to be an imagined conversation. The first colloquy during the days considering sin, was to imagine having a conversation with Christ as he hung on the cross, asking ourselves 'how is it that God, in Christ, has come to die in this way for my sins?' To ask, 'what have I done for Christ? What am I doing now for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?'

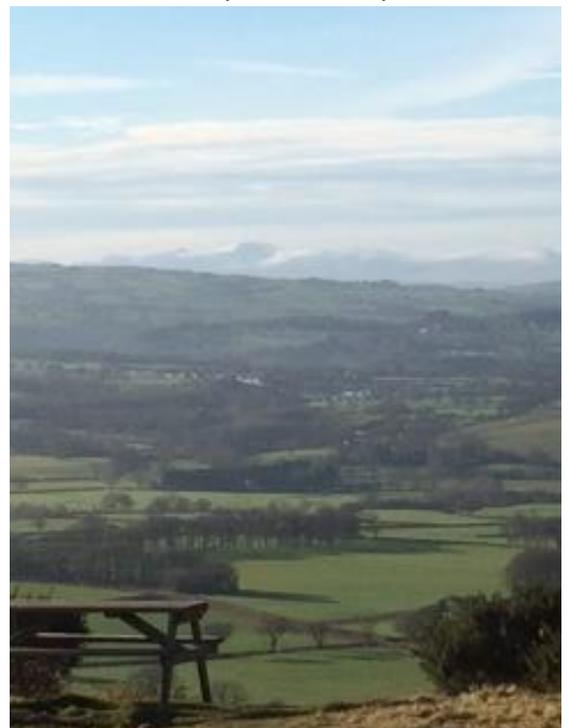
The next day, we had to remember our own sins, ponder on them, stand with them before God in our imagination and then stand with them before all creation. On this day we were introduced to another Ignatian technique; repetition. This is where we replay the previous prayer periods noticing especially times when we were feeling consoled or times when we felt desolate; things that felt really positive and up-lifting and things that felt negative,

difficult and challenging. Noticing anything that we might want or need to focus on again and bringing that into the period of prayer; this time, in the middle of the night.



You will understand now why it was so important to keep a journal - a spiritual diary - during the retreat. My journal fills one and half exercise books and as I look back at it I can re-connect with my experiences of the retreat and, most significantly, of my experiences of God. In the middle of the night, opening myself to God, lamenting my sinfulness and my unworthiness, having the words of John Bell's song suddenly come to mind; 'take me, take me as I am' and then knowing, with absolute certainty, that even though God knows all there is to know about me -every single hair on my head - still he loves me, unconditionally.

We spent 5 days contemplating sin, even spending time imagining hell. In his meditation on hell, Ignatius encourages us to use all 5 of our senses so that hell becomes a kind of 'virtual reality' inside our prayer. Again I discovered that my imagination can be almost over-active; hell wasn't a pleasant place to be in! on the 5th day we reflected on all of this in our prayer periods and then, the next day, we were unexpectedly given a 'repose day'. This turned out to be a day away from the exercises, when we could speak to one another, re-connect with the world, if we wanted to, and even speak to our wives and family. As a group we decided on a day trip, first to Conway to explore the castle and have lunch and then onto Llandudno, to walk along the promenade. After the heaviness of the previous few days, it was a lovely respite to be able to have some 'time out' before



moving into the next section of the Exercises where we began our contemplation of the life and ministry of Jesus.



All the time that we were journeying through some difficult prayer material, we were also being very well fed - although meals were in silence - and we were able to go out and walk in the beautiful Welsh hills that surround the retreat centre. Walking alone, of course, and usually only meeting, with a passing nod, our fellow retreatants. It is through these walks that I have a collection of photographs to keep as memories, many of them taken from a bench where I needed to sit and recover from the steep hills!

Canon Michael

Prayer Group...

Jacquelin Hill says that if anyone would like to join in, especially during these lockdown days, you can join on the phone Tel No: 03330110616 and Access code 9086615 at 2.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month. The next one will be 3rd June.

The first meeting took place in April and worked very well.



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Junior Church at home



So here we are. Many weeks on and still in lockdown and we are still unable to meeting the parish centre on a Sunday morning. Junior church as a live Facebook stream has become part of my weekly routine.

I have a very kind, patient, and loyal audience with a range of ages from 1 to a bit more than 21!!

Over the weeks I have tried to include crafts that are accessible to anyone with (whenever possible) a choice of activity usually one involving food and one not. I have to admit the food ones are very popular and the way people have adapted the crafts using the resource they have available to them is amazing.

I was a little nervous when Canon Michael returned, and he joined us one Sunday morning and I had to ask my twin sister from Liverpool to cover for me. (Not my real twin, it was to help explain about the men on the Road To Emmaus not recognising Jesus). However, he has proved to be a well behaved and very creative participant to our little group.

Part of me will be quite sad when we finally return to normal as the adults seem to have enjoyed Junior Church as much as the children and I will miss them when they return to the main Church.

If anyone else wants to join us you can find me on the Ewelme Benefice Family Facebook page on a Sunday at 11:30 or you can always catch up later if you miss it.

Much Love
Diane



What a happy, smiling face



More happy, smiling faces

Church in the time of Zoom

There are drawbacks to being considered the St James 'techy' guru! Prior to all this I hadn't even heard of Zoom – other than as a word beloved of comics along with woosh.

Towards the end of March I looked at Skype as a possible way to run an online service, and my daughter recommended Microsoft's Teams, which she uses in a business setting, as being better than Skype for meetings.

Both had problems – Skype required all users to download the app, while Teams required users to hold Microsoft Office licences.

Then the following emails from Jane

26th March – *I appreciate you have a zillion and one things on your minds at the moment. So when you have a moment with a cup of tea.... It seems a lot of people are using Zoom, the Diocese, area dean etc. I have downloaded it and it's really easy to download and I'm no techi. For free you can have 40mins - up to 100 people*

28th March - *Could you possibly have a look at Zoom - I think it could work for us. Perhaps we could have a practice next week?*

30th March - *This your invite to the (test) meeting jane wood is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.*

So on the 30th March we held a Zoom meeting - and ran a Zoom test Then on the 5th April we held our first service – a Service of the Word for Palm Sunday, and on 12th April an Easter Day Communion Service. We have continued this every Sunday since with both Eucharist services and Services of the Word.

It's not been without problems! We realised very early on that we couldn't have everybody responding as we would in church. Zoom does its best and tries to highlight the current speaker but when everyone speaks it quickly becomes a cacophony of sound. This is fine when we're greeting each other before and after the service, and during the Peace, but not during the service itself. The solution was for the host (me) to mute everybody's microphones except for the current speaker. But I found that trying to control this (which included turning off microphones activated by the participants themselves) and controlling the PowerPoint screen sharing, meant I was like the legendary one-armed wallpaper hanger!



Once we'd gone to the paid version of Zoom and after an upgrade, we could have co-hosts who could also control the microphones. So I drafted Adrian in to co-host the services – a task which he has fulfilled admirably - my thanks to him!

It hasn't proved altogether satisfactory – attempts to play video clips proved a bit disastrous during our Christian Aid Week service and attempts to provide music for hymns is a bit hit and miss. We can never know in advance just how good our broadband connections may be, or how the Zoom server itself will perform on the day – but we keep trying and learning.

As of today (11th May) it looks as though it is going to be July at least before we can make any attempt to return to our churches – Zoom will have to suffice!
Tony King

You are doing a really good job Tony, but I dread to think what it's doing to your blood pressure at times! *Judith*

I have a favourite true story. It was told by Jonathan Sacks, at that stage, the Chief Rabbi.....

Itzhak Perlman the famous violinist was playing the famous Beethoven violin concerto at a fabulous concert with a large and glittering audience. They were spellbound. Suddenly, during the slow movement, there was a gasp from the audience, as one of the middle strings of Perlman's violin broke. Surely the moment would be lost as he went to restring. However much to their surprise and pleasure, Perlman indicated to the conductor that he was going to continue. He simply transferred the notes from the broken string onto the string on either side with changes of fingering necessary. No doubt many thought that at the end of the slow movement, he would go and change the string before the final fast movement. To their shock and surprise, he did not, but played the last fiery movement with just three strings on his violin.

As you can imagine when the concerto finished, there was a stunned silence from the audience who had been mesmerised. Then the applause began, and the stamping of the feet as the whole auditorium rose to pay tribute to this remarkable man.

When silence finally descended, Perlman spoke a single sentence, 'It was my responsibility to make music out of what remained.'

What an incredibly wise and powerful statement to make! I have been thinking of that a lot while we have been on lockdown, and many of the normal routines have been taken from us.

David Vonberg

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St Mark's News



Dear Friends

Well as I write this, the weather is beautiful, the garden is at its very best although wild animals and birds have other ideas of where things should be planted. We have lots of wild birds bringing their young to the back door to be fed. We are Zooming on a Sunday morning, social distancing and getting our exercise out in open spaces, so all in all nothing changes (much). We celebrated with a picnic our 24th Wedding Anniversary and have our fingers firmly crossed that we manage to celebrate our Silver, next year.

Last month, when we went to the Parish Office to produce the magazine, I noticed on the wall the two items below. They have been there quite a long time but the rainbow is appropriate at the moment and we are using it all the time. The little clouds say in hard times and in easy times, rain and shine. The other picture is another old picture of St James Memorial gates, slightly different from the one printed last month, as it has a little more of the buildings either side of the gates.

It still amazes me that I can fill the magazine for the third month now, and this month I had some items left over, so my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes and pray that we are able to meet properly soon.

With all Best wishes

Judith



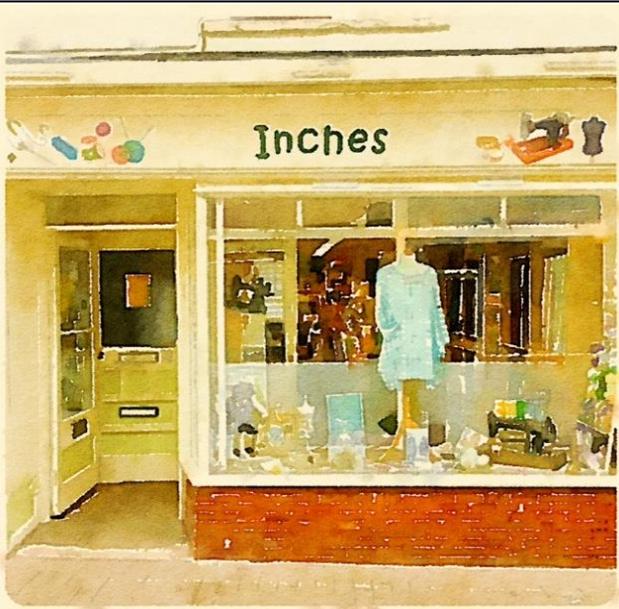
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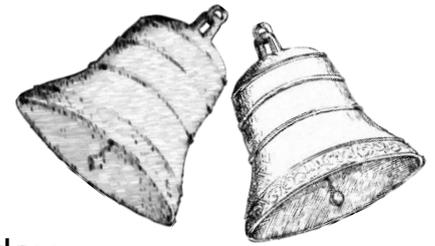
1st	134 - Tony King
2nd	170 - Austin Meares
3rd	213 - Norma Pope

Due to the current lockdown the draws will continue but there may be some delay in giving out prizes as I require a second signature on the prize cheques & that is rather difficult at the moment.

Many thanks to all who subscribe
& thank you for your patience at this time.

Virtual Bellringing

Bellringers Outing: Alas, this year's bellringing outing that was to have taken place on 27 June has had to be cancelled.



To maintain contacts between our ringers we have started to have a weekly virtual meeting on Thursday evenings using ZOOM. At present this is limited to the 40 minutes allowed for group meetings using Zoom's basic plan. These have been very successful in maintaining contact and reminding others of what we look like.

A virtual ringing room is under development by two computer-boffin ringers from Boston, Massachusetts to enable ringing to be practised during this period of enforced lockdown. Its present state of development allows ringing on between 4 and 12 bells, and ringers from anywhere in the World can take part in the same ringing session. The 'bell sound' is produced electronically, 'ropes and sallies' are shown moving as we would expect. To-date, we have tried it out twice at a practice. It's challenging to operate even for the most basic methods we ring, but we are hoping to improve. Patience and humour are necessary and it is fun. At present, there is no facility for audio communication between the participants, so Zoom is used for that. It is hoped that ongoing developments will enable RingingRoom (as it's called) to eventually include the audio facility as well. Cheers for technology.

The Central Council of Church Bellringers (CCCBR) requested that bells be rung at 7pm on Friday 8 May in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. We had planned to mark the occasion with a Quarter Peal at St James'. Since churches were closed this couldn't happen, instead at least one bell was rung at the appointed time, even though not a church bell, when Liz Byrne rang a little bell outside her home. *Frank Byrne*

Dear All,

This month includes Trinity Sunday. I took a song about the Trinity by Terrye Coelho. Coelho's song is an expression of our love for God. Every verse runs '... we adore you, lay our lives before you. How we love you,' like the last verse of the hymn below. It's good to stress first God's love for us. Our feelings can vary – though to express our love, whatever our feelings at the moment, is good. Love of God and one another must go beyond feelings to commitment. But our commitment is a response to God's committed love and all God does for us. So here is a simple

summary of who God is and what God does for us.

[Tune by Terrye Coelho]

1. Triune God, creator,
saviour, liberator:
how you love us.
2. Father God, you form us;
with your love you warm us:
how you love us!
3. Jesus, Son, you save us;
your own life you gave us:
how you love us.
4. Spirit, you breathe in us;
thus God's life you bring us:
how you love us.
5. So, God, we adore you,
lay our lives before you,
how we love you.
6. Triune God, we bless you,
worship and confess you:
how we love you.

God's love is about commitment. So are our loves, notably marriage. So here's a hymn linking God the Trinity and marriage. It can be sung to the tune, Jerusalem.:

God, you created us in love
the imprint of your life to bear,
and, as we give our lives in love,
your Triune life of love we share.
You made us female, made us male,
to live in love and unity,
and so our married, family love
is to reflect you, Trinity.

Eternal Godhead, One in Three,
Heavenly Father, Spirit, Son,
each person is the others' good,
and so your life is ever one.
So join each wedded pair in love,
that we one flesh, one life, may be,
and, in our care and partnership,
the glory of your love may see.

From Revd Richard Morgan

Communications Office at Church House, College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LY. It is available on www.gloucester.anglican.org

A message from Bishop Rachel



Ascension Day on Thursday 21st May we remembered the day when the risen Christ returned to the heavenly realms and his disciples waited for the Holy Spirit to come upon them with power. The disciples were called to shape a new future through the work of the Holy Spirit within them and around them as they remembered and proclaimed all that Jesus had taught them and revealed.

As Christ's followers today we too are standing in a strange present seeking to shape a new future amid people's cries for life to return to normal mingled with a recognition that life will never be the same again, and I believe that we need to pay attention to those themes of **returning** and **remembering**. I wrote about this in the May 17 BlogSpot for the publishers Darton, Longman and Todd and I hope it might enable you and your worshipping communities to reflect on what you want to hold on to and what you want to leave behind. 'How will we remember so that we might sustain that which has been life-giving and dare to change where we need to live differently?'

In all of this, prayer is essential and particularly in the 10 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost. Whether you are someone who finds it easy to pray or someone who struggles with prayer or someone who has never prayed before there are resources to help you as we pray 'Thy Kingdom Come' with Christians of all denominations across the world.

On Ascension Day I remembered Ascension Day in 2016 when we had a diocesan day of prayer in the cathedral and committed ourselves to prayer and conversation across the diocese to discern our vision for the coming years. This led to our **LIFE vision** which continues to shape how we are church in our many different contexts. As we reflect now on what 'returning' will look like in the coming weeks I encourage you to ponder the themes and priorities of our LIFE vision which have a fresh poignancy as we live this time of viral pandemic. Let us look back and remember, as we discern how we will return to the future.

As always, Bishop Robert and I continue to keep you in our prayers with deep thanks.

+Rachel

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VE DAY CELEBRATED IN DURSLEY.



Picture courtesy of Marion Padgett (Jackson as she was then). She is at the back next to the flag, by her brother Ivor, her Mum. Her baby sister Daphne is out of sight in the pram. (you'll need your magnifying glass!)

VE75 CELEBRATED ON 8th MAY 2020.

A very different socially distanced commemoration at the Memorial Gates on 75th Anniversary.



Elizabeth and Frank Byrne's garden basking in the lovely sunshine.



Capture your gardens now!

We're looking into the possibility of hosting a Benefice Virtual Gardens event. This could include sharing photos of gardens from across the Benefice on a page on the website or even on a separate website created for the purpose. As this is still in the planning stage, please take some photos of your gardens now, just as they're looking their best and most well-cared for!

Keep the photos until we are able to give you more details of what to do with them.



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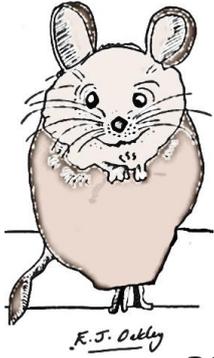
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Mouse Diary....



Ring, ring, ring. Ding a Ling. I have to say that when MBFTLP called, I was quite busy after all (dusting). And how is my favourite furloughed mouse? said MBFTLP. Well, now you mention it, I said, I am still waiting for my 80 %. It might be a good idea, reflected MBFTLP, to send the Chancellor of the Exchequer an email to see if he has you on his list of Church Mice to be Furloughed. In the meantime, I am calling about one or two things: the three Rs: Rations, Reading and Rescue. Well to take these in strict order, I said, as follows:

Rations: not too bad, I have plenty of chocolate (Cadbury's Fruit and Nut). But if I run out a have last year's packet of custard creams, and going further back than that, I have the previous year's Stache of.. wait for it.. Cadbury's Fruit and Nut. That does not sound very healthy, said MBFTLP, perhaps I shall have to send you a food parcel. Well, you can try, I said, but I am a bit stuck here in the church on my own and I am not sure of the which-way-In and the which way-Out, but perhaps I shall have fathomed this out by next week..

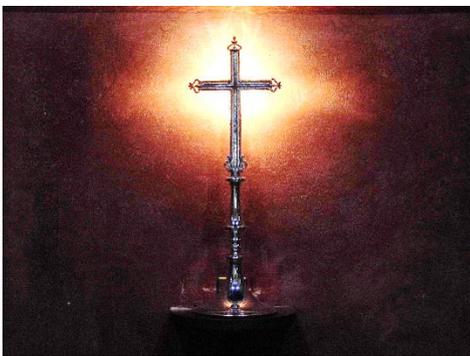
Reading: yes, I said, I am getting on ok with this as some kind person put an article under the church door for me. It was, "Corona Virus College, how to read Shakespeare in 5 minutes". Well, I would not worry about the timescale too much, said, MBFTLP, if I were you I would pace yourself with War and Peace instead. By the way, how did you get on with the Easter Bunny this year? Not too bad in the end, I said. He explained that as he was a Key Worker he could not stay too long and had to get off and get busy in the community. However, he did have time for one extra thing before he left. He showed me how to do the Lockdown Lollop. I have been practising ever since and must have done the equivalent of the Bath half marathon round and round and up and down the church. MBFTLP was moderately impressed. That might make up for the awful diet I suppose for a little while. However, I will still take pity on you and order you one of those healthy fruit and veg boxes from GL11.

Rescue: now this is an important one, said MBFTLP, that is, do you think you need rescuing? I pondered this for a while and I have to say was quite touched that MBFTLP was thinking of me in this respect. Ahem, I said, I think that overall I don't mind and think I could happily be un-rescued at the moment. I like it here in the church and it is my natural Milieu. I am not much good at French, said MBFTLP, but I get the gist. As you are happy to be un-rescued, do you think we could have another go at remote communications? I know you weren't very good at Skype, but could we try Zoom? Ok, I said, with a touch of nervous anticipation rising up into the throat. Ok, said MBFTLP, I shall plug everything in and

we will see how we go. So, whirr, zirr..bump..reverberated around the church. I think we might have a touch of Zoom doom, said MBFTLP, because all I can see is your nose right in front of the screen, it's rather dark and I can't see much else at all. I tried to help didn't I? On taking three steps backwards however this did not seem to facilitate the situation much. Now, you have zoomed off to the far distance and I can't see you at all, said MBFTLP. Perhaps we ought to give up on this IT malarkey and you can practice talking to Himself Upstairs after all. Ok, I said, I will work out what to say and let you know next month how I have got on..

With that, I signed off for this month, happy as I reasonably am in my natural milieu accompanied by Cadbury's fruit and nut and the occasion to do the Lockdown lollops every so often. Bye for now.

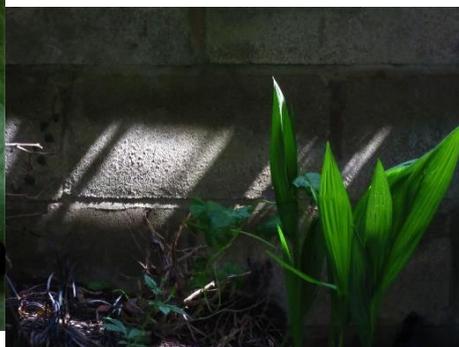
Mouse was helped in the writing by Elizabeth Oakley



Elizabeth says 'You probably know I'm a photographer working my way up. Some sales and commissions, local prize winner, and many published. So I am semi-professional. I've got a mentor now which is all very exciting. We work on line for the time being. He keeps making suggestions which is great except that I don't really have a proper camera! All my work up to now has been done on simple

compact or bridge cameras. The most high value of these was £140 (new)! So a lot can be achieved with basic tech and one or two easy tweaks on the computer. However, I am now ready to move to the next stage. Would anyone have a second hand proper camera a bit better than the above types that they would like to see rehomed with me for negotiable rate?'

Elizabeth Oakley



Lockdown pictures: Lily at Frampton on Severn; shadows in our back garden; long view of Severn Vale from Stinchcombe golf course.



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Kindness.....

I have had much kindness over many years from friends, neighbours and strangers. These are some notable recent examples.

In February I was at Moretonhampstead on Dartmoor. On my last day there, while exploring by car down a narrow lane my right front wheel went into a pothole. There are fewer of these than here but they are deep and with sharp sides and the tyre was split. When I pulled in to a passing place the van behind me stopped and the driver asked if he could help. "New" cars apparently do not have spare tyres, so the driver tried to apply the sealant, leading to a stream and then a pool and finally a fountain of thick white liquid which we had to evade. This was not going to work. The driver then took me several miles back to Moretonhampstead in the opposite direction to the way he was travelling and dropped me at a garage and explained the trouble to the owner whom he knew. As a result the helpful owner took me back to my car and fitted a new wheel a few hours later. My saviour made nothing of his help and did not want any gift.



The other occasion was just before the lockdown when I and two others came to the Parish Centre a week early for the Lent course. In parking in the Broadwell I jammed my car with its wheel so firmly against that of the next car I saw no way of freeing it. A friend with me asked a man to help and with some difficulty and great skill he freed it and re-parked it beautifully. That should have been the end but the hand brake was so well on I could not release it! Fortunately a couple had just arrived at a nearby house and the man when I asked him happily eased it. I had then with some difficulty got the car into a reasonable position to back out when his wife who had heard my efforts came out and guided the car out, finishing by giving me a kiss and asking me always to ask them for help if I needed it! None of them gave any sign of criticism or of minding being asked.

I am sure I, and I hope many of us will receive more such heart-warming acts.

Best wishes

Jacquelin Hill



**St John
Ambulance**

St John Ambulance is working hard, not just in Gloucestershire, and it is badly in need of financial support to keep going. Below is a link to a Just Giving page for SJA Gloucestershire and even the smallest

amount will help us.

There is an active First Aid Unit in Stroud and also a very strong and lively Cadet Unit! Both delighted to welcome anyone interested in joining. Many thanks.....Caroline Penley, President SJA Gloucestershire.

Clap for St John's Ambulance volunteers Published: May 5, 2020

The Revd Canon Paul Williams, the Vicar of Tewkesbury Abbey and County Chaplain to St John Ambulance and Sub Dean of the Order of St John blogs.

"I want to introduce some of my amazing friends and the fantastic work they are currently doing in this pandemic. Daily, in our county of Gloucestershire, St John Ambulance is working flat out to support the work of the NHS. All the St John workers are volunteers, many of whom also have a job within the NHS with families to protect and care for when they get home. We have 100 adult volunteers with 150 Cadets (10 – 17 years) and Badgers (7-10 years old) in units across the county. Around half of the adults are now working on COVID 19. Their work includes equipping and supplying ambulances for use in this crisis, and by retraining to work in the new Nightingale Hospitals. Others are helping out the NHS by taking some of the strain through working in busy A and E departments in our Gloucestershire Hospitals.

The work involved in disinfecting and restocking ambulances is massive, and the St John volunteers are working relentlessly. Their effort is impressive, especially as one Gloucestershire St John Ambulance volunteer has recently died due to the virus. Nationwide, St John Ambulance has some 8,500 regular volunteers in England with over 700 vehicles and often provides an auxiliary ambulance service at public events. With all public events cancelled, our usual income to maintain the charity has plummeted. The spirit of our volunteers, however, is high with the whole organisation geared up to continue in the next months to face the challenge of COVID 19.

The roots of St John go back many centuries to a hospital founded by Benedictine monks in Jerusalem who cared for, 'our lords, the sick and the poor.'. We have a long and fascinating history, but, although we are proud of our roots, it's our fruits as an inclusive Christian Order of Chivalry that makes us what we are today.

My colleague, Richard Lee, at National Headquarters in London said: "In the coming weeks and months, St John Ambulance will face extraordinary demands, the likes of which our organisation has not faced



in peacetime. Our resources will be stretched, and our people will be tested, but we will stop at nothing to help beat this virus.”

In this country, and across the world, my friends and I in St John will spend and be spent in our service to humanity inspired by the example of Jesus. As one of our doctors, Helen Pool, has recently written: “I pray most for the ability to provide quiet support and peace for those I work with: ‘I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the night time of your fear. I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.’ That’s the essence of what I do.”

So, my friends, may I introduce you to my other friends and when you ‘Clap for the Carers’ on Thursday nights clap for St John Ambulance too. In Christ’s service,
Paul.

THE TROPICAL STORM IN AUSTRALIA

by Jennifer Kendrick

Great big blobs of crystal rain fall from the leaden sky,
Bouncing off the parched red earth after months of scorching dry.
Gutters fill and overflow, puddles form and grow and grow.
Rivers bowl, and pitch and run, scoring points and having fun.
Listen to the wind as it thunders through the trees,
Some it hammers, some it bashes, bringing others to their knees;
Then hear the quiet when it’s finished, feel the stillness of the storm,
See the beauty of the branches, every shape and every form.

FINE FOOD IN SYDNEY HARBOURSIDE.

by Jennifer Kendrick.

Fish from the market, herbs dressed in oil,
Potatoes in the saucepan coming up to boil.
Fish in the grill pan, herbs tossed around,
Potatoes mashed with butter, salt and pepper ground.
Fish all crispy, brown and gold, herbs sparkly and green,
Potatoes soft and fluffy white, placed with pride on a tureen.
A simple meal, a pretty plate, food prepared with care,
Fresh fish and herbs and seasoned spuds, a feast beyond compare.

A note from Brendan.....*With unfading love and thanks to the entire team at the Nevill Hall Hospital. In particular the Ambulance Drivers, A&E department and the EAU unit nursing and cleaning staff, Tretower ward. Also, to Dr Richard Gilpin for his care and expertise.*

An unexpected end to my holiday in Wales 2017, however, an enlightening one. Now in 2020 the vision remains. Care and love continue to be showered by Angels upon the sick and needy.

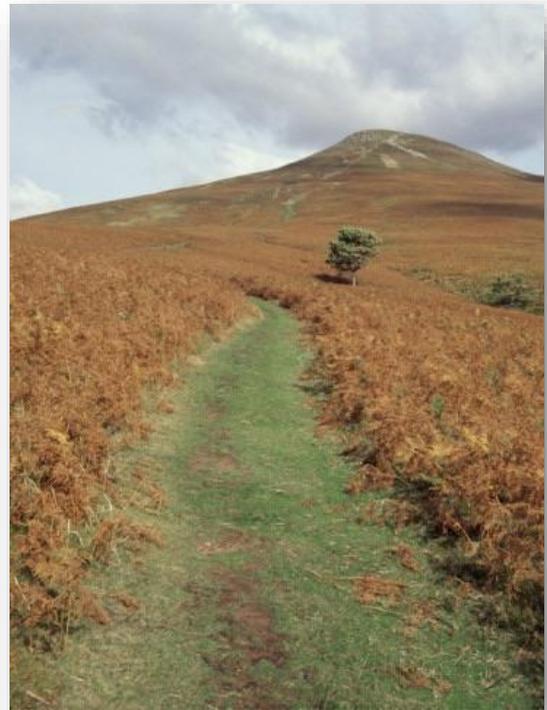
(photo of the Sugarloaf' mountain taken from the window of Tretower ward.

The Dossette Box

The whole of humanity was there, a Dante conveyor of broken parts deftly being sifted, healed, sorted and comforted by as many and more Angels of dark nights, bright days, and more dark and light to return the souls exactly as they should be to fulfil more moments.

A Dossette Box was lost, then, through the window a slanting sun caught my eye to look, really look to see the healing Dossette Box in front of me.

The angels wings gently fanned the moment, to land lightly, lighter than this pen upon it's gifted ground, the fertile wealth of real wisdom. The moment and each that paved it's way here could not have been different.



B Skelton .

Food Bank

In the present lockdown the Food Bank is struggling to meet the demands made upon it. With our churches shut, it is not possible for us to donate as in the past, but Uley village shop and both Tesco's and Sainsbury's have food donating points which can be used.

Pastoral Care

Unfortunately due to the coronavirus, we have been advised by the Bishop that only essential visiting should take place at the moment. We are keen to continue our care and support through telephone calls. Please let Canon Michael (546459), Revd Ian Gardner (546895) or Revd Jane Wood know of those who need to be contacted or those who are in hospital and we will get in touch. Marion Kee (860364) or Pat Jones (860696) are also happy to be contacted for Uley, Owlpen and Nymphsfield.

LET'S GO.

Jennifer Kendrick.

Where are we heading in the middle of 2020 as temperatures rise and tempers fray?



It's hard to imagine Jesus wearing a face mask and fully protective clothing, spending precious time and resources protecting himself from the unseen enemy whilst exposing the majority to fear of the unknown. Imagine having to don wet suits and breathing apparatus with heavy cylinders before diving through murky waters in pitch dark narrow tunnels at great personal risk, giving hope to the seemingly hopeless and inspiring others to believe in the impossible! What lessons have we learned

from recent headline news apart from the fact that miracles can happen, and when even the greatest efforts don't result in a World Cup coming home, or the most modern medicine cannot save lives, brave leadership and committed team work makes a whole lot of difference!

We should all be caring, or, if limited, to four walls for whatever reason, secure in our faith, still somehow sharing the daily challenges faced by those so badly served by masters sitting in high places, insulated from poverty and unreachable! We should be walking alongside the lost and lonely whose friends are alcohol and drugs, and those who hunger for help but find it impossible to ask. Why do Churches have walls and heavy doors that are frequently locked for fear of vandals? What are we doing about it? Do we really care? Do we feel helpless in the face of adversity? Are we just idle?

The least we can do is pray, wherever we are whenever we can. Just treat Jesus like a friend whose ear is always open. He hears but may not respond immediately or in a way that is obvious or to our satisfaction, but He knows best! If we make the effort to reach out into the abyss where the impossible abides, just maybe we will dull that invisible pain that beleaguers others and perhaps cobbles us too and, who knows, gain insight ourselves, give incentive to others, sow seeds of hope and reap a harvest of deep thankfulness. We are not all given to be leaders, or contenders or trained to take life threatening risks, but the wheels need constant oiling by those who gently and quietly persevere unseen, unrecognised and often publicly unrewarded, but devote time and energy to all manner of jobs and services, groups and teams.

I treasure the memory of the day, 75 years ago when I solemnly made my Brownie promise "to do my best to do my duty to God and the Queen....." that has stood me in good stead ever since and I commend it to everyone as an anchor in any situation. All together now, let's go!!



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VIRTUAL MUSIC NOTES

June 2020

Some while ago a regular attender at the Coffee, Cake and Music organ recitals told me that, while they loved the sound of the organ, they had no idea what went on behind the scenes to produce such an amazing array of sounds.

It's true to say that most church organs have about the same proportion on view as an ice-berg!

At St James', the organ's workings are disguised by a rather fine case designed by Arthur Hill, one of the grandsons of the founder of the firm of William Hill. Not all churches have such a fine case, as that added to the cost of the instrument, and so in many cases a simple "pipe rack" would suffice. However, no expense was spared in the construction of our instrument as Mrs Eyre, a far-seeing benefactor to Dursley, gave the instrument as a memorial to her late husband, and a brass plaque (probably difficult to see from the chancel) commemorates this gift. The pipes in the case all work; in many organ cases they are "dummies".

The principle governing the way an organ makes its sound is remarkably simple. Fill a wooden box with air, place pipes on it and work out a system to decide when each pipe plays. Instruments using hollowed out cane for pipes date back to Egyptian times, and became quite sophisticated when other materials were used during the mediaeval era.

These days an electric blower is used to provide the wind, but for many years, even in the last century, hand pumping was common. There were devices powered by water and even gas! The pre-electric large organs found in continental Europe (who were more advanced than the UK in organ technology) would have teams of men literally bouncing on vast bellows whilst clutching a hand rail! Practising would have been very difficult, so the story is that organists would put one spinet (a small compact version of a harpsichord) on top of another to create a two keyboard instrument, giving rise to the schoolboy howler that "Bach had twenty children and used to practise on a spinster in the attic....."

Pressing a key with the latest technology activates an electrical switch which mechanically releases a pallet under the pipe to admit the air. Previously this would have been done by a complex series of rods and

levers making the keyboards very heavy to play. St James' organ had this system from 1888 until the refurbishment and modifications of 1952. In 1988 and 1997 more work was done to use even more up-to-date solid state components so that between the player and the pipes just about everything is computerised, but there are still many mechanical parts.

It is a pity that access to the organ is so difficult making guided tours impossible! Behind the façade there are around 1800 pipes ranging in size from a pencil to 16 feet of wooden box. They are divided into four main sections; the Great Organ (middle keyboard) where the pipes are situated at the front of the case, and designed to accompany singing in the body of the church. The Choir Organ (lowest keyboard) originally designed to accompany the choir, so the pipes are made on a smaller scale than the Great Organ. The Swell Organ (top keyboard) where the pipes are enclosed in a large wooden box with shutters, a bit like Venetian blinds, operated by a foot pedal which controls the volume; and the Pedal Organ played by the feet which provides the depth to the organ's sound. Each keyboard has fifty-six notes and the pedal board has thirty notes.



(pipes of the Great Organ)

Within each section are an assortment of pipes creating different sounds. The Diapason is the foundation of the organ's sounds; the Flute family is next in importance, followed by the reeds and the strings. These sounds are available at different pitches. 8' pitch being the same as equivalent notes played on the piano; 4' being the octave higher; 2' another octave higher and 16' being the octave below 8'. There are other stops which are designed to enhance the natural harmonics of the 8', 4', 2' pitches and are very high-pitched sounding two or more ranks of pipes simultaneously. These are the Mixture stops and give a "sparkle" to the basic organ tone.



The console



(Some of the tiny Mixture pipes on the Choir Organ)

(Some of the pedal pipes. The stoppers double the speaking length of the pipes making them sound lower)



In 2004 to commemorate the contribution made to the music of St James' church by the late Diana Collins, we wanted to reinstate the Clarinet stop (like many organ stops, this attempts to sound like the orchestral instrument). The Clarinet had been replaced to make the organ sound "more Baroque" in 1968, when trends in playing were rather different! Not wishing to lose any of the existing



stops, there was no room to squeeze in one single pipe, leave alone the 56 pipes needed! So the decision was made to add the Clarinet digitally, which meant that for the price we could have five extra stops giving even more colour to the instrument. This has worked remarkably well with some of our eminent recitalists being convinced that the sounds of the additions come from pipes! In 2012 to mark my twenty years' service, the Fanfare Trumpet and Tuba were added digitally making the instrument even more complete.

(The pipes of the Swell Organ inside the Swell Box)

There is just one more addition which would be desirable, and that's a digital 32' flue pipe for the

pedals. It's the sort of sound you feel rather than hear, and it adds great depth to the body of sound, whether loud or soft. Writing this reminds me of Dean Parker of St Paul's Cathedral who, when asked by his organist if it was possible to add some stops to the mighty cathedral organ replied, "you organists are like a broken-winded cab horse, always longing for another stop"!

We are indeed fortunate to have such a fine instrument in St James'. In the words of one of our visiting recitalist (a former cathedral organist) "you can play anything from the organ repertoire on this lovely instrument". True, but its main purpose is to support our worship, and I hope that when the present crisis is over, I hope we can look forward to it doing just that for many years to come.



The 1952 Tromba. A reed stop with the top mitred to direct the sound.

Nigel Davies

Gloucestershire Social Distancing Race Series

We are trying a different kind of fund raising venture – a Social Distancing series of 3 runs – 5K, 10K, half marathon, full marathon – on the first Saturdays of the next 3 months. Dursley Running Club is helping too. To take part log on to the link I will circulate, choose your distance and place, and with your mobile or watch record your time and distance which you record via the link. There is a score board so you can see how fast you are, and a board of finishers' photos - of course you can walk the distances rather than run. The entry fees will be split between the Bishop's Feed the 5,000 and Uley parish fundraising endeavours. More details next week – I need just one more photo! I shall be asking you to circulate details please to anyone you think might enjoy doing this.

Prue Vernon

This month Elizabeth shares with us The Joys of Singing.....



My earliest memory of singing is a song in my favourite book, *The Jolly Robin*, when I was about 3, which my mother would sing every time it appeared in the story. The music was printed at the back. I always enjoyed singing and music at school, in the choirs and in music lessons and church. We always spent every Christmas and Easter with my Grandfather, in Lacock after 1952, when he retired there, having been a GP in Marlborough. The village church was always full on these occasions and, at Easter, we had helped with decorating the church with wild flowers, primroses

especially, the day before. The church choir was rather elderly, and I was fascinated by the little organ, when keys towards the left hand end of the keyboard miraculously depressed by themselves. At home we attended matins most Sundays and sang the same chants to the canticles week by week. I remember being very cross when visiting other churches, and finding they sang different chants, which I did not know and could not join in.

At school, at the end of the Autumn Term, everyone in the top 3 years (modern system Y11, Y12 and Y13) had to sing *Personent Hodie* (Long ago, prophets knew) in Latin, as a processional hymn. This involved about 200 girls congregating in the Art Room above the hall, ready to process in 2 lines down the stairs at each side, round to the back of the hall and our seats. The Y13 people led the procession, so we in Y11 were last down and had to listen very carefully to ascertain where we had got to in the hymn, joining in appropriately. The whole hymn had to be sung through two or three times before everyone was in their seats.

Unfortunately this tradition was stopped when I reached Y12, so never had the honour of possibly leading the whole thing.

Ours was an all-girls school, and so the choirs had to sing music for upper voices only. Reaching the 6th Form, we were invited to join in a very large choir made up from London Grammar schools, to sing in a carol concert in the Royal Albert Hall. One of the items we had to practise was a selection from Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, particularly "There is no rose of such virtue". None of us was willing to sing the alto line, so an audition was necessary – anyone who could not reach the top A in this movement had to sing alto. From then on I have always sung soprano, preferring second soprano when the part splits. Other works we practised for the two years in which I took part were the opening of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. There were also carols for everyone to join in of course.

Contd on page 36.....

Francis Jones

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.....Contd from page 34.....

The main outcome of this whole experience was that it was my first taste of singing in a mixed choir – I loved it and was hooked from that point.

Off to college next and more singing in the college choir, then my first teaching post in Tring, where I joined the Tring Choral Society who were rehearsing Edward German's Merrie England. Our conductor's son was the accompanist, a very talented young man who wanted to extend the choir's repertoire and persuaded his father to try Vivaldi's Gloria. I was appointed Latin coach as the rather elderly members of the choir thought singing in another language was taking things a bit too far. We succeeded and all were pleased with the result, so much so that we then tackled a whole mass in Latin.

I married and we moved to Watford where I joined the Aeolian Singers in Hemel Hempstead in time for Beethoven's 200th anniversary and performed his Mass in C, along with the Choral Fantasia, based on a similar little melody to the final movement of his Choral Symphony 9. We had started rehearsing Verdi's Requiem when we moved to Hitchin and I was prepared to travel to Hemel Hempstead each week to rehearse, but there was no need – the North Herts Guild of Singers was also rehearsing this, so I joined them. Two performances of Bach's B Minor mass when 7 months pregnant was memorable – I am sure our daughter knows it well.

Moving to Dursley, I left the Hitchin choir rehearsing Bach's St Matthew Passion, to find Gloucester Choral Society preparing this too. For the first time I found I had to audition to become a member, passed this and still sing with them after 45 years. The Three Choirs Festival Chorus beckoned in 1977 and I successfully auditioned, eventually singing in 30 Three Choirs Festivals before I retired from this in 2013. There were so many memorable performances, with so many different conductors and different venues to perform in, and also being allowed to join with the BBC National Chorus of Wales for two Prom concerts.

I am so grateful to my mother, who, when I announced that I wanted to play the oboe and she found out how much they cost, said "You will just have to use your voice".

Elizabeth Byrne

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