

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Priest-in-Charge: Revd Tim Close,
Mobile: 07772 704 232. Email: timothy.close@btinternet.com
Church Website: www.cloughfernparish.co.uk

THE SELECT VESTRY

RECTOR'S CHURCHWARDEN
David Garland Tel: 07753 486063
PEOPLE'S CHURCHWARDEN
Tanya Kay Tel: 07597 916012
RECTOR'S GLEBEWARDEN
Brian Moore Tel: 07771 806008

PEOPLE'S GLEBEWARDEN
Jane Dunn Tel: 07729 932252
HONORARY SECRETARY
Gillian Webb Tel: 07746 423424
HONORARY TREASURER
Caroline Tares Tel: 07870 761280

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

Norman Dunn Tel: 028 9086 2960
Diana Harrington Tel: 07742 739633
Sandra Harvey Tel: 028 9096 7408
Christine Hunter Tel: 07732 603202
Billy Ingram Tel: 028 9086 6064
David Mackey Tel: 028 9086 2581

Kerry McIlwaine Tel: 07772 887233
Alan McNiece Tel: 07921 650134
Elizabeth McWatters Tel: 028 9050 6805
Irene Orr Tel: 028 9087 9709
Barbara Turkington Tel: 07731 908039
Helen Wilson Tel: 028 9086 0816

OTHER OFFICE HOLDERS

**BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT
FUND SECRETARY**
Diana Harrington Tel: 07742 739633
F.W.O. SECRETARY
David Mackey Tel: 028 9086 2581

PLANNED GIVING SECRETARY
Christine Hunter Tel: 07732 603202
ONE-OFF GIFT AID SCHEME SECRETARY
Graham Cully Tel: 028 9085 3174
ORGANIST
Irene Orr Tel: 028 9087 9709

CLOUGHFERN PARISH VISITING TEAM

Jo Cole, Shirley Flack, Audrey McKeag, Christine Hunter, Irene Orr
SAFEGUARDING TRUST PANEL: Clare Campbell, Norman Dunn
PARISH REP FOR THE LEPROSY MISSION Anne Sproule Tel: 9086 2689

PAROCHIAL ORGANISATIONS - Church Halls Tel: 9086 0046

Sunday	11.00 am	Sunday School – Up to 10 Years	Gillian Webb	Tel: 9086 3305
	11.00 am	Sunday School – 10 Years and above	Barbara Turkington	07731 908039
Monday	10.30am	Yoga		
	7.30 pm	Indoor Bowling	Barrie Moore	07799 191621
	7.45 pm	2nd Cloughfern Guides and Rangers	Gillian Webb	07746 423424
Tuesday	10.30 am	Coffee Morning	Gillian Webb and Christine Hunter	
	11.30 am	Prayer Group		
	6.45 pm - 8.00 pm	Rainbow Guides	Carole Coupe	07860 481773
	7.00 pm - 8.15 pm	3rd Cloughfern Brownies – 7 Years	Ciara Field	07510 633036
Wednesday	10.30 am	Ladies Badminton	Christine Hunter	Tel: 9086 2651
	7.30 pm	Indoor Bowling	Barrie Moore	07799 191621
Thursday	6.30 pm	Cub Scouts – 8 Years	Chris Cully	07515 560282
	6.30 pm - 7.45 pm	Beaver Scouts – 6 - 8 Years	Linda Cherry	Tel: 9443 2173
	7.45 pm	Scouts – 10½ - 15 Years	Geoff Hegarty	07736 310126
	7.45 pm	Choir Practice	Irene Orr	Tel: 9087 9709

Mothers' Union – 3rd Wednesday of month at 7.45pm
M.U. Prayer Group – 3rd Wednesday of month at 7.15pm

N.I. Charity No. 10321

Lawrence



the
**Church of the
Ascension**

CLOUGHFERN PARISH

**CENTRED IN CHRIST
FAITHFUL TO SCRIPTURE
UNITED FOR MISSION**

**News and Views
of the Parish**

MARCH, APRIL and MAY 2021



**The glory of our King was seen when He came riding by,
And People ran and waved and sang: 'Hosanna, King most High!'**

Taken from the Register. . .

Christian Burial

"I am the resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord"

Doreen Essery	7 December 2020
Stephen Harington	29 December 2020
Irene Dyer	7 January 2021
Harry Greenfield	20 January 2021
Kathleen Irwin	13 February 2021

Church Cleaning List . . .

5 March	The Abraham family
12 March	Miss G Webb and Miss C Hunter
19 March	Mr and Mrs A McNiece
26 March	The Mackey and Cully families
2 April	Mr and Mrs V Cole
9 April	The Pryce family
16 April	The Young and McKay families
23 April	Mrs L Cherry and Mrs C Robinson
30 April	The Black family
7 May	The Turkington and Montgomery families
14 May	Mrs L Coleman and Mrs A Sproule
21 May	The Abraham family
28 May	Miss G Webb and Miss C Hunter
4 June	Mr and Mrs A McNiece



COVID-19 and Church Cleaning

Until further notice, routine cleaning of the church may only take place on Friday mornings. In the event of a church service being held 72 hrs prior to scheduled cleaning, cleaning rota volunteers will be advised, and given special instructions.

** Please note Tanya Kay has advised that she is able to assist any cleaning group needing an extra pair of hands – her contact number is on the back of the magazine.

Editorial

63 Connor Road, Parkgate, Co Antrim BT39 0EA
Tel: 9443 2173 Email: linda.cherry@btinternet.com

Well this magazine has been an unusual one to prepare. Still in a lockdown situation, with our church closed and other face-to-face church activities brought to a halt. Regardless, we have tried to pull together as much information as possible for you and it goes without saying but I'll say it anyway – our sincere gratitude to the faithful contributors who always supply us with content for the magazine. Thank you all.

This issue will cover the quarterly period of March, April, May and during these months there is still a lot to be thankful for. Mother's Day falls this year on 14 March – a time to spoil your mum and thank her for all she does for you. Of course, the stores have many gift suggestions for you to choose from – albeit if it is from their websites!

Good Friday falls on 2 April and it is interesting to note all the traditions and customs associated with Easter from around the world. In Bermuda it is customary to fly a kite on this day which symbolises the cross and Jesus' ascension into heaven. In some countries church services conclude with the bell tolling 33 times in succession to mark each year of Jesus' life.

Of course, Easter has a number of food-related customs which we all enjoy like hot cross buns – it is said that a hot cross bun baked on Good Friday will never grow mouldy. The

most popular Easter custom I would suggest though is that of Easter eggs. Eggs have been regarded as a symbol of fertility and new life dating back to pagan times. The hard shell of the egg is a reminder of the stone walls of Jesus' tomb with the egg itself representing the new life of the Resurrection. Originally the hard-boiled egg would have been decorated using paint or dye until the more modern chocolate version was created by Joseph Fry in 1873 – hand crafted and therefore very expensive. It wasn't until the 1950s that a more affordable option was introduced.

The most expensive Easter egg however has to be one commissioned by Tsar Alexander III of Russia in 1885 as an Easter gift for his wife. He requested the jeweller Faberge to create the piece and in total Faberge made over 50 eggs for the Russian royal family, each more extravagant than the last!

And now to the weather – it is said that a bad year is forecast by poor weather on Palm Sunday but rain on Good Friday is believed to predict a fertile year.

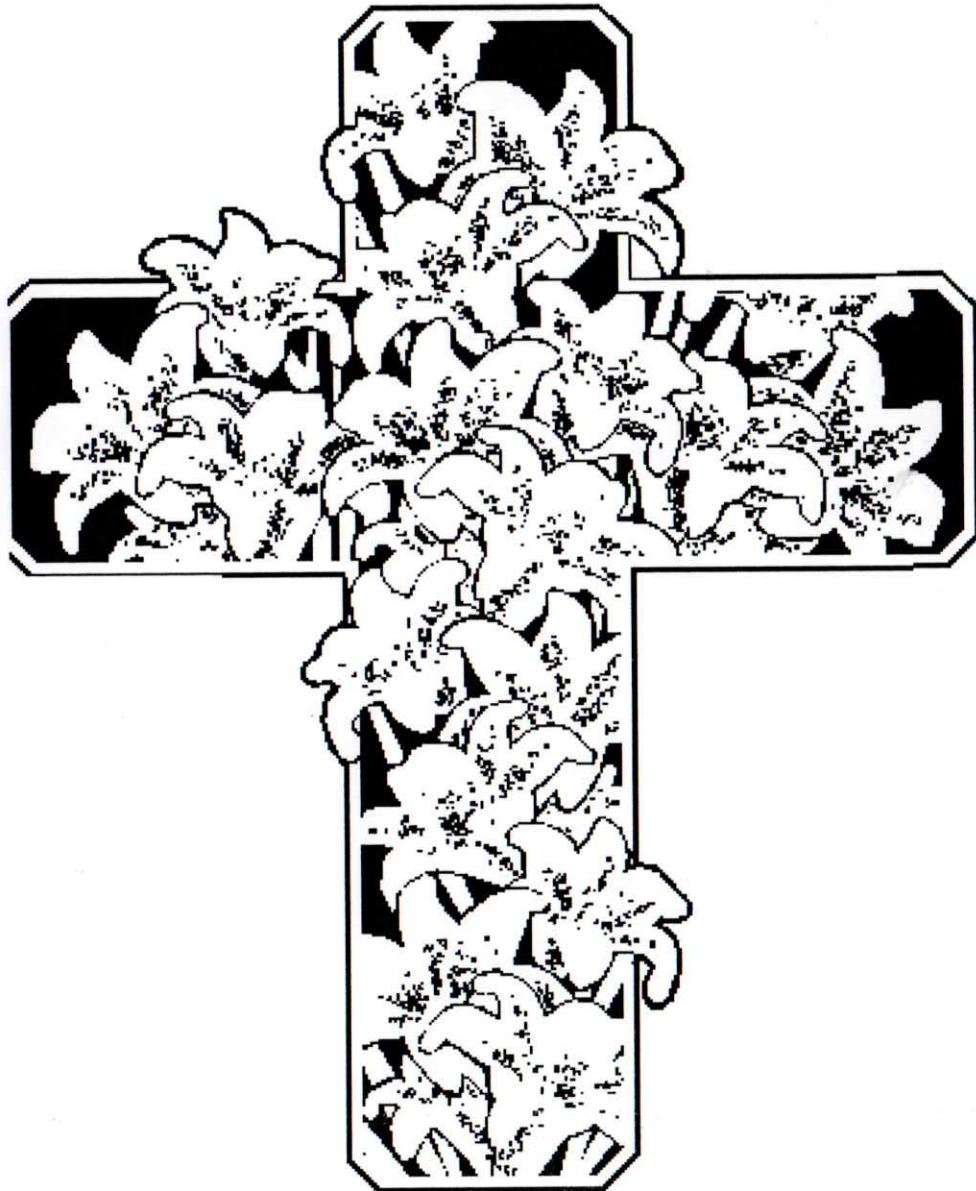
In closing, we hope you are keeping safe and well and that we will see a return to some normality in the not too distant future.

The magazine team would like to wish all our readers a Happy Easter.

Linda

Sunday 4th April is Easter Day and we hope to have our cross in place from Good Friday. On Easter Day we invite our parishioners and friends to bring along flowers and foliage from their gardens and decorate the cross placed in its usual place at the bottom of our church driveway. Thank you.

Brian



Minister's Message

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Thus begins Charles Dickens' novel, A Tale of Two Cities.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, we are mindful that the worst of times, the crucifixion of Jesus, gave way to the best of times, the resurrection of Jesus.

The Gospel calls us, as disciples of Jesus, to play our part in building the Kingdom of God in our community and society. We are called to be a people who in the worst of times work to bring about the best of times.

The global coronavirus pandemic, which has caused so much heartache and hardship, is certainly among the worst of times. However, in the midst of the suffering inflicted by the pandemic, we have witnessed humanity at its best. Healthcare staff who care for the sick, emergency services personnel who keep us safe, food manufacturers and distributors who ensure we have the supplies we need, neighbours who support the vulnerable in our communities. When we work together for the benefit of all, we see the best of times.

As we approach Easter, it is my prayer for each of you that, in the worst of times, you will know the Easter hope which is God's gift to all of us. Amen.

Tim

Church Worship

At time of going to print, it is not possible to predict when in-person worship will recommence, nor what format church services will follow once in-person worship does recommence.

Updates on church worship will be posted on the parish Facebook page and the parish website.

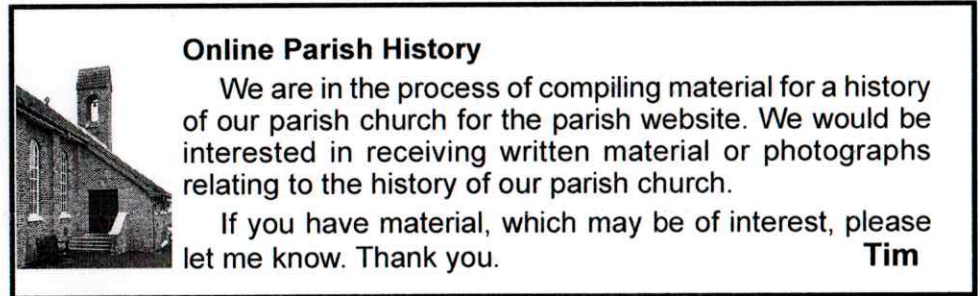
Tim

Online Parish History

We are in the process of compiling material for a history of our parish church for the parish website. We would be interested in receiving written material or photographs relating to the history of our parish church.

If you have material, which may be of interest, please let me know. Thank you.

Tim



BRIAN'S SLOT

Although we are now into the spring season we must not forget to mention our friend, Stephen Harrington, who sadly passed away whilst in hospital, just five days before Christmas.

Just like his mum before him, Stephen was a faithful member of Cloughfern Parish and played his part in every sphere of parish life. As Robin said during Stephen's eulogy, he was a cheerful, happy man of generous spirit who was always approachable and willing to do what he could to assist anyone in any way possible. There were only 25 souls present inside the church attending Stephen's farewell service, conducted so warmly by Tim, and yet so many came to stand outside just to be there at this sad time.

He was a quiet man who worked for BT and during 'The Troubles' when contractors were considered a target for working for the security services, it was considered a normal day's work for Stephen to be transported by military helicopter into both army and police bases and compounds to carry out remedial work on their communications systems.

Saturday afternoons found us sitting in our local bowling club where political corruption and government conspiracies were discussed at length. These were his favourite subjects, along with being watched

by GCHQ, allegedly, and these afternoons we will miss terribly.

To Diana, Paul and Marc, our best wishes and thoughts will always be with you. **Brian**

Sam, who runs the charity shop in St. John's Whitehouse, has asked me to extend a welcome to any parishioner who would like a DVD or book from his shop delivered to their homes - he would be more than happy to do so. If anyone in Cloughfern or their friends would like a delivery, please ring me and let me know what subjects and/or authors you prefer, and I will see if Sam is able to help. (Brian - 02890 865229).

Christmas is now long past, and we hope to re-open our charity shop. Thank you as always for the donations and please remember that we are really happy to receive any unwanted Christmas presents. Thank you. **Brian and Tanya**

Not so long ago, Caroline had the greatest difficulty making our books balance and more so, we were at the limit of our bank overdraft.

Yet even with the Covid disruptions, the parish has made great strides forward in its finances. So much so, that we are now able to balance our books and do what Cloughfern Parish has always done in past years.

Last year the parish was able to make contributions to some very worthwhile charities and it is only proper that our parishioners, who have done the giving, know the outcome of their generosity.

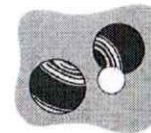
Caroline and Gillian asked our different sections of the parish to propose a charity they would like the parish to support this year. As a result, Caroline was able to forward cheques to the value of £250 to each of the following charities:

- ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY
- LISTENING EAR
- TINY LIFE
- MARIE CURIE
- AIR AMBULANCE
- PARKINSON'S NI
- CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Also, our FOOD BANK support has been just overwhelming and very humbling, and our little shop has made donations of £250 to SAVE THE CHILDREN, NSPCC and NI HOSPICE.

Thank you everyone for all the support over the last difficult year.

Brian



INDOOR BOWLING CLUB

Due to the continuing situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, we are unable to resume play this season. We will monitor the situation and hopefully, when people get their vaccinations, play can resume, however bowls are unlikely to start until September 2021.

In the meantime, everyone take care and stay safe.

David Mackey, Hon. Secretary



Girlguiding

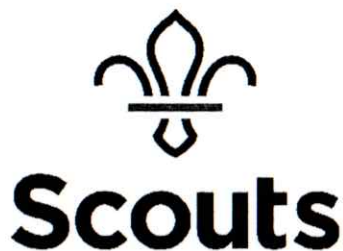
Guides and Rangers

It's hard to believe it's almost a year since we held our last Guide meeting in the hall. Who would have thought that when we last met in March 2020, that things would escalate as they did, and our way of living would change so much. It's been particularly difficult for our young people, with stop-start school openings, uncertainties with exams, primary/secondary school moves, and not being able to meet up socially with friends.

Due to the personal circumstances of the leaders, we haven't been able to meet up with the girls face-to-face, when restrictions allowed. During the past year, we have kept in touch online, offering the opportunity to work for badges and challenges at home, and it's been good to see some of the interaction. We were able to have a socially-distanced get-together on a lovely evening in May in the church grounds, when we gave out badges and certificates for that year.

We'll continue to keep in contact online, until such times as we can meet face to face again, hopefully in September. In the meantime, we hope everyone stays safe and well, and hope the warmer and brighter days of Spring are not too far away!

Gillian, Lynn, Lara and Niamh



1st CLOUGHFERN SCOUTS

Hi Folks,

Last year the Scouts worked hard in order to gain badges and learn new skills and we have been very encouraged by their enthusiasm. Given the Covid-19 restrictions, meetings have been intermittent, and we are unsure what will be in store over the next few months. Before Christmas we were regularly meeting face-to-face, which was a welcome distraction to all the Scouts given the difficult situation that the world is in. The normal Scout programme has been difficult to deliver but we have tried our best to make it as fun and normal as possible.

Even though there have been no face-to-face meetings since Christmas, our Scouts have engaged in online programmes. This has included question and answer sessions from local celebrities including Ulster Rugby stars and well-known radio personalities.

This is usually the time of year when we are planning Easter and Summer camps. It is unfortunate that camps won't be happening this year however, we remain optimistic and will camp at the earliest opportunity.

I'd like to say a MASSIVE thank you to each Scout for actively engaging in our programme last Scouting year. They carried out each activity to the best of their ability and turned up each week throughout the year.

If you are reading this and know anybody who would be interested in becoming a Scout leader, please encourage them to come along to our Troop, we meet each Thursday at 7.45pm. They won't regret it!!

Geoff, Stephen and Fiona



1st CLOUGHFERN CUBS

As we have entered lockdown 3, the Cubs are back to online only meetings. Nevertheless, this has not deterred us from continuing on with the good work that we have been doing since September. To date, from the safety of our own homes, we have been able to participate in a number of games and activities while also working through a number of badges.

So far, we have been able to create an "alternative" model of our solar system using household items that represent the planets for the Astronomer Activity Badge. We have learned how to appreciate the world around us by learning about The

Countryside Code and are documenting the changes we can see in our favourite outdoor places as the season changes from Winter to Spring for the Naturalist badge. We will soon be building our own robots out of recycled materials that will help us attain the Artist and Environmental Conservation badges.

We have also been thinking hard about how difficult lockdown can be. The Cubs are missing their regular meetings, missing school, missing being able to go out and see people who they can't see as much now. The Cubs were great at coming up with ideas of what to do when they felt frustrated, pent up, sad or lonely. Perhaps some of them might be useful to you?

1st Cloughfern Cub Scouts' ideas for making yourself feel better during lockdown - give someone in your house a cuddle - play with your pets - call a friend on the phone or on Zoom - go for a walk in your favourite park - paint a picture - read a book - watch a favourite movie - play your Switch - do some exercise - bake something tasty. I hope that you get as much benefit from these ideas as we have!

Chris and the leaders



1st CLOUGHFERN BEAVER SCOUT COLONY

We were able to run a number of meetings from the middle of November until our Christmas meeting on 17 December. Unfortunately, that was our last face-to-face meeting of 2020 and we are currently only meeting via Zoom. The Beaver NI team have been very helpful and organised monthly online meetings. These meetings are designed to engage the Beavers with games and craft activities which also count towards badgework.

We have also provided badgework ideas, crafts and activities on a regular basis via our WhatsApp group. Whilst we are maintaining a Scouting presence virtually, nothing compares to face-to-face meetings and we look forward to a return to normality. As Scouting follows the Education Authority guidelines, we hope to return when schools re-open for all pupils.

Regrettably we have had to make the decision to postpone our Beaver Sleepover scheduled for May 2021 to next year, due to the uncertainty of the present situation.

When we do return, however, we aim to have a fun programme for our Beaver Scouts to enjoy and to make full use of the lighter evenings to get out and about.

Linda, Claire, Corrina, Elizabeth and Joanne

POEMS

Easter Story

The thud of nails on open palms,
'Father forgive' was all He said,
'Finished' was His final cry,
As death approached God bowed
His head.

Born of a woman He entered our
world,
Fully man yet fully divine,
Such is the mystery beyond
comprehension
That One such as this should step
into time.

He came to die and rise again
The firstfruits of the Father's love,
That man should follow in His train
On wings of light to realms above.

By Megan Carter

Dawn Chorus

A glow in the east, faint fingers of dawn
A single bird wakes, and greets the dim rays
His voice fills the air, as morning takes form
And soon he is joined by a chorus of praise.

They praise for their life, and the end of the night
For perils survived, and hunters unfed.
They praise for the day, and the beauty of light
The praise for their flight; while we lay abed!

And yet, as we lay, and hear their fine song
Our praises join theirs, our hearts lift with joy.
We can't match their skill, but yet sing along
The birds and ourselves our voices employ

In worship of God, for gifts of new days
A cadence of song, dawn chorus of praise.

By Nigel Beeton

The Goldfinch

A flash of yellow, gold, and red
Dancing in our flower bed
Flocked together, bringing charm
Their joyful song restoring calm.

Through centuries since times of
old
We've always loved their plumage
bold;
As they gathered round to feed
Seeking grubs, and thistle seed.

So, go ahead, and plant some
thistles
You will see, among the bristles.
Golden birds who dance and dart
Bringing joy to warm your heart.

By Nigel Beeton

Written in March

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun . . .

There's joy in the mountains,
There's life in the fountains,
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing,
The rain is over and gone.

From a poem by William Wordsworth

May our kindness be witnessed by all

When the things of the world seem so dark and so grim
When disease and despondency call,
Rejoice in the Lord and the nearness of Him –
May our kindness be witnessed by all!

When the pillars of life seem to crumble and creak
When our walls seem to tumble and fall.
In prayer and petitions our Father we seek –
May our kindness be witnessed by all!

The tempest may rage, but His wondrous peace
Stills the storms that may rage in our soul
In our hearts and our minds shall the turmoils cease
And our kindness is witnessed by all!

By Nigel Beeton

The Good Old Days

A sofa in the corner, oil cloth on the 'flure',
A man standing in the yard, a broken toilet 'dure'.
Paper cut in little squares, hanging on a string,
Someone sitting on the 'throne', thinking they can sing!
A well-scrubbed table in the house, always standing there,
Mother with her apron on and 'herpins' in her hair.
A wee half curtain on the 'windy' so the neighbours couldn't see,
If we were having 'cabbage and nabs' or else a well-done knee.
Gas mantles were the only light for Mother to see her thread
For sewing patches on our trousers, when we were all in bed.

I remember my younger brother – always a bit of a wit saying
'Don't be burning the tablecloth, Da hasn't read it yet!'
A jaw box in the scullery, bathing in a big tin tub,
Saving up for Christmas in a weekly Christmas Club.
Overcoats for blankets, a 'poe' below the bed,
The 'nitty nurse' in our wee school, 'luckin' through your head.
Scrubbing on a washboard, using Lifebuoy soap,
Playing round the lamp-post, swinging on a rope.
We hadn't many luxuries, everything was plain,
Although we long for 'The Good Old Days'
They won't come back again.

Author Unknown

Submitted by Joy Felton



Prayer for Families

Dear Father God,

In this month, when we especially think about mothers, we thank you for the families and friends you have given us. You know how hard it has been to have been separated over these past months, how much we have missed and longed for their hugs, their physical presence and fellowship.

As we hold on to the hope of overcoming the pandemic, help us to be strengthened by the power of the love we receive - and to strengthen others by the love we give.

May we know that, wherever we are, whatever our circumstances, we and our loved ones are held safe and connected by your unfailing love for us, revealed in Jesus - who is alive - and from whom nothing, no pandemic, no man-made turmoil, absolutely nothing and no-one can separate us, when we put our trust in Him.

Thank you, Father, that we belong to your family. Thank you for the love and security we have in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Stay trimmed and balanced

'Do not let this Book . . . depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night . . . be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be . . . successful.' (Joshua 1.8)

Any flying instructor will tell you that aeroplanes need to be 'trimmed' or 'balanced in flight' on a regular basis. After flying through storms and hitting air pockets, they get knocked out of line. That's true of our path through life. The bad storms of sickness, redundancy, divorce and disappointment, can knock us off our balance, too.

In other words, our attitude needs to be constantly checked and adjusted. Have you checked yours lately? What are you encountering at the moment that is putting pressure

on you to veer off course? So long as we live, we will always need to look to God, to stay 'trimmed and balanced'. Lent is an excellent time to do this.

The best way to stay balanced is to read God's Word. It gives us a true map of the world around us, and it shows us where we are on that map. Here's an idea you can try for Lent: every week, for the next few weeks, choose a Bible verse and write it down on a small card. Carry it with you wherever you go and memorise it. In one year, you'll know 52 new scriptures, and more importantly, your attitudes will be more naturally in line with God's Word, your faith will be strengthened, and your life will be moving in the right direction.

Taken from Parish Pump

'One Year On'

It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly two million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith, as we look back over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the **reality of our situation**. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain!

As the apostle Paul writes: *'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus'* (2 Cor 4:8-10).

The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us in these circumstances.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find **new faith and hope in Jesus**. The experience of Jesus' death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future: *'so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.'* (2 Cor 4:10-12).

During the season of Lent, as we anticipate the events at Easter, it's good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them to Jesus? May the hope of Easter Day take us forward into the coming year.

By The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham

Passionflower

Why is the passionflower called the passionflower? This beautiful climbing plant that grows in many of our gardens, was discovered in South America by Spanish missionaries centuries ago. Drawings were sent back to Europe and in 1609 an Italian priest interpreted the flower to represent the crucifixion, otherwise known as the Passion.

The five petals and five sepals represent the 10 disciples who remained steadfast (Judas and Peter both abandoned Jesus). The corona is the crown of thorns. The stigma is the cross or nails, and the five stamens are the number of wounds Jesus received.

Taken from Parish Pump

News and Views

What we want during the pandemic

What have men and women been thinking about during the pandemic? According to recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), men have been preoccupied with takeaway food and pints, while women have been keeping in touch with their friends.

In a study on the social impact of coronavirus, the ONS found that women are only half as likely to leave home for a takeaway or drinks, and much more likely to go out in order to meet a friend. Women are also far more likely to form a lockdown support bubble and to adhere to government advice than men.

Beware hand sanitiser!

Don't let vulnerable members of your family accidentally poison themselves with hand sanitiser. It can kill them.

Poisonings from swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitiser have more than doubled in the past year, to nearly 400. Doctors from the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine at the University of Oxford urge that more needs to be done to protect children, the elderly or anyone with mental health issues, from mistaking the sanitiser for a drink.

Pandemic dreams

The pandemic is affecting our dreams. More people are reporting nightmares which relate to 'contamination' and 'cleanness'.

A recent study has found that the more anxious a person is in their waking life, the more vivid will be their dream images. The findings, published in the journal *PLUS One*, explain that "Pandemic dreams show a higher proportion of anger and sadness words; these features seem to be associated with mental suffering linked to social isolation."

Your daily walk should be a sacred ritual

Under lockdown, millions of us who rarely walked around our immediate locality are now well acquainted with every nearby driveway, every crack in the pavement, and every pothole in the road. We have developed views on our neighbours' gardens, on their oddly coloured garage doors, and on their dogs, children and cars. If we go out at the same time every day, we may even be saying hello to the same people we don't know every day.

For many of us, that daily walk has become the high point of our day. After all, it is one of the few liberties we have left. Some of us go early, to enjoy the relative peace and quiet. Some of us go midday, to at least see other people, even if we can't talk to them. Others of

us opt for dusk, the dark comfort of a street with lit houses and stars in the sky.

Whatever time you most enjoy, make sure you do make the time to go for your walk. Your mental and physical fitness can only improve!

Want to feel better? Cuddle your pet

If you think you feel better after cuddling your dog or cat, there is a good reason: you really *do* feel better.

After only three minutes of cuddling your pet, your levels of oxytocin, the 'love' hormone, increase, according to a recent study from Australia's Monash University. And just five minutes of cuddling will also raise your levels of the two wellbeing and happiness hormones, endorphin and dopamine. So says a recent report in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*.

Furthermore, a study at Liverpool University last year found that dog owners are four times more likely to be fit than other people.

Rising demand for leggings

The popularity of leggings soared last year. They became the must-have fashion garment to see out Covid-19.

John Lewis reported sales of leggings and loungewear had increased by 1,303 per cent. Sweaty Betty was selling a pair of Power Leggings (£75) every 90 seconds. Julia Straus, CEO of the brand, explained: "Good quality leggings transform the way you feel."

Even Lucas Hugh, the retailer that made the £175 leggings Jennifer Lawrence wore in *The Hunger Games*, saw a 100 per cent increase in sales last year, despite shutting down its King's Road boutique. Leggings are "a nesting thing", according to Anjhe Mules, the co-founder of the brand.

Mountains make you feel better

The natural environment can make a real impact on your mood. Mountains can leave you feeling more optimistic, while the ocean can help boost your inspiration.

A recent study at Goldsmiths University of London found that water is most effective at increasing positive emotions, such as happiness and inspiration. Woodlands can help you forget your worries, and fields and meadows can enhance your energy levels.

Taken from Parish Pump



Let's clap for mothers!

As Mother's Day approaches, let's hear it for all the mothers who have been on the frontline of helping our country survive the Covid pandemic!

Just as we've clapped on our doorsteps for the NHS and other heroes, let's applaud all that mothers have done – often balancing home and employment— during these long lockdown months.

Research shows that mums have carried out most of the home schooling and household tasks – with many also holding down important frontline roles in the NHS and other essential services.

Women spent more than twice as much time as men on their children's home schooling and development during the lockdown, according to a study by University College London. It measured how parents responded while schools and nurseries were closed to most families.

The survey, reported by the Guardian newspaper, found that women across several age groups took the major share of childcare and home schooling. Those with primary school-aged children "were considerably more likely" to have given up working than fathers with children of the same age.

The pressure on families was further increased as many grandparents and other carers were unable to help. Family and friendship networks were put under strain with contacts restricted to online Zoom or Facetime calls that are often difficult with younger children.

Launching a Children's Society report into children's welfare during the lockdown, chief executive Mark Russell said: "We are living in unprecedented times. Months of national lockdown, only small numbers of children in school, and many families experiencing real crisis. Coronavirus has impacted every area of our lives and The Children's Society has been deeply concerned about the impact of this crisis on children, especially the most disadvantaged."

He added: "Our survey found a higher proportion of young people experiencing low well-being than we are used to seeing. Whilst we know that most children's well-being will 'bounce-back', there will be some who do not."

Mothers are at the frontline of helping our children cope with – and then recover from – the effects of the Covid pandemic and the extended lockdowns.

Many working mothers lost their jobs because of the pandemic, and families will be hard-pressed to make up for the income lost. Food bank provider, the Trussell Trust, has warned churches to prepare for a 'tidal wave' of poverty and to be ready to help their local communities.

This Mother's Day, daffodils and chocolate may seem very thin reward for the major contribution of mums across our nation.

In normal times, they have a challenging and demanding job to do. Through the pandemic, they have risen to the challenges and sought to ensure children thrive despite the lockdowns.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, let's recognise the amazing efforts made by mothers in the home with their children.

Let's also celebrate the vital roles many also play – as do those without children – in the NHS, in education, in the government and civil service, in keeping vital supplies flowing – and churches.

By The Revd Peter Crumpler



Who moved the stone?

'When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.' Mark 16:4

Frank Morrison was an investigative journalist who was a sceptic when it came to religion. He decided to write a book to disprove the claims of Christ, specifically focussed on the last week of His life.

However, when he came to consider the evidence for himself, he was drawn reluctantly to a different outcome than he had imagined. He found that the evidence proved the story to be true, including the fact that Jesus not only died but rose again. In the end he wrote a different kind of book called 'Who Moved the Stone?' with the first chapter entitled, 'The book that refused to be written.'

The veracity of the Christian faith is grounded on historical fact. Not only was Jesus a real person, a figure of history, but His death was real, and so was His resurrection. Examine the evidence for yourself. Read the gospel accounts openly and honestly and see what happens. The truth is there for anyone willing to consider the facts.

Easter reminds us that our faith rests on solid ground. It is why we celebrate Easter Sunday with such gusto. The Resurrection proves that Jesus was who He said He was (the Son of God) and that He did what He set out to do (save us from our sin). But more than that, it reminds us that He can deliver what He promised and help us today because He is alive for evermore.

Jesus is not a figure of history, locked away in the past. No, He is a risen Saviour who is alive today and who invites each of us to receive the gift of salvation, and to live a new life in fellowship with Him.

By the Revd Tony Horsfall of Charis Training

Have you done something which haunts you?

Do you ever worry that your past failings mean that God will not accept you now? Some of us have done many things which we regret, things that have caused us, or others, great pain.

We've given our children short shrift, we've betrayed our marriage partners, we've been dishonest at work, we've been ruthlessly greedy and ambitious, no matter what the cost to anyone else. And now the memory of the wrong we've done lingers and makes us ashamed. Our past failings make us very reluctant to turn to God. Why should He forgive the damage we have done?

If you think this way, then you have a big surprise waiting for you: God isn't like that. You haven't yet encountered His GRACE. God knows all about you, and most of all He knows you need His help. Jesus said that He came into the world to reach sinners, to help anyone who turns to Him in true repentance to find forgiveness, and a new start.

You can't do anything to turn yourself into a good person. But you don't have to. All that God asks of you is that you turn to Jesus in prayer, and say you are sorry, and ask Him to forgive you, and to put His Spirit within you. Then you find His GRACE – which means – His loving-kindness, beginning in YOUR life. Just try it.

Today let God begin to set you free from the past!

Taken from Parish Pump

It's all in the spelling...

G - God **R** - Ran **A** - Alongside **C** - Carrying **E** - Everything

It is not enough to love – you need to be loved

Sometimes we can be inclined to give and give and give to others - without asking anything in return. We may think that this is a sign of generosity - of great strength. But it can also be one of pride - we want to be seen as the one who does not need help. Or it can be a sign of very low self-esteem - we do not think we are worth receiving anything from others.

Whatever the reason, when we keep giving, without also receiving, we put ourselves in danger - we will burn out quickly. It is as important to know when we need to TAKE attention and care, as when we need to give it to others. If you do not pay careful attention to your own needs - whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual - you will not last the distance.

If you want to remain a joyful giver for years to come, you need also to be a joyful taker and accept God's love, given to you through other people.

Taken from Parish Pump

The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

On why our church does not need health or safety

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was entirely commendable, and I do know that sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave – which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

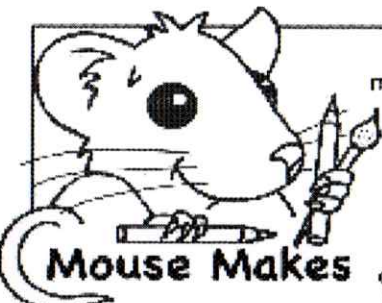
The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over – and if it happens when preparing for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus is slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the church, but it is very slow – and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit from America to commemorate his death at Agincourt – which is probably just beyond remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling in the north aisle are solved with a row of buckets – and even you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look really rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is certainly an issue – although it looks so attractive in Spring when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls while he was with us. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



Who is my mother?
 Lock up the Bible verses
 then find the mother's
 names in the word search

CAIN and ABEL
Genesis 4:1-2

JOSEPH
Genesis 30:22-24

ISHMAEL
Genesis 16:15

TIMOTHY
2 Timothy 1:5

RUBEN
Genesis 29:32

GAD
Genesis 35:26

SAMUEL
1 Samuel 1:20

OBED
Matthew 1:5

ISAAC
Genesis 21:3

Jesus was **loved** by his
 mother Mary, she looked
 after him, worried
 about him and prayed
 for him. She **cuddled**
 Jesus when he was
 born, cried when he
 died and **rejoiced** when
 he rose from the dead.

SOLOMON
1 Chronicles 3:5

JOHN
Luke 1:57-60

ESAU and JACOB
Genesis 25:24-26

JESUS
Acts 1:14



R A C H E L M A R Y A V Z
 E L I Z A B E T H H E V I
 B Z D R E B V S U A U O L
 E T M U M L E A H N N L P
 K M O T H E R R T N I E A
 A I S H H A G A R A C G H
 H S T A B A T H S H E B A

There are two other words in the word search, can you find them?

RECIPE CORNER



Cheesy Chicken with Mustard (serves 4)

Ingredients

- 4 boneless chicken breasts
- 4 oz cheese, (Stilton or cream cheese)
- 7 fl oz double cream
- 1 oz butter
- salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp Dijon or wholegrain mustard

Method

Preheat oven to 200C. Make a deep slit in each chicken breast to form a pocket. Put a piece of cheese into each pocket. Place chicken in a shallow dish. Mix together cream and mustard and pour around the base of the chicken. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes. Serve with potatoes and vegetables.

TIP: 2 slices of smoked bacon and a handful of chopped mushrooms can be added to the cream mixture before pouring around the base of the chicken.

Taken from Angels' Delights Recipe Book

Submitted by **Corrina Cully**

CHARITY SHOP

Opening times are:
 10.30am until 12.30pm
 Every Saturday and Tuesday

Any items for sale can be left in the porch or brought along on these days. Also we will be happy to accept any donations for our food bank appeal, during shop opening times, if anyone cannot make it to church. Thank you.

Brian, Tanya and all the volunteers

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YOU HAVE TO LAUGH...

Switched on

A housewife was helping her aged mother get up the stairs on their brand-new stair lift when the minister telephoned her. He was horrified to hear her say: "I'm so sorry, but I'll have to ring you back. I can't talk right now because I've finally got Mother in the electric chair and I'm eager to press the switch and see if it works!"



Bishop

A little girl told her mother, "We went to a confirmation service at the cathedral and I saw the bishop. Now I know what a crook looks like!"



Little old lady seeks handsome young man

An advert appeared in a student newspaper of a university: "Sweet little old lady wishes to correspond with good-looking university student – especially a six-footer with brown eyes, answering to initials J.A.D." It was signed: "his mother."

Observations on modern life

Common sense is not a gift. It's a punishment because you have to deal with everyone who doesn't have it.

A filing cabinet is a place where you can lose things systematically.

Two choir members recently got married. They met by chants.

The most welcome guest is the one who knows when to go home.

Being popular on Facebook is like sitting at the cool table in the cafeteria of a mental hospital.

Why do they lock petrol station bathrooms? Afraid that someone will clean them?

Paradise lost?

A young mother stood in her kitchen and watched her baby screaming, her sons fighting, her daughter crying, the washing machine leaking, and the dog being sick. She sighed and said to her friend: "I sometimes wish I'd loved and lost."



Knock knock

A conscientious minister decided to get acquainted with a new family in his church and so he visited them one Spring evening. After his knock on the door, a lilting voice from within called out, "Is that you, Angel?"

"No," replied the minister. "But I'm from the same department."



Bend

I got a package envelope in the mail the other day that had written on the front, 'Photographs: Do Not Bend'.

Underneath the postman had written: "Oh yes they do."

Mervyn Kelso

State Registered Chiropodist

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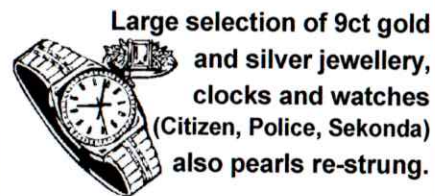
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