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# Church Link

March 2020

## Welcome to our Newsletter

This newsletter, sent from the Church Office, is designed for all in our church community, to offer spiritual support and to help us stay connected and informed over the next few months. If you know of any others who would like to receive it, please share with them and ask them to [subscribe](#). **Church Link** will be sent every two weeks and will include Reflections on the weeks' Bible readings, a letter from Simon our Priest, recommendations for accessing church services remotely, and information on prayer and Spiritual guidance resources, both within our parishes and from the wider Church community. Please let us know of other material. We would welcome your [feedback](#).

Our Church Office remains open but with slightly altered hours; 11am - 1pm, Monday and Wednesday - Friday. Details can be found on our website, by clicking [this link](#). Please do not visit the Church Office in person unless you have made an appointment.

As we seek to find new ways to connect with you, we hope that you will embrace new technologies (which we are still adjusting to ourselves) and help our Church family continue its outreach into our community.

Yours in fellowship,  
Simon Lewis (Priest)  
Laura Williams (Administrator)

## Sunday Reflection

### 22nd March 2020 - Mothering Sunday

In this time of crisis, remaining faithful; being The Church filled with hope and confident of our Lord's promise to be with us, I would like each of us to meet through the Scriptures. Each fortnight, **Church Link** will give you the key Bible reading, followed by a reflection. This week, Mothering Sunday, it is from one of St Paul's Letters. Please read it in the knowledge that your sisters and brothers of our Church family are reading the same passage.

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#### **Colossians 3:12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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What a manifesto! Could we, on this Mothering Sunday adopt it as our own? What difference it would make when the church is seen to be the company of the accepting, the caring, the nurturing, the loving, the forgiving. Quite like your own Mother perhaps; but remember, for many the memories are not always happy; there are hurts to heal.

You know too well that mother Church is prone to make mistakes. She too is prone to hurt her children by thoughtlessness or carelessness. Wonderfully, at

her best she offers love which is unconditional, and wisdom borne of experience; she knows too the pain of separation and letting go. Perhaps the person that each one of us must forgive first and most of all is our mother. Perhaps you must forgive Mother Church by forgiving yourself. By forgiving, you receive in return full measure, pressed down and running over.

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### **A Prayer for Sunday**

Thank you, Lord, for our mothers.

We remember today their loving care,  
and their ceaseless love.

May we show them by our gifts, our words and our actions  
that we love and care about them too.

Father, we thank you for the family of the Church.

May they know your blessing and strength  
as they care for others.

Amen.

## Letter from Simon our Priest

*Dear Church family,*

**We are open**, we are not shut;

**we are doing things differently and creatively**

**This is a pandemic** and not a panic!

On Tuesday 19 March, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, wrote to all Church families across the nation offering advice and encouragement at this difficult time for our country, and in anticipation of increased COVID-19 cases in our country. (A copy of their letter can be found on our [website](#), along with a letter from our two Bishops in Bath and Wells.)

I have been, along with our Churchwardens, in active dialogue about this issue. The decisions we now make regarding our Benefice Church life are done so thoughtfully, with the best factual information from both the Government and the National Church, and out of loving concern for our Church family here in Blagdon, Charterhouse, Compton Martin and Ubley, and the world at large.

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What we are doing as a Church is serving all people in new and creative ways. As from Sunday 22 March (Mothering Sunday) all public worship of any sort will stop until further notice. During this time, we will also refrain from other gatherings, groups, and meetings including Emmaus and Lent Forum, our Benefice Choir, Intercession Group and Prayer Group, our Benefice Partnership PCC meetings, Churchwarden meetings and Annual Parochial Church Meeting; along with groups like Monday Mix, Prayers and Bears, WiFi Wednesday, Bell Ringing, and Lunch Clubs. We are also having to make difficult decisions about weddings, baptisms and funerals.

The Archbishops are correct in saying that being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days that lie ahead. Our lives are going to be less characterised by attendance in a church building Sunday by Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each other each day. And yes, we may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to. Nevertheless, we can certainly pray for people. And we can certainly offer practical care and support.

All our church buildings will remain open for you to visit when you need to get away from the hustle and bustle of what is going on in your lives and throughout the world. A specific '@SPACE TO CONTEMPLATE' will be designated in each building for you to sit and stay awhile - there will be reading material to guide your contemplation, and the opportunity to light a candle. The Daily Offices (the technical term for Morning and Evening Prayer that priests are asked to do) will continue to be said by me on behalf of everyone.

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Over the coming weeks, and in the spirit of doing things differently and creatively, there will be ideas sent to you for nurturing your spirituality and

relationship with God. Some will suit you, please use them; please take the opportunity to continue to grow your relationship with God, knowing also, that you are not alone at this time: God is with you all as you share with others all over the world, this life transforming experience.

You will find these new and different ways of being Church on our website ([beneficebcmu.co.uk](http://beneficebcmu.co.uk)) and our new newsletter called **Church Link**, which for those who have received this letter via email will now know, and for those reading this letter in either of our Church magazine publications - the *Blagdon Magazine* or *The Link* (Compton Martin and Ubley) can subscribe to. For those who cannot subscribe please ring our Church Office 01761 463205, and we shall arrange for a paper copy to be posted in your letter box - please remember to leave your name and address.

It is important to remind ourselves that we are the body of Christ, and we cannot say we have no need of each other. Your priest and lay staff are creatively working to keep the body connected and nourished.

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Provision is being made for Benefice staff to work remotely in order to protect their health and care for their loved ones. Our Administrator Laura, is available and can be contacted by email during this time:

E: [benefice.bcmu@gmail.com](mailto:benefice.bcmu@gmail.com)

P: 01761 463205 (Church Office)

Please email me ([priest.bcmu@gmail.com](mailto:priest.bcmu@gmail.com)), or call the Church Office (01761 463205) for concerns, prayer requests, or conversation via phone. The need for in-person visitation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and due care and diligence will be given to making sure rigorous health and hygiene practices are in place along with the practice of maintaining of social distancing.

It is important to remember that according to the best information we have, the surest way to offer protection and care to the most vulnerable members of our Church family and the neighbourhood at large, and to contribute to larger public health efforts, is to suspend public gatherings wherever possible. It is therefore in great prayer and thoughtfulness that we look to the insight of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians, which instructs us that we should:

*“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,*

*but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.*

*Let each of you look not to your own interests,  
but to the interests of others.”*

Philippians 2.3-4

Those of us who are currently unaffected by the virus may long to gather in person, but at this time, looking to the interests of others calls us to take these steps outlined above.

We will become a “**different sort of church**” in the coming months as we face the challenge that COVID-19 has brought. This is a difficult path for all of us to walk during this season of Lent, and on into Holy Week and the Passion of Christ, his death, and then into Easter and the celebration of Resurrection. But I am convinced that we will move through this challenging journey with grace and hope. Hope, because we do have the sure and certain of hope of God. You are in my daily prayers and I ask the same from you. Let us commit to our Benefice being a community that demonstrates sound wisdom and faithfulness as disciples of Jesus for Blagdon, Charterhouse, Compton Martin and Ubley, and the world.

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I finish with another piece of Scripture which was sent to me by one of our Churchwardens.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,  
who comforts us in all our troubles,  
so that we can comfort those in any trouble  
with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.  
For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ,  
so also our comfort abounds through Christ.*

2 Corinthians 1.3-5

Yours in fellowship  
Rev. Simon Lewis

# Sunday Worship

22nd March 2020

Over the next few weeks we will identify ways for you to access and share in Sunday worship from your homes. We recognise that different people will connect with different styles of online worship and hope to provide a variety of styles.

This Sunday we recommend that you join the Archbishop of Canterbury for a Mothering Sunday service, which will include prayers, hymns and a short sermon, broadcast on **BBC Radio 4 at 8:10am**. Further details can be found on the Church of England website, [by clicking this link](#). Perhaps if you are joining in with the hymns you could stand near an open window?

## Spiritual Resources

We are also hoping to offer you access to daily prayers, prayers and reflections that are available online. Please explore these resources to help you find prayers and ideas that will help to nurture and sustain your spiritual life.

Please click on the following links to view or subscribe to material:

**Richard Rohr's** insightful and reflective Daily Meditations can be sent to you daily or weekly from the **Center for Action and Contemplation** by registration via [this link](#).

For those of you who use Twitter, **Bishop Peter** has recorded and will continue to record a series of prayers on his [Twitter Feed](#)

**Pray As You Go**, [available here](#), offers daily opportunities for prayer and reflection through a daily offering in music, words and imagery.

**Sacred Space**, a contemplative online resource [available here](#), provides sequenced daily prayers that are shared by the Christian community throughout the world.

Details of **Churches Together in England's** national call to prayer can be

found [here](#).

## Prayer within our community

Our prayer teams will continue to operate remotely. If you have someone or something that you would like us to pray for, your requests can be passed onto them and included in our prayers. Please click [here](#) to send us your requests. Please remember that our churches all have prayer stations within them, should you wish to visit.

## Community Support and Help Details

Support is available in all our villages for anyone who is self-isolating:

### **For those who live in Ubley**

#### **Ubley Cares**

Landline: 463509 speak to Wes Hallam

Email: [whallam@ubleyparish.co.uk](mailto:whallam@ubleyparish.co.uk)

Landline: 462827 speak to Jonathan Longhurst

Email: [jl1andjl2@sky.com](mailto:jl1andjl2@sky.com)

### **For those who live in Compton Martin:**

#### **Coronavirus support in Compton Martin Parish**

Email: [comptonmartin.cv@gmail.com](mailto:comptonmartin.cv@gmail.com)

Landline: 221415 speak to Jean Lockett

Mobile: 07968 861118 speak to Jean Lockett

Email: [peterandjeanlockett@gmail.com](mailto:peterandjeanlockett@gmail.com)

Landline: 220102 speak to Rachel Branston

### **For those who live in Blagdon:**

## Blagdon Community Link

Landline: 462169

Mobile: 07768 725380 speak to Melloney Kaye

Email: [standrewchurchwarden.bcmu@gmail.com](mailto:standrewchurchwarden.bcmu@gmail.com)

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