

PARISH OF KIRKLEES VALLEY
'PARISH NEWS'
MAY 2020

**THE SERVICES at our church buildings are temporarily suspended
BUT we continue to worship in our homes....**



Editorial

Welcome to this electronic edition of 'Parish News', which I have put together to bring you all up to date with happenings in the Parish. Our church buildings remain closed until further notice, but our homes have now become the place where we worship and we are helped with this through the use of technology. I am really enjoying the U-tube Sunday Services and the Evening Service we have now, and many people have said the same. Can I say on everyone's behalf a big '**thank you**' to Simon, Liz, Sue Stonestreet, Ann Redding, Jennifer Daly and Anne and Barry Sugden for their contributions to these recordings and for the musical accompaniment. Also, thanks to Derek Akker for contributing to the Evening Service and all those behind the scenes who make this possible.

I know many of you are also using Facetime, WhatsApp etc to link up with family and friends, it is so nice to be able to do this and whilst not being able to see them face to face, you can see on screen how they are. On a personal note, we were able to see via Facetime, our youngest grandson who we haven't seen for 7 weeks take his first steps!

We might be in lockdown, but we must be very thankful that it hasn't stopped it being a lovely spring where we can all get out in our gardens and when possible, take the permitted daily walks. I've heard from many of you via email and telephone conversations about what you have been doing and I guess this year will be the best show of gardens that Brandlesholme has had for a long time. Some of you will have heard about my unsuccessful attempts at growing seeds – I've planted so many but only the sweet peas seem to have thrived despite me doing it by the book! I have heard a couple of stories of others having less success this year, but others report their plants doing well. Perhaps we can set up a swapping of seedlings – at a safe

distance of course – once the time is right. If you have any you can share, please let us know.

For information, those who were regular visitors to our local flower shows – Harrogate, Tatton Park, Southport etc., do not despair! and if you've been wondering how you'll fill the Chelsea Flower Show-shaped hole in your May diary, there is an answer. **The annual event is moving online**, as the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) announces its first ever virtual Chelsea Flower Show. The show, which will take place between 18-23 May, will include virtual garden tours, a school gardening club and virtual floristry displays.

Not living in Brandlesholme, I don't have the opportunity for taking local walks around the avenues, streets and roads, but many of you are, and many are able to have 'social distancing' chats across the road or at the bottom of a garden path. It is lovely to be able to keep in touch with people when you've been isolated and that is also true of telephone calls and emails. We are all doing a wonderful job of keeping in touch and looking out for each other and our neighbours. I have had lots of emails from members of our congregation and found out what folk are up to, it seems mainly gardening, tidying up, spring cleaning, DIY, decorating, jigsaws, walking and some arts and crafts. (*Do have a close look at the beautiful mosaic on the front cover, which has been done over the past few weeks by Derek Akker*). We also have some on line quizzers, on-line keep-fitters and choir sessions via Zoom. Also, our Messy Church leaders have been busy sending out activities for our Messy Church families. Further along you will be able to see two separate articles from the Sugden's and the Stonestreet's about what they are up to during lockdown.

Please email and let me know anything you have been doing for inclusion in the next edition.

Lynne

FROM THE VICAR



One of our amazing friends at St James called me today, and said that she had just received the worship sheet for Sunday today, which was Monday. She didn't mind, and had called to say thank you and that she was well – and she shared that she has been really enjoying the Sunday services on the BBC while she has been at home. In fact, she called to suggest a hymn to share in a few weeks' time – but more on that shortly...

I've had other people tell me about prayer conversations they are having through technology across the world, or worship they are joining every week from Portugal or Ireland or Australia or Canada – or special old books that they've found on their shelves with poems and reflections and prayers they haven't thought about in years, or things they have been inspired to write and share – as you will find on our A Church Near You pages. And many people have shared pictures or little snapshots in descriptions of walks they have been on, or things they have seen in their gardens.

It's incredible how we human beings adapt to our circumstances, and even as we may struggle or have difficult days or weeks, there are surprises and blessings we can still encounter from our past, from our present, and sometimes, when the technology works, even from the future!

Of course, we wish things were different, but for now, we're doing our best to adapt – even as the guidance begins to shift and move on again. We're learning all the time, not least with the services and worship materials we're producing – and the challenges of posting things out to those at home without email. I am aiming for the Tuesday post at the moment, which means trying to turn the text around pretty quickly!

Like our friend I was speaking to, may I thank all of those who aren't getting things on time, or who are waiting patiently for responses to emails or questions as it isn't always possible to get back to you immediately – I really appreciate your good-spiritedness, patience and positivity. And to any of you who are struggling at the moment, or who have hugely difficult and complicated situations you are dealing with, please be assured of the love and prayers of everyone. Even if we don't know the needs, we are praying for you and rooting for you too.

Our friend from St James suggested a song for a few weeks' time, as I said, and explained that it was particularly the second verse that was speaking to her at this time, and that she wanted to share with us all. When she told me what it was, I couldn't think of a better way to finish this message to you.

Stay safe and look after yourselves!

*Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged: take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness – take it to the Lord in prayer.*

Every blessing, Simon

From Father Luke ...

Modern Monasticism

Friends, I hope that this finds you and all your family and friends well. Everyone I have spoken to seems to be in good spirits at the moment, and accepts that we just have to get on with it - it *will* be over at some point. Perhaps the overwhelming feedback I have had is that *everyone* seems excited genuinely about getting back into church someday, it is infectious, and I feel it too, it will be like a second Christmas! Oh happy day indeed! We do not know when, or how it may happen, but it will be a glorious day when it does. Christians are good at waiting. Some people may choose to wait longer to return to church for good reasons; still others may not be able to come back for some time. They will remain of course part of the church, remembered and prayed for.

I bang on about Mirfield a lot. There are good reasons for it. It is a working Monastery. There are few people who understand isolation better than religious, monks or nuns. I have been there and in touch with the Brethren quite a lot this last year. Life for some of them is changed a little, but for others being isolated from the outside world *is* a way of life they are used to largely. They are of course a community too. I envy them in a way – I watch their services on the internet, and wish I was there with them. I am not alone in that. We are all having to experience a tiny bit of the monastic life at the moment, living separately. Some of us find it harder than others. Some no doubt find the monastic life harder than others, but still they live it. This is down to their devotion to God. They use their isolated lives to pray to and worship God every day no matter what. In this current time, we can do the same. I cannot urge you enough to watch their services, either live or available after a service has taken place. Do not worry about being able to follow the liturgy, just soak up the prayers, see and hear the Holy Men at work. You do not need a facebook account to access their services.

<https://www.facebook.com/CoRMirfield/>

In the meantime, keep praying for each other, looking out for one another, loving one another. Amen.

Luke

From the Daily Strength booklet, sent in by Churchwarden Christine:-

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

So, we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

A river brings joy to the city of our God the sacred home of the Most High.

God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed. From the very break of day, God will protect it.

The Nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble!

God's voice thunders, and the earth melts!

'Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honoured by every nation.

I will be honoured throughout the world.'

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.

From Fr. Derek Akker ‘You Raised Me Up’

Many of us will have a favourite song or piece of music that will spark off a memory that has left a mark on us. The event can cover a range of emotions and often, despite the seriousness of the event, these can be humorous.

I have been the Vicar of two churches dedicated to St. Barnabas, one just outside the Potteries, the other in Hattersley, about 15 kilometres from Manchester. In the eyes of a few young folk I was also the Vicar of Dibley, not that I looked like Revd Geraldine Granger (Dawn French), but because of St Barnabas and the TV sit-com “The Vicar of Dibley” with Howard Goodall’s arrangement of Psalm 23 as its theme tune.

Amongst the highlights of each episode was the parish meeting and the hilarious discussions and arguments that followed. In the first series one episode was “The Window and the Weather” with an argument between Jim and Owen as to whether it was a ‘Great Storm’ or a ‘Great Wind’ that damaged the window in St. Barnabas, Dibley.

That was of course fiction, but In Epiphany 2005 there was a ‘Great Wind’ and the real St Barnabas Church, Hattersley, received more than damage to a window - the entire front of the church was blown in/out. It was a disastrous morning event, knocking the stuffing out of everyone. After the initial shock came the realisation of the huge task that lay ahead of us. It took a lot of hard work, rooted in hope and trust and underwritten by prayer, reference to our sacred texts and theological thought. It also relied on the loving support and hard work of many, and some pragmatic action.



Before



After the hard work and prayer

In addition, the song ‘You raised me up’ played an important role. It touched an emotional spot and did what the title suggests - it raised us up. We need to have those moments when our emotions are lifted and our hearts are strangely warmed.

*When I am down, and, oh, my soul, so weary
When troubles come, and my heart burdened be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until you come and sit awhile with me
You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas
I am strong when I am on your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be*

Today we are facing Coronavirus – COVID 19, although I would not wish to suggest there is any comparison between experiencing the severe storm at St. Barnabas and the pain and anguish to millions caused by COVID 19. However, what we can do is to learn from our experiences of the past and how we responded to severe difficulties as a basis for responding to today's unprecedented difficulties.

COVID 19 has changed so much of what we have taken for granted, leaving us with more questions than we can answer. And we cannot see the end of the COVID 19 at present.

It is understandable to feel frightened and to find it difficult to be hopeful. I read recently 'nothing lasts forever and the only certainty is things will change'. Despite all that is going on we can still be hopeful and trust that at some stage we shall grasp these words of Jeremiah:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him' (Lamentations 3:22-24).

And remembering that God is with us:

"He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:8), and "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself." (Matthew 6:34)

As hard as it sounds we need to hold onto our dreams for a brighter future, to have hope and trust. This holding on will include times of prayer, exploring our sacred texts, theological reflection. It will also involve us working together and recognising all the good and signs of light in the darkness that we have experienced. We are not alone!

Speaking of our situation in the UK; during some of the darkest moments we have witnessed amazing signs of hope and trust, widespread acts of neighbourliness, huge numbers volunteering their time and commitment, and the Health and Care service staff literally giving themselves to patients. We have seen an outpouring of gratitude for the service given by Health and Care workers, hundreds of thousands of people standing at their windows applauding these workers, an act of appreciation and love that brought some Health and Care Workers to tears.

As we look to the future let remember all these good signs and acts of love and compassion, let us plan and engage with others in a common effort. Remembering we are an Easter people in the Christian sense, a people not held in darkness but people of light, hope and trust. The coming time will be different and difficult for some time, for many very difficult, but let our spirits be lifted with the sounds of music that builds, enhances our lives and leaves our hearts strangely warmed and enthused.

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas
I am strong when I am on your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

Alleluia to that!

Alleluia Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Amen.

Derek

Resources, Reflections and Contemplations

In our weekly sheets, Simon has mentioned various resources and the links for these are all put together here for you to use.

A Church Near You pages (All Saints www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16034 and St James www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16046) - with excellent new reflections from Derek Akker, Jennifer Daly and Elizabeth Kay, as well as poems by Joyce. A couple of excerpts from articles are below – do take the time to have a look at the full articles, they are well worth a read.

Are You Keeping Fit? (Elizabeth Kay)

Or are you sitting knitting? You might be doing both! I was surprised to discover recently that the word “fit” is derived from the old Norse word “fitja,” which means “to knit.”

*We are all missing one another at the moment, but one of the activities that I am missing most is our time together at the arts and crafts group at St Francis house on Thursdays, where several of us enjoy knitting and crochet. The ideal woman is described in Proverbs 31 as one who, amongst other qualities, “selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.” We have lots of these ideal women at All Saints and, of course, at St James as well. **want more?? See link below***

Thoughts and Poems by Joyce

Time is past, present and future.

Time is something we have so much of (a lifetime), yet we seem to have so little of.

Life today is so rushed that we often forget the most important time. That is time spent with God, praising him, asking his forgiveness, seeking his guidance.

How is it that out of a full day, we often forget to spend time with our Lord?

It's easy Time is needed to shop, wash, work, school, endless jobs to do.....

The theme of time runs through a lot of my poems (especially the early ones), and shows what a struggle I had to find that time to spend with God. It's only by finding time, making time, taking time that he can speak to us in rhyme and through His Word, through our everyday lives, through prayer. To anyone who reads my poems may you feel God's love in these words as I have done in writing them.....

to read Joyce's poems and Elizabeth's Keep Fit

Ctrl +click www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16034

Other links found by Joyce

- **Exploring Prayer By Justin Welby**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZEE62AWHPk&list=PLYdwn9CNZpZMUnKulCTPkIpgq0s9G3Sb>
- **Justin Welby in conversation with Nicky Gumbel**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjwmRnfwTbU>
- **Facing the Canon with Nicky Gumbel**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sCruydnwso>
- **Coronavirus - Where are You God? by Nicky Gumbel**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaNO6SW8-uo>

Thank You

From the Parish Treasurer.

Parish Giving

I recently wrote to all you who give by envelope or standing order or both to express my gratitude for the continuous financial support in the past which has enabled us to maintain a healthy parish life and I asked everyone to consider how they might help us in present situation. I want to take this opportunity to also thank all those of you who give in many ways other than the Giving Scheme.

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me during the last few weeks to discuss various aspects of giving to the church. I have been delighted and encouraged by your supportive responses to this appeal and by the number of people who have been able to transfer their envelope payments to standing order and also by those of you who have been able to increase your donations. Occasionally there have been problems with the banks when setting up a standing order. We have found that the name and account number of the churches together with the sort codes previously published has worked after perseverance.

Many of you who wish to continue with the Envelope Scheme have asked about getting payments to either of the churches. Unfortunately we are unable to receive envelope payments during lockdown. The confidentiality and accuracy of the recording system needs to be maintained and we are not in a position to get cash to the bank.

We have 5 regular ways of giving. Gift aided standing order, Non gift aided standing order, Gift aided envelope, Non gift aided envelope and cash on the plate and each is an individual transaction which has to be recorded to maximise the tax reclaim.

Those who pay tax can complete a gift aid declaration form which means that the church can claim an additional 25% tax refund on any donation made. The Government has an additional Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme which allows us to claim an extra 25% of any non-gift aided donation (below £50 last time I checked) which is put on the plate. This includes the Pennies from Heaven. Thanks to Robin Stonestreet we submit totals to the Diocese and the Diocese Claims the tax back and discounts it against our Parish Share.

Do not worry about getting your envelope giving to us. Concern about church income is something for all of us but please wait until we tell you the system to collect your gifts. Do you remember the old Gift Days when clergy waited in church for parishioners to donate their gifts personally?

Please continue to place your offertory in the envelope before each Sunday worship and keep it in a safe place. You can then empty these at a later date and place all the money into one envelope. You may prefer to write a cheque for the total later on when we are able to receive cheques.

Best wishes to you all

John

A LOCKDOWN WEEK WITH THE SUGDEN'S

Gone are the days when we had a fixed routine for every day of the week, for example ever since we moved to Lancashire over 45 years ago, Saturday was always a trip to Bury. Bury Market for fish, a visit to the cheese stall and Greenhalgh's for bread and a vanilla, passing the café on the corner and seeing if Anne can spot Flo. and her friends having a coffee and waving to them through the window and hoping they look her way.

Monday mornings was always Yoga for us both at the Jubilee Centre (AGE UK!). Since the lockdown, we now do Yoga every day for about half an hour except Sunday and we take it in turns to lead the session, although it nearly always seems to be Anne's turn to give the instructions. This fitness regime is supported by us both going on our treadmill for about 20 mins at 4.5 miles an hour to get thoroughly puffed and tired out every day, apart from Sunday.

Tuesday and Friday, Anne is brushing up (literally) on her teaching skills after 16 years of retirement now doing some online Facetime Art and History of Ancient Egypt lessons with our two granddaughters in Lytham, and these two sessions seem to be enjoyed by everyone.

Anne doing her art work



Their lovely garden



Wednesday morning is our photo shoot and recording day to be inserted by Simon into the Sunday service. We get dressed up in our Sunday best (contrary to what most people think, we actually have separate lockdown outfits which we don't think are appropriate for Sunday service viewing on YouTube)

The photo shoot exercise can take up most of the morning especially when things go wrong and we both get the giggles and must do a retake. For Barry's last reading we had nearly a dozen takes before he finally got it right. Anne, on the contrary, seems to be more easily satisfied despite obvious visible mistakes!

On a more serious note, we are really pleased to be able to take part in the Sunday service and it has given us a definite focus to our week. We always sit down on Sunday morning at 9:30 to watch the complete service and join in. Afterwards we share the link with our friends and family.

We feel blessed to be living in such a lovely environment and, like everyone else who are fortunate to have a garden, the good weather has enabled us to spend a lot of time working and relaxing in it. Everything seems to be particularly beautiful this year. The air is so clear, and you can hear the birds singing without any interruption.

We are very grateful for the work that Simon, supported by Liz, and Luke are doing to keep our church community involved and active, and for conducting their pastoral care so sensitively throughout these unprecedented circumstances.

Anne and Barry

The Stonestreet's - Working in this strange new world!

Robin and I are both still working, though Robin hasn't gone to Glasgow for two months to work on football because there is no Euro 2020. We're both going into Media City which is a weird experience. In good weather like we've been having, the Piazza would be full of people. Now the piazza, the Lowry theatre and shopping centre are empty, and trams are only arriving every twenty minutes. All of the restaurants are closed, and Booths has a queuing system in place. Driving in is like travelling on a quiet Sunday, though we have both noticed an increase in traffic over the last few weeks. Once we get in there are very few people in the buildings and lots of space in the offices to work with 2 or more metres between people. The studios are a little trickier, in some cases we are connecting two studios with half of the staff in each. This is how Robin has been working to do web streams for BBC News and how I do Sunday on Radio 4. For You and Yours, Good Morning Sunday etc. in our big studio we have borrowed the clear Perspex screens that usually go around a drum kit to shield each other in the area where we would be too close together. We cannot just move apart because the sound desk and other equipment is fixed! Before we start, we clean all of the surfaces- keyboards, sound desk, telephones, headphones etc. with alcohol wipes- these make some of us, including me, cough which did worry my colleagues at first!

A lot has been said about how wonderful it is that presenters and guests on TV and radio are able to make programmes from home. Even though some of them can work from home and some have to, there are technical and production staff still going into work to connect all of it together and get it on air! I have to admit that this can be a struggle as we try to talk a not very technically minded person through using a new piece of kit that we've never seen. To record Pick of the Week for Radio 4 I had instruction manuals on two screens and the presenter and producer on a phone line each- we eventually managed to find a work around! One problem that has come up is that not much of the remote working equipment available is suitable for the blind or partially sighted. We have had to provide Peter White, because he has to work from home to present In Touch, with equipment that his partner (a real technophobe) can connect for him. One of our younger members of staff has spent his spare time in the last few weeks developing a system specifically for Peter with voice confirmation on each action.

I have to admit that we were a little nervous about going in at first but I have colleagues who have to work from home due to health reasons themselves or in the family. They are mixing and editing pre-recorded programmes at home on their laptops. Those of us who do go in are being rota'd so that you tend to work with the same person for a week on shows with two of us. We are having a weekly team chat which is a good way of keeping in touch and sharing the tricks which we develop to make life a little easier.

Take care and we're looking forward to seeing everyone again once we can.

Robin & Sue S.

Monday walking –

Monday 4th May should have been our Monday Walkers' scheduled walk around the lovely National Trust grounds at Dunham Massey, led by Kath and John Schofield, who are regular walkers at Dunham Massey. What a shame, the day would have been absolutely perfect for a walk, the sun was shining and it was just the right temperature! However, I'm hopeful we will be able to transfer this year's programme of walks along and re-schedule them all.

When John and Kath did the 'reccy' earlier in the year, John took some wonderful photographs from along the walk, which he is sharing with us, as a 'virtual' walk through the Dunham Massey grounds.



From the book entitled ‘*Music and Mayhem*’, here is some Noticesheet Nonsense – kindly supplied by Stuart McCarthur

- The third verse of *Blessed Assurance* will be sung without musical **accomplishment**.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- The ‘Over 60’s choir will be disbanded for the summer with the thanks of the entire church.
- This evening there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanked and be prepared to sin.

And lastly, from the same book, a couple of quotes from Johann Sebastian Bach;

‘I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music’ ...

‘It’s easy to play any musical instrument; all you have to do is touch the right key at the right time and the instrument will play itself’

(think Morecambe and Wise here where in the sketch Eric says I’m playing all the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order).

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Here is a lovely and practical suggestion for you all. When you’ve finished going through our weekly services, why not take the time to ‘share’ a coffee or tea in fellowship as we would usually do – and pop a few coins in a pot each week too, and bring them in when the churches reopen. It’d be good to share a cuppa!



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Men's Group	Trevor Eastland	0161 705 2037
Mother's Union	Anne Gratton	0161 761 3465
Parish Prayers	Mike Williams	0161 761 4712
Rooms at St Francis	Deirdre/David Watson	07733 008078
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