



# Connection

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**  
**Fifth Sunday of Lent**



## **View from a Vicarage**

Greetings and I hope you all have had a good week. It was a pleasure last week to focus on all mothers and ladies who have role modelled mothering to us throughout our lives as we celebrated Mothering Sunday; And as Mothering Sunday is also known as Refreshment Sunday, I hope you were able to indulge in some special treats as we marked the mid-point in our journey through Lent.

This week much of the general conversation across the country has been that on Sunday we will all be invited to take part in that event, which happens every 10 years, the National Census. The Census responses will provide a snapshot of life at a set point in time, and the eventual analysis will inevitably show how much life has changed in this country, not just over the ten years since the last census in 2011, but since the time of the very first official census in 1801.

There were, of course, information records going back to the date of the Domesday Book in 1086, and even before that, records for the purposes of calculating tax from the time when the Romans first occupied Britain. However, it is the 1841 census, run by the new registration service, which is however, now regarded as the first modern census.

In society today we are of course very reliant on all forms of data, and it is the foundation for helping decision makers plan for the future, providing evidence on which to formulate their strategies and policy. The Census data however reveals our identify, our culture, our religion, our lifestyles as well as area population demographics; And this year, the census will undoubtedly capture the unique picture of a country positioned in a national Lockdown, as it emerges through one of the most serious pandemics in modern history.

Churches can also find data helpful and useful in their ministry and mission as it provides a basis for understanding the communities around us. As we go forward as church communities, any future thinking and planning, will need to take into consideration the changing context of the villages and areas around us. For example, many villages across the Hill face the likelihood of new housing, and with this may come additional infrastructure such as schools and shops. Such developments and changes in the local landscape can be potential sources for building relationships and extending church links into new communities. Therefore, as churches, if we are to be in the best position to make the most of such opportunities and be ready to engage with proposals and changes to the local context in their earliest stages of planning, then we need to utilise the data and information resources which are available to us, and engage with data capture exercises, such as the National Census.

I hope therefore that we will all take part in the census this weekend, and as we do, let us remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, at a time when such a census was taking place. It is true that whereas ours is being conducted electronically and is somewhat more sophisticated than theirs probably was, nevertheless Mary and Joseph dutifully went to their home town to complete this task, in spite of the personal challenges they were facing with Mary about to have a baby.

# CENSUS 2021

The bible unsurprisingly gives barely any detail about how Joseph managed to complete the census he was in Bethlehem to undertake – there were, of course, one of two other more important things to record as Mary gave birth to the Son of God. However, the very mention of the importance of completing a Census by Jesus' parents, and the genealogies scattered throughout the bible, are enough to show us of the relevance and importance which an understanding identity and context has to our faith, and this can only happen when data is captured.

We have journeyed over the last twelve months through a unique time in history, and this week sees the anniversary of the first Lockdown on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. During the past year, many people have kept diaries, collected mementos or taken photos to capture this strange time; And in years to come these things will all become sources of information and reminders of which we have been through as a shared experience, not just in this area, or even across the country, but across the whole world.



It seems appropriate therefore to reflect on this first anniversary, and as such there is a national call to mark the 23<sup>rd</sup> March as a national Day of Reflection. To this end, you may like to light a candle and place it in your window at home, or where local churches are open for private prayer, what better way to mark this milestone by remembering all that we have been through, remembering what the cost has been to so many in our society and yet giving thanks that God has journeyed with us faithfully through these uncertain times, and will accompany us on all this ahead.

And, as the end to our time in Lockdowns looms ever closer, let us start to look forward to how we will wish to use the lessons of the last twelve months in planning for a brighter and better future – How will we start to reopen our churches again for physical worship; What new opportunities are there for us to engage with people who do not normally attend our church but with whom we have built connections with over the last year; How will we maximise the opportunities that have arisen through the increased use of technology for worship; And how will we wish to engage in the inevitable changes on church worship and activities as we start to plan for ministry and mission based on a 2 incumbent position across Bredon Hill.

These are just some of the questions that we are starting to think about as we look towards the future. For God is faithfully leading us forward into a new season and we need to trust in His promises that the seeds of new growth which have been sown during this pandemic, can be watered and turned into new and exciting visions for the extension of the Kingdom in this place.

Until then, we look forward to celebrating a number of services over Holy Week, leading to four physical services of Holy Communion on Easter Sunday itself. Details of all these services are shown later in this publication or in the Elmley Castle Link Pew Sheet. Anyone wishing to attend one of the physical services on Easter Sunday will need to contact Alison Khan or a church warden to book a place and help ensure we can safely accommodate all those who wish to attend.

Similarly, for any of the Zoom services, if you would let Alison Khan know of your interest in attending, then she will send you an electronic invitation.

So, may God bless you and your families in all that you may be doing this week, and to reflect the ending of many of our church services, may you also go in Peace and Love to Serve the Lord.

*Allison*

**Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group**

## **Service of Holy Communion for the Fifth Sunday of Lent**

### **Collect**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son  
out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**



### **Hebrews 5: 5-10**

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **John 12: 20-33**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

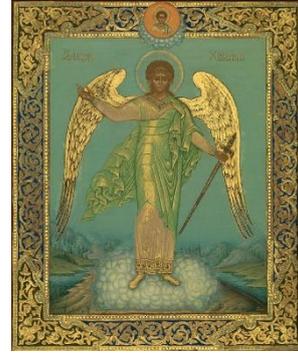
"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

## Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us  
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters  
we do also for you:

give us the will to be the servant of others  
as you were the servant of all,  
and gave up your life and died for us,  
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

**Amen**



## Hymns

Christ, whose glory fills the skies  
Christ, the true, the only Light,  
Sun of Righteousness, arise,  
Triumph o'er the shades of night;  
Dayspring from on high, be near,  
Daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn  
Unaccompanied by Thee;  
Joyless is the day's return,  
Till Thy mercy's beams I see,  
Till Thou inward light impart,  
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine,  
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
Fill me, Radiancy divine,  
Scatter all my unbelief;  
More and more Thyself display,  
Shining to the perfect day.



1 Be thou my guardian and my guide,  
and hear me when I call;  
let not my slippery footsteps slide,  
and hold me lest I fall.

3 And if I tempted am to sin,  
and outward things are strong,  
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,  
and save my soul from wrong.

2 The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell  
around the path I tread;  
O save me from the snares of hell,  
thou quickener of the dead.

4 Still let me ever watch and pray,  
and feel that I am frail;  
that if the tempter cross my way,  
yet he may not prevail.

Lift high the cross  
The love of Christ proclaim,  
Till all the world  
Adore His sacred name.

Come brethren follow  
Where our captain trod:  
Our King Victorious,  
Son of God.

*Refrain:*

Lift high the cross  
The love of Christ proclaim,  
Till all the world  
Adore His sacred name.

From farthest regions  
Let them homage bring;  
And on his cross adore  
Their Saviour King.

*Refrain:*

For thy blest cross  
Which doth for all atone;  
Creation's praises  
Rise before thy throne.

*Refrain:*



## Reflection for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March



This week's Reflection is the poem A Hymn to God the Father written by John Donne (1572-1631). It is one of his Divine Poems but its date of composition is unknown.

Donne was an English poet, scholar, soldier and secretary born into a recusant family, who later became a cleric in the Church of England. Under royal patronage, he was made Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London in 1621, holding the post until his death in 1631.

In the poem Donne has a conversation with God, asking him about sin and forgiveness.

A Hymn to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,  
Which was my sin, though it were done before?  
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,  
And do run still, though still I do deplore?  
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,  
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won  
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?  
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun  
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?  
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,  
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;  
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son  
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;  
And, having done that, thou hast done;  
I fear no more.

John Donne



## Prayers for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March by Derek Potter



As we come to the end of this 40 day period of self-examination in our own versions of wilderness, we offer our prayers to our Lord and God and listen for his response to each and every one of us.

Lord Jesus Christ, in your radical reshaping of the relationship between God, the Jewish people and the whole of mankind you constantly emphasised the need for change if we are to grow in faith. Help us not to be complacent and self-satisfied that we are already right with God and that it is just everyone else who needs to change. May we always be looking for new ways to be 'Church' and especially to be your eyes, ears, mouths, hands, feet and hearts in the places we find ourselves.

We continue to pray for Allison and Bob as they return to full health, for Sarah Dangerfield in her new and demanding role of Area Dean for Evesham and Pershore Deanery, for Bishops Michael and Martin, for our other retired Clergy who continue to serve in so many ways and all those involved in the life of the Bredon Hill Group of Parishes.

Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, in your wisdom you taught 'render unto Caesar those things which are Caesar's and to God those things which are God's'. Help us to appreciate the difference between those things which are necessary from time to time for the peaceful and efficient ordering of society, and the eternal truths which never change. We pray for your wisdom and discernment for our politicians and administrators locally, nationally and internationally as they face problems too big for any one political party or nation to resolve.

Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, although in your period of ministry you were always on the move, you remained rooted in your home town of Nazareth, in Galilee and in your local community of followers and supporters. Help us to value our communities and the various institutions to which we belong and which support us and our families - schools, doctors, hospitals, shops, businesses and tradesmen which we rely on and which in return rely on us for their survival and prospering in these difficult times. As we hopefully begin the process of returning to normal, help us to realise that that 'normal' will be different from the normal before Covid, and that global warming and the depletion of the earth's finite resources would have required us to change in any case.

Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, in the absence of a universal health service as we know it today, many people brought their sicknesses and those who were gravely ill in body or mind to you, and were healed. We cannot aspire to perform miracles of healing but by our concern and prayers we can commend those we care about to your eternal, unchanging love. In recognising that mental stress can often exacerbate physical illness, help us to recognise the social pressures which so often underlie the symptoms we observe. We continue to give thanks for all those working in the NHS, hospitals, GP's surgeries and in the community to keep us healthy, and acknowledge the burden on those working with Covid patients, on test and trace and vaccination teams and the staff at undertakers and crematoria whose workload is still very high and who are not able to offer the familiar funeral rituals for those bereaved and grieving.

Along with those who have died in our villages we remember all those killed in accidents and by deliberate acts of violence, especially Sarah Everard whose death has been transformed from a personal family tragedy into a media and political event.

Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

### **Requests for Prayers**

If there is someone or something that you would like to pray for please email us at [eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com](mailto:eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com)



Please continue to pray for the ill and isolated, frontline, hospital and medical staff and for all those who are in any kind of need. We pray for all the members of the Chaplaincy for Agriculture and Rural Life as they work to support those in our rural communities.

We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers, Roy and Margaret Putnam, Edward Bunn, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward and Andy Caddell.

We continue to pray for Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

We pray for those who are in residential care Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton and Rita Sheppy.

We pray for those who have died everywhere. For those who we know and for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. Eileen Fincher, Michael Connelly, Ronnie Compton, Captain Anthony Greenwood, Betty Kirkpatrick, Margaret Sutton, Pat Hidden, Don Dufty and David Finch

## National Day of Reflection – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

The Church of England is supporting the National Day of Reflection on 23 March, the first anniversary of the UK lockdown, to commemorate this tragic loss of life and to stand together with everyone who's grieving.

You are encouraged to join in the national minute's silence at 12 noon on 23 March to show support for the millions of people who have lost someone they love because of COVID.

More information about how churches as well as individuals can get involved can be found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/national-day-reflection>



## Easter Garden Competition

Last year we had a very successful competition to see who could make the best Easter Garden and we would love to do the same this year! Decorate a tree, make a garden on a plate, create an Easter scene – get those creative juices flowing and send your photos to [the.tebbatts@btinternet.com](mailto:the.tebbatts@btinternet.com), including your name and age. There will be a chocolate prize for the winner of the best display by a child and the best display by an adult – we can't wait to see what you create!

## Holy Trinity, Eckington – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March

We will be collecting items for the Pershore Foodbank on the weekend of Palm Sunday. A box will be available outside the church all day on both days – we would particularly like to ask for Easter Eggs but all donations will be gratefully received. During March the Foodbank would like these non-perishable items. (They are not able to use chilled or frozen items.)



## EASTER EGGS



Coffee  
Rice Pudding  
Veg & tomato soup  
Cereal  
Tinned tomatoes  
Instant mash  
Sponge puddings  
Meat e.g. tinned chicken and mince  
Deodorants  
Pasta in sauce e.g. macaroni cheese



We are also continuing to collect at Eckington Church on Wednesdays and Fridays 10am-3pm.



### Bredon Foodbank Collection

Bredon Parish has pulled out all the stops again for this month's Food Bank Collection! Great job everyone - LOADS of food making its merrily way to the local food bank

Photos courtesy of Laura Haines -Gill



### Church Services via Zoom

There will be a Zoom service this Sunday at 10.30am. So, if you would like to join us for worship and fellowship, please contact Alison Khan (email [acbhteam@gmail.com](mailto:acbhteam@gmail.com) or telephone 07984 748059) and she will send you an invitation.

### Lent Study Course

The fourth session led by Canon Roger Spiller is entitled Self Giving and Discipleship and will be held via Zoom at 7pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March. If you would like to join in; please contact Alison Khan at [acbhteam@gmail.com](mailto:acbhteam@gmail.com) to be sent the Zoom invite.



### Palm Sunday - 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021 - 10.30am Morning Prayer via Zoom

Reverend Allison will be leading Morning Prayer for Palm Sunday via Zoom at 10.30am.

There will be palm crosses available outside the door of Holy Trinity, Eckington on Palm Sunday and we will also be doing a Foodbank collection in time for Easter.

### Holy Week - 29<sup>th</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Each evening from the 29<sup>th</sup> March to the 1<sup>st</sup> April at 7pm, Bishop Michael Hooper and Reverend Allison will lead a nightly reflection via Zoom based on Rowan Williams' book *Candles in the Dark: Faith, Hope and Love in a Time of Pandemic* concluding with the evening office of Compline.



### Good Friday - 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

Reverend Allison will be leading a service of hymns, readings and silent meditation for Good Friday, via Zoom at 10.30am

The customary pilgrimage up Bredon Hill will not be permitted under current COVID regulations, but each parish will also be arranging local events, including the opening of churches for private prayer so look out for local notices.



## Easter Egg Hunt at Holy Trinity Eckington – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

Attention all children - please join us in the churchyard at Holy Trinity for a FREE Easter Egg trail between 2-4pm on the Saturday before Easter. No need to book but social distancing rules must be observed. For further information please contact Karen Sagar on 01386 750401.

## Easter Sunday – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Subject to no changes to the current government guidelines; Easter Services of Holy Communion will take place in the following churches at 10.30am:

St Giles, Bredon led by Reverend Allison

St John the Baptist, Beckford led by Bishop Martin

St Mary's Elmley Castle led by Canon Roger

Holy Trinity, Eckington led by Bishop Michael

If you wish to attend a service, please contact Alison Khan to book your place.



## Easter Sunday Songs of Praise

Reverend Allison will be leading an Easter Sunday Songs of Praise via Zoom at 4pm on Easter Sunday.

This will be an opportunity for you to nominate your favourite Easter hymn to form part of the service and then introduce it to the rest of the online congregation before it is played for all to sing along.

If you have a hymn that you would like included please contact Alison Khan at [acbhteam@gmail.com](mailto:acbhteam@gmail.com) or on 07984 748059.

## The Second Sunday of Easter - Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April

A Morning Prayer service via Zoom led by Reverend Allison where we will be welcoming Archdeacon Robert Jones who will be joining us to provide the Reflection for the Second Sunday of Easter



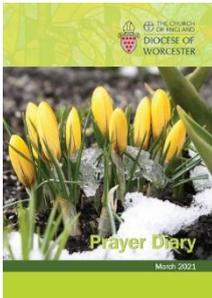
For all services being held via Zoom please contact Alison Khan if you wish to attend so that she can send you the Zoom invite. Tel: 07984 748059 or email: [acbhteam@gmail.com](mailto:acbhteam@gmail.com)

## Additional Resources during Lockdown

Even though we are inviting everyone to join our weekly Zoom service at 10.30 on Sunday morning, please be aware that the Freephone Daily Hope programmes of worship services and prayers are still available by ringing 0800 804 8044. This includes a Church of England weekly service (select option 6) and traditional Morning/Evening Prayer (select option 7). This service will not cost the caller anything and provides worship material for those looking for additional services and prayer.



A free phoneline of hymns, reflections and prayers



## News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at [www.cofe-worcester.org.uk](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk)



**Reverend Allison Davies**

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group