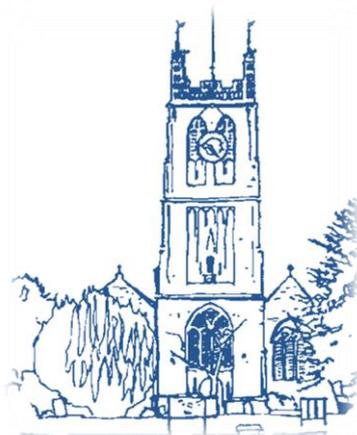


**St. James's, Dursley &  
St. Mark's, Woodmancote**



**The  
Messenger  
AUGUST  
2020**

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# **The Ewelme Benefice**

**The parish of Dursley and the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield**  
**Web Site – [www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk](http://www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk)**

## **RECTOR**

Revd Canon Michael Cozens

**Tel: 546459**

**E-mail: [mgcozens86@btinternet.com](mailto:mgcozens86@btinternet.com)**

**Please note Michael cannot be contacted on Fridays  
this is his day off – please contact Parish Office**

## **ASSOCIATE PRIESTS**

Revd Ian Gardner,

**E-mail: [chestal@hotmail.com](mailto:chestal@hotmail.com)**

**Tel: 546895**

Revd Jane Wood

**E-mail: [revjanewood@yahoo.com](mailto:revjanewood@yahoo.com)**

## **READER**

Mr Tony King,

**E-mail: [tonyking@gmx.co.uk](mailto:tonyking@gmx.co.uk)**

**Tel: 298897**

## **CHURCHWARDENS.**

Mr Austin Meares,

**Tel: 544677**

Mrs Caroline Marrow,

**Tel: 544221**

## **BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR – Clive Orchard**

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**Tel: 549280**

## **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.**

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**Tel: 01454 416867**

**PCC: VICE CHAIRMAN – Mr Austin Meares,**

**Tel: 544677**

## **PCC SECRETARY –**

Mrs Edwina Walton

**Tel: 890588**

**E-mail: [edwinawalton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:edwinawalton@hotmail.co.uk)**

## **PCC TREASURER -**

Dr Sally Pearson

**Tel: 542106**

**E-mail: [v6sep@aol.com](mailto:v6sep@aol.com)**



# AUGUST

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### Editors:

**Marlene Powell Tel: 01453 545706**

**Valerie Meares Tel: 01453 544677**

**Jenni Norris Tel: 01453 543996**

Advertising please contact

**Philip Staddon Tel: 01453 544312**

**e.mail address [judith.staddon@gmail.com](mailto:judith.staddon@gmail.com)**

### **PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

Marlene Powell

Tel: 01453 545706

or Valerie Meares

Tel: 01453 544677

or Judith Staddon Tel: 01453 544312 e.mail [judith.staddon@gmail.com](mailto:judith.staddon@gmail.com)

and Jenni Norris

e.mail [jenorris@talk21.com](mailto:jenorris@talk21.com)

### **Message from the editors:**

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

*Marlene, Judith Valerie and Jenni*

\*\*\*\*\*

**DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2020 ISSUE IS  
SUNDAY 16th AUGUST**



Dear friends

One thing we can be certain of in August is that we will be enjoying (hopefully) the height of summer! Normally this would mean, following a hectic end to the summer term - long summer holidays from school and college. Holidays away or abroad, or perhaps grandparenting duties looking after

youngsters whilst parents and carers continue with their jobs. All being well I hope some of us will be able to enjoy a welcome holiday or break. But whatever our situation, the summer holidays often spell movement of some sort or another and transition.

In the life of the Church we are also making transitions. Unfortunately, this year Covid has thrown us all a huge curved ball, the implications for everyday life, our loved ones, and communities, we could have never imagined. However, now restrictions are being lifted, and as I write this, we will have celebrated Holy Communion in St James for the first time since March. Although, to keep each other safe things will be feeling and looking quite different and there will have been both a sense of loss and joy in our return.

We will also be in a 'new normal' rhythm of blended worship, a weekly service of Holy Communion in church uploaded to Facebook or YouTube. So that those who are unable to come to church or who prefer to remain safely at home are still able 'attend' services and join in the worship of our church family, while others will continue to worship from the service sheet at home.

I hope and pray that the virus will continue to regress, but we can't be sure what life is going to look like and we will need to live with uncertainty for a while yet. Although services are different to pre-Lockdown, it is a real joy to be able to open our churches and worship together again. While acknowledging some of us still need to remain cautious about socially mixing, for the time being.

In all this change, we shouldn't try to compare ourselves with other people and feel comfortable to go at our own pace. For some of us the weeks of social isolation have meant that we have been able to engage with nature or

have become more aware of God in the ordinary places in our lives and we will bring all this experience and insights back into our worship.

Looking back over these last few months I have reflected how a church without walls can be transformative. We have been able to reach across geographical boundaries and to worship as a benefice on Zoom in ways we could never have previously imagined. We have strengthened the bonds of our benefice as community, and have also been invited to live our Christian faith outside the building as individual Christians who can be alongside others in their life journeys meeting them, as Christ meets us, just where we are. Whether that's a phone call, collecting some shopping, or being a listening ear - especially as emerging from Lockdown may bring anxieties and worries of its own. Perhaps this is something we will want to reflect on going forward? How we will take time to stop, listen and engage with those outside our boundaries in new ways, how we contemplate a different future?

But with the pressures of the virus how do we live in these times of uncertainty?

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to the fearful disciples, who were hiding in the locked Upper Room, and said, "peace be with you." Jn 20:19. In our own times of uncertainty and fear, Jesus comes to us with compassion, care, understanding and love, to give us His peace. That peace of deep calm amid all that is going on around us, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding.

in the words of the Gaelic blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you  
Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you  
Deep peace of Christ to you

Have a lovely and blessed summer

Revd Jane

## **Church News from Canon Michael.....**

### **Re-opening for services – at last!**

By the time you read this we will have begun to hold services in some of our churches again. It has been a long time; the last public services were held on 15th March, but as we return, sadly our services will not be quite as we have known them! We will not be able to sing any hymns; we will have to follow social distancing rules and so the number able to attend will be limited; we are not allowed to share the peace with one another and communion will be given in one kind – just the bread – and there will be no coffee afterwards!

The pattern of services for August which are shown here has been prepared following consultation with the Churchwardens, my ministerial colleagues and the PCC's. We have also taken note of Bishop Rachel's recommendation not to rush our plans for the resumption of public worship and her expectation that over the summer 'it will be simple and limited in scope.' As the churches re-open and worship in them begins again, all are very welcome – within the social distancing guidelines of course!

On Sunday 12th July we had our last Benefice service via Zoom. One of the big positives of this virus and the restrictions on our worship, is that many of us have joined together each week from across the 5 churches of the Ewelme Benefice and beyond! Not everyone has been able to do this and each week many have been worshipping at home, perhaps using the same readings and prayers, but not joining by Zoom. However, I know how much the Zoom services have been appreciated and how they have enabled some people who cannot physically get to church to join our worship. We very much hope that we will be able to offer either a live link to the service in St James, or a recording of the service which is then posted to the Youtube channel. Again, I must thank Tony who has learnt so much about how to use Zoom and has made it possible for us to worship together in this way.

### **For the new pattern of services see the centre pages 18 and 19.**

I am aware that we are not holding any services in St Mark's during August. This is mainly due to the extra demand that would make on our human resources; those who would have to set up and then clean the building after each service. We also want to make sure that it would be safe for the congregation to attend services before we open the church. At the moment, apart from on 2nd August, we are not holding services in St James at 8 o'clock as it would be difficult to clean and prepare the building for a service at 10am.

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## **TUESDAY**

outside at Quarry Chapel

## **WEDNESDAY**

at Dursley Tab Garden/Rec

## **THURSDAY**

at 3C/St George's Church



*come & see us one  
session per week*

# 11-12.30

# THROUGHOUT SUMMER HOLS

*coffee & cake  
children's snacks*

*(Not week 6)*

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THERE WILL BE NO INDOOR FACILITIES, INCLUDING TOILETS

**Extended opening times**

We have been able to extend the times that some of our churches are open for private prayer. Although we continue to follow the guidelines about opening and cleaning, we no longer have stewards in the buildings during opening times.

St James is open on Mondays and Thursdays 10am – 3pm

**Virtual Open Gardens**

We are still displaying photos taken in gardens from across the Ewelme

Benefice and if you would like to take a virtual garden tour please go to our website [www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk](http://www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk) and follow the link. There are many lovely photos of some really beautiful gardens. Many thanks to all who have sent photos in. If you have some photographs you are happy to share, please send them to Canon Michael [mgcozens86@btinternet.com](mailto:mgcozens86@btinternet.com) Our plan is to label them, for example, 'Gill and Michael's garden in Dursley', so not giving surnames or specific addresses. When you send your photos, please can you indicate that you are happy for them to be labelled in this way.



\*\*\*\*\*

**Prayer Group...**

Jacquelin Hill says that if anyone would like to join in, especially during these lockdown days, you can join on the phone Tel No: 03330110616 and Access code 9086615 at 2.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month. The next one will be 5th August.

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

\*\*\*\*\*



**DURSLEY HOME GROUPS WWW.COME  
SUSPENDED FOR THE MOMENT**

**Update:**

In the March edition of The Messenger, Jan Vonberg wrote an article about the Church's debate on action to combat climate change and explained the first steps that St James is taking to join in the Eco Church initiative.

Since then, so much has happened and the climate crisis has, until recently, been over-shadowed in the news by the Covid -19 pandemic.

During the Lockdown in April, I read that RSPB England had noticed there had been an increase in the number of people sharing sightings of birds and wildlife in their local area, that they had never noticed before. This included sighting bullfinches and green finches, as well as buzzards flying over and seeing herons in their garden!

Tony Whitehead, a spokesperson for RSPB England said "All these sightings are not a result of wildlife becoming more numerous in response to the new conditions, as has been suggested, but more people simply being around and paying more attention to what's around them."

He went on to say, "This uplift in interest, and of people's increased connection to nature is really heartening, and it's to be hoped that it will continue once the restrictions are lifted."

More recently the news is about our post pandemic recovery and there is a sense of people wishing the recovery to be a 'green' one.

For example, in early June, the BBC reported "more than 200 top UK firms and investors are calling on the government to deliver a Covid-19 recovery plan that prioritises the environment."

Like many individuals, the task of tackling the climate crisis seems overwhelming to me. However, I have taken heart, since reading a BBC interview with the young environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, which happened last September.

In the interview Greta said, "our actions are important not because they have a material effect on climate change, but because of the message they send to others.

What you do influences your friends and family and will help create the political space for governments and businesses to act. That, in turn, is likely to encourage other people and other countries to do more."

As the article title suggests, our choices, even small 'green ones' have a 'ripple effect'.

*Adapted from the following articles:*

*"Nature in lockdown" On-line article by Becca Smith, RSPB website, 20.04.20*

*"Make Covid-19 recovery green, say business leaders" On-line article By Roger Harrabin BBC Environment Analyst, 01.06.20*

*"Climate change action: We can't all be Greta, but your choices have a ripple effect." On-line article by Justin Rowly, BBC Chief Environment Correspondent, 20.09.19*

**Footnote:**

Jan and I continue to fact find about what we currently do in St James to reduce our environmental impact and are hoping to be able to submit the Eco Church (A Rocha) questionnaire soon.

This will give our church a score which will hopefully point us in the right direction for taking steps to make our church 'greener'. The initiative has Bronze, Silver and Gold awards which St James can aim for.

If anyone would like to join Jan and me to help with this project, please either speak to one of us at church or e-mail Jan at [janmcurt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janmcurt@yahoo.co.uk)

Best Wishes,  
*Gill Mather*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Advance notice of the 5 Churches Walk on Saturday 10 October 2020 from David Smith.....**



It starts from St. James at 10.00 and calls at all the benefice churches. More information in the September Messenger.

*Photo from start of the 2019 walk*

# Virtual Bellringing

We soon hope to bring you news of some ringing having taken place at St James'. At present nothing is certain, but we might be able to report that 4 bells have been rung for the first



Service since lockdown to be held at St James' on 26 July. If this takes place it will be the first 'open' ringing to have taken place since Sunday 15 March, the monthly simulator practice took place on Tuesday 17 March. Social distancing rules prevent any more than 4 bells being rung, most probably by 2 couples. If it can be arranged, it will be for a very short duration, again limited by the rules that apply at that time

Last month we mentioned the ringing of the first transatlantic quarter peal (electronic) with 4 ringers each from the US and UK taking part. This month we can go one better with a quarter peal consisting of 8 ringers from 8 different countries ringing simultaneously:

The details

On Sunday 14 June 2020 in 62 Minutes

## **1260 Changes of Stedman Triples**

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Paul Groupner (USA)          | 5 Martin Bright (Netherlands)    |
| 2 Vanessa Grisslegård (Sweden) | 6 Janet Archibald (South Africa) |
| 3 Brian Diserens (Germany)     | 7 Mark B Davies (Conductor) (UK) |
| 4 Jeff Ladd (France)           | 8 Laura E Goodin (Australia)     |

First ever Quarter Peal rung by eight ringers in eight different countries

First Quarter Peal 8

1000th Quarter Peal 7

Followers of the England's test cricket team will have heard of their captain, Joe Root's, very recent addition to his family with the arrival of Isabella Florence, a brother for Alfie. Isabella is also the second grandchild of one of our ringers, Judith whose daughter, Carrie, gave birth on 2 July.

*Frank Byrne*



### **Gnome From Home**

Sat outside in all weather's  
and remain to have a  
smile on my face.

Dreamt of going to space  
and decided differently.

Apply to go Britain's Got Talent, they sent me a  
form to fill in; will I get the chance to win?

To begin with there are a lot of people going to  
apply.

Awaiting patiently for their reply, days turn to weeks  
and within three months a letter drops through my  
front door.

Tore it open and have been invited to an  
audition. The nearest from me is Birmingham.

Best check on the trains, as with a taxi I'm bound to  
get in a traffic jam.

*By Sally Hayward*



\*\*\*\*\*

### **Acrostic for Ewelme Zoom**

**E**welme Zoom  
**W**e've had for several weeks  
**E**ntering into  
**L**ockdown  
**M**ade people's lives  
**E**ntirely different

**Z**oom services have been  
**O**rganised by Tony and Adrian  
**O**pen to  
**M**embers from our churches to join in

*By Sally Hayward*

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est. 2009

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**August 2020**

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**A message from Bishop Rachel talking week commencing 13th July.**



The opportunity for rest and 'letting go' is finally appearing on the horizon for Headteachers and staff of schools across the Diocese, and Bishop Robert and I want to say an enormous thank you. It has been inspiring to see how our schools have lived out their calling and created places of community, security and hope over these past few months. As we thank our schools, we also want to send up a big cheer for every member of the diocesan Education Team and the Academies Trust.

Whilst we cannot name every staff member, governor, trustee or volunteer contributing to the life of our schools, we thank you that at the heart of your work is a commitment to the thriving of every unique child, named and known.

During this final week of the academic year, the Church of England calendar names a number of individuals, all once children. Today we remember the nineteenth century priest John Keble, who has strong connections with Gloucestershire as does Serlo who we remember in this diocese on Wednesday. He was the Abbot of Gloucester and founder of St Peter's Abbey, now our cathedral. On Wednesday and Thursday we remember Swithun, Bishop of Winchester in the ninth century, and Osmund the eleventh century Bishop of Salisbury. Then on Saturday we remember Elizabeth Ferard, the first deaconess of the Church of England.

This is also the time of year when typically up and down the country many women and men would be starting out on their journey as newly ordained deacons or priests, and we continue to pray for those in our diocese who are waiting patiently for the day when they can be ordained. Yet the service of ordination reminds us that it is not primarily about these named individuals but rather about the whole Church: 'In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom' (words from the introduction to the ordination service).

One of the losses I have been aware of in recent months has been the absence of baptisms and confirmations. It is an immense privilege in

the service of confirmation to speak the name of each candidate (whether baptised many years ago or only minutes before), and mark each one with the sign of the cross, saying 'God has called you by name and made you His own.'

We are loved and called and known by name, and whilst there are sometimes specific tasks and roles to which we are called at a particular time, our calling is not primarily about task but about who we are and who we are becoming, rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ.

In these days of change and navigating life as we have never known it and for which there are no maps or blueprints, may you know God's calling afresh. Amid weariness or energy, anxiety or calm, may you hear the God who loves you deeply speak your name as you let go in rest and childlike trust, whatever the future holds.

**Psalm 131: Rest and quiet trust**

1. *O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things  
too great and too marvellous for me.*
2. *But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.*
3. *O Israel, hope in the Lord  
from this time on and forevermore.*

Bishop Robert and I continue to hold you in our prayers with thanksgiving.

## 100 CLUB

**July draw is as follows:-**

1st - 214 - Sally Pearson

2nd - 163 - Pam Crellin

3rd - 120 - Margaret Lloyd

Due to the current crisis the draws will continue but there may be some delay in giving out prizes.

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

# St Mark's News



Dear Friends

After moaning and groaning last month I start this dissertation on a more positive note, because at last we have met up with family members, seen and enjoyed the sea air in Cornwall and had two meals in local hotels while we were there and my lockdown locks have been tamed on my return. The world feels different but it's great to do 'normal' things again. By the time you read this, services will have taken place in St Giles and St James, although again things will be different, especially without any singing, or refreshments. But it is a step in the right direction. We don't know yet when St Mark's will be open, so watch this space as they say.

On an unhappy note our neighbour and friend Kaye Gardiner who lived at the bottom of Fort Lane, has died. Rest in Peace Kaye.

On a happier note congratulations to my daughter Clare and son-in-law Steve who were married at St Mark's church on 21st July, 30 years ago, on the hottest day of the last century!

With all Best wishes

Judith



Down on Bude Breakwater



First gathering of VSCC at Hunter's Hall.

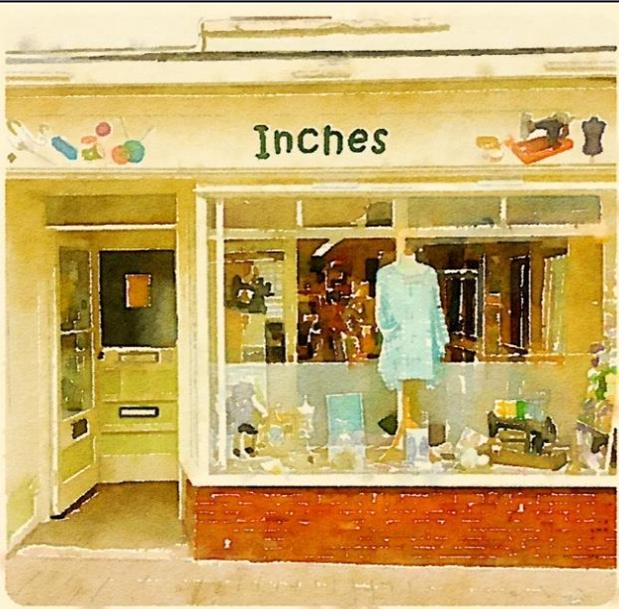
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## **6th August is the Feast of the Transfiguration.**

Here's a hymn to help think and pray about it.

76.76. D Could go to Ellacombe or Aurelia, or Ewing [not J.R.!] or Cruger.

1. The Word of God, the Saviour, shines with the Father's light,  
And brings God's love and glory to pierce our darkest night.  
God's glory and God's beauty shine out in Jesus' face:  
God's Son shines by his nature, so we'll shine by his grace.
2. On Sinai's clouded mountain, the Word shone as God's Law.  
That light transfigured Moses, as awestruck Israel saw.  
God's Word shone through Elijah against oppressive kings.  
God's fairness, justice, goodness, so God's true peace it brings.
3. Upon the lofty mountain, to Peter, James and John,  
Before his cross and passion, the Saviour's glory shone.  
The ancient Law and Prophets both stood in witness there.  
Gathered around Christ Jesus, his glory they declare.
4. And, in the cloud's bright dazzle, the Father's voice rang clear,  
Filling confused disciples with shattered awe and fear.  
'This is my Son, my loved one, with him I am well pleased.  
Hear him.'- And in our hearing, will all our ills be eased.
5. So in the deepest darkness, hung there upon Skull Hill,  
The love of God in Jesus shone to dispel all ill.  
In rising and ascension, that glory blazed again,  
And shall shine out for ever in Jesus' endless reign.
6. God's love and God's salvation give light through Jesus' grace,  
We too will be transfigured in gazing on Christ's face.  
His Spirit in the Scriptures shines out to end our night,  
And brings us to Christ's glory and God's eternal light.

### **Here is one on the temple, with an introduction:**

As our church buildings re-open for worship, here is a meditation on the temple, the greatest building in the history of God's people, and its fulfilment in Christ and in us as God's people - with a prayer for our proper care for our church buildings today.

1. God, you are present ev'rywhere,  
In earth and heaven above,  
Yet to Jerusalem you gave  
The Temple in your love.
2. A place in which you gave your word  
Your presence could be found,  
A dwelling for your Holy Name,  
And so a holy ground.

3. A place for prayer and sacrifice,  
A place to seek your face,  
The home of ark and mercy seat,  
Of pardon and of grace.
4. For us, beyond the Temple's stones,  
Christ is himself the place  
Where, in his flesh, and in his blood,  
God comes to us in grace.
5. So let us put our trust in Christ,  
And through him make our prayer,  
And living life in Jesus' way,  
We'll find that God is there.
6. God, help us cherish in our time  
The buildings where we pray,  
To keep them fit for helping those  
Who seek for you today.
7. And grant us each and all to be  
In Jesus Christ made one,  
A living Temple of your love,  
In which your will is done.

God bless you.

Yours

*Richard*

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## The Garden @ Steep House



Bottle brush plant. The original seeds were given to me by Sheila Wright and the dahlias putting on a show of colour. Judith

\*\*\*\*\*

### Diary for July/August

#### Sunday 26th July Trinity 7/St James Patronal Festival

10am	St James	Eucharist <i>service recorded or live streamed</i>
10am	St Giles	Eucharist

#### Sunday 2nd August Trinity 8

8am	St James	Eucharist
10am	St Giles	Eucharist
10am	Zoom Service of the Word	

#### Sunday 9th August Trinity 9

10am	St James	Eucharist <i>service recorded or live streamed</i>
10am	St Giles	Eucharist

**Sunday 16th August Trinity 10**

10am St James Eucharist *service recorded or live streamed*  
10am St Giles Eucharist

**Sunday 23rd August Trinity 11/  
St Bartholomew's Patronal Festival**

10am St James Eucharist *service recorded or live streamed*  
10am St Bartholomew's Eucharist

**Sunday 30th August Trinity 12**

10am St James Eucharist *service recorded or live streamed*  
10am Holy Cross Eucharist

\*\*\*\*\*



Two pictures from Elizabeth Oakley taken on the pathway by the river Ewelme. She walks this way to town and St James.





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## Mouse Diary....

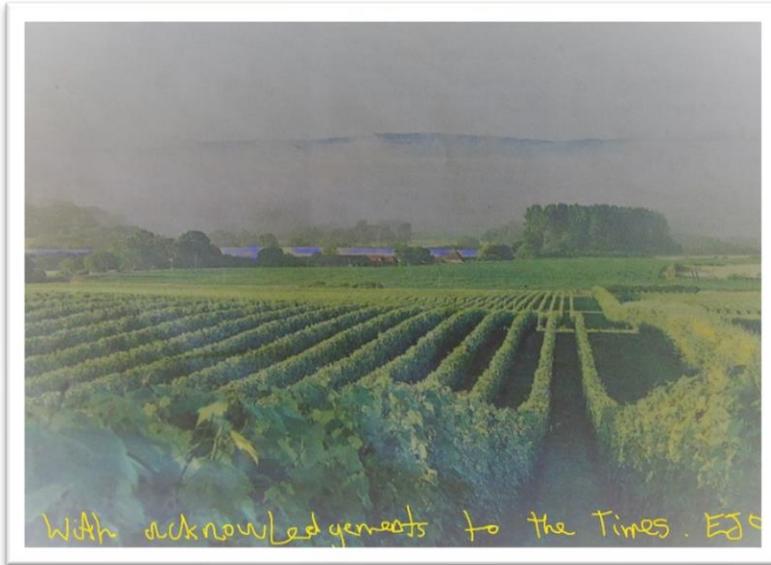


Ring, ring, ring, ding a ling. Whirr, Whirrr, WHRRrrrr. Ring, ring, RING, ding a ling..I don't know, said MBFTLP, I can't hear myself think. What is that noise in the background? Whirr, WhIRRR.. It's me, I said, I'm busy Hoovering the church. I found Henry the Hoover in the cupboard and thought I had better have a go. MBFTLP was only moderately impressed. A noble effort, she said, I can see you've been re-purposed during the contingency of the current crisis. I

thought I had better say something but did not like to dampen her enthusiasm entirely. The only thing is, I said, the church floor looks a bit like the centre court at Wimbledon. Things go one way and then they go the other way. MBFTLP said, I never did like stripes. They remind me of that lady on the TV doing the weather whose top goes up and down with the charts and I am not sure which is which. Her or the charts. MBFTLP then did her best to change the subject. How have you been getting along in the current crisis and what did Himself Upstairs have to say about it? Well, I said, He said he did not mind about the Hoovering but He thought the stripes were A Bit Too Much. MBFTLP concurred at this point and then tried to divert me again to something more promising. Have you been looking through the archives to see what you were up to a few years ago? I don't know about you, but I don't mind the occasional bout of nostalgia. Yes, I said, I found that page in my diary whereby Mr Dinosaur ate so much he got stuck in the corner of the church. I hung my washing on his rear end whilst I slimmed him down with a special diet. Fortunately in the end, the diet along with the smell of sausages and hamburgers from the Church barbecue, did the trick and he did The Decent Thing and Ambled Out Of my Orbit. Quite so, said MBFTLP, a good story and one that Ends Well. Perhaps we should end there for this month. I hesitate to have another go at Zoom in case you ZOOM all over the place like last time and all I can see is the fridge magnets behind where you would have been sitting. Yes, I said, I've done a good job of collecting those over the years. I use them as an Aide Memoir for all my stories. (I hope you notice this is something of a cliff-hanger a la Dickens and I hope you will tune in next month in order to hear the continuation of The Big Story: "Looking After the Church Whilst Everyone is Away For The Moment".

*Mouse was helped in the writing by Elizabeth Oakley*

As we can't go on holiday, perhaps we could share some of our favourite places. This is a photo of one of Elizabeth Oakley's favourite places, a French vineyard. It is a technical experiment, that is a painted photograph, the original image was in The Times, June 2020.



### **A contribution from the Writing Group...**

This is a poem about the early influences on the English language and is based on the historical descriptions written by the venerable Bede.

#### **Origins**

We had come at dead of night,  
Mooring three long ships  
On the East coast.  
We'd been called to defend  
The nation against tribes  
From the North.  
There were just a few of us  
Bone-dwellers then.  
We had settled in Engle-land  
And called it our own.  
A modest place to start with.  
A clearing in the woods like a  
Lea under curtains of the gods,  
(Who seemed to favour us).  
Over time we stayed on  
And helped invent the  
Language. A long legacy  
Of which we were unaware  
When first we sailed forth  
In answer to the King.

*Elizabeth Oakley  
A Dursley Poets*



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## VIRTUAL MUSIC NOTES

**August 2020**

As I write this, the C of E has issued new guidelines about the use of church buildings and Canon Michael told us (Zoom service on 5th July) what will be happening in our churches during the next few weeks. I hope that it won't be too long before we are back in our churches in some form or another on a regular basis

We have all listened to many a sermon which proclaims that the church is its people and not the building, and of course that is true, as without people the building wouldn't exist! However, the different spaces we occupy in our lives are very important, which is why, for example, we have specific areas in our own houses for specific activities. Our church buildings are very important as they provide us with that sense of calm and otherworldliness taking us away from the grind of everyday life and I for one certainly miss the serene atmosphere of St James' church (just as Rev'd Ian Gardner mentioned in his address on 5th July).

Church buildings grow over time to reflect the local worshipping community and so they contain many memorials and tributes to past worshippers, often represented by plaques, statues, stained glass, and in St James', the organ. Some of these memorials are perhaps not to today's taste, and in the present climate may be seen as a little controversial, but we are unable to rewrite history which by its very definition is full of events which are not always a source of pride. Hindsight is wonderful, but it is no bad thing to be reminded of the good and the bad of the past. As an aside, I wonder if current thinking will mean we have to air-brush out vast amounts of the Old Testament?

So when we are allowed to return to church, obviously not in the manner of Bournemouth beach during lockdown, I hope we will be able to retain something of normality. However, that begs the question of music!

First of all, I am grateful to Lynn James for going in to St James' and giving the organ an occasional workout. I visited it a few weeks ago and was delighted to find that everything worked and was relatively in tune. Secondly, there are many questions surrounding the return of choirs. Choristers from Salisbury Cathedral have performed under laboratory conditions as scientists from Public Health England capture and measure the flight of their spray. According to Hugh Morris, director of the Royal School of Church Music, an alternative to singing might be that the

congregation switch from hymn singing to "hymn humming". "That is being discussed as an option; humming might be safer." he said. I can't help but think that is a rather strange way of moving forward.....

*The Times* recently reported that "unless the choirs get back into church soon, Christmas music, including carol concerts and the famous *Nine Lessons and Carols*, beloved of cathedrals and chapels such as that of King's College, Cambridge, might have to be scrapped". ( Note; no mention of the humble Parish Church.....) Peter Allwood, chairman of the Friends of Cathedral Music said "The government has been very fearful because of headlines about choirs in the Netherlands and America with outbreaks of the coronavirus, but those were huge choirs with more than 100 members each, who also rehearsed and ate together. The situation in cathedrals is very different. We operate in large, draughty buildings and we can easily distance choristers from one another."

The Church of England is preparing national guidance on music and singing and it is thought to be looking at returning to music in steps. First an organ would be played alone, then with a soloist singer, and then a group of choristers. Public Health England would have to endorse such proposals depending on the outcome of the singing experiments it has organised".

Among recent experiments carried out into singing was work done by Munich Armed Forces' University. Its Institute of Fluid Mechanics and Aerodynamics carried out experiments with professional singers and orchestral musicians from Munich and Salzburg to examine "both the spit-like (ballistic) propagation of larger droplets when singing and speaking, and the flow-related spreading of small droplets (aerosol) when singing and playing music with wind instruments".

The tests showed that air was only disturbed during singing for up to half a metre in front of the mouth, irrespective of the volume or pitch, and far less than when sneezing or coughing. The Munich scientists concluded that virus transmission beyond this distance was "unlikely" but recommended that a safe distance for a choir in a church would be 1.5 metres in a staggered formation. In the case of St James' choir that is not at all possible, so it would seem that unless an effective vaccine is found soon we have to wait a while longer before assembling as a group.

Sadly, it seems that there will be many church casualties following the pandemic. Huw Clayton's recent email details some of the problems faced in the Staffordshire churches where he plays the organ. Already some professional choirs in London have folded, and there is talk of several Cathedral Choir Schools going the same way. The daily reports of redundancies in all areas of the jobs market are depressing and worrying and it doesn't take a genius to see that the problems of the forthcoming

years resulting from this vicious virus will eclipse our present Government's original main agenda; Brexit.

According to The Times over 2 million people sing in 70,000 choirs in Britain, and an article in that paper (June 7th) asked why no-one in Government has raised the issue as to how choirs can form once more. I was interested to note that the very first activity after the complete lock-down was horse racing; surely one of mankind's most wasteful activities! That was followed by Premier League football played behind closed doors with "dubbed" sound! Personally I could live very happily without either of these two "sports"! My knowledge of football is limited, but I can't see how you can put twenty-two players on a pitch and keep the two metre social distance rule. Do the players not emit "the spit-like (ballistic) propagation of larger droplets" when playing? In normal times, the clips I sit through during television news bulletins often show players spitting!

But of course, as we all know the great god of football is a "special case", and choirs are not! It is interesting to think that this year's Kings College Carol service could well be replaced by a choir of professional footballers, as at least they practise together..... By 6th July a rescue package for the Arts was announced by the Government, so let's hope that the money is sensibly shared round to protect all artistic endeavours, but I doubt that preserving church music will be high on the list!

*Nigel Davies*

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**Mary Ann Wall.....***(from a new contributor Patricia Main)*

*During lockdown Pat has been doing some research on past businesses in Parsonage Street Dursley*

Did you know that there was an organ builder and organist living in Dursley in 1841? His name was John Augustus Wall and he lived in Parsonage Street roughly where the shoe repair shop now stands. He lived with his wife, Mary Ann, both in their mid-thirties, but they appear to have had no children. Sadly, the 1851 census shows Mary Ann as a widow aged 47. On the surface this is just one of the little tragedies that life presents ... but there is a deeper story.

Mary Ann Wall was born in Painswick in the early years of the 19th century but, after the death of her husband, she continued to live in Parsonage Street. She is listed in various of the commercial directories as running a Berlin Wool repository. Berlin Wool work was a form of tapestry on canvas – an example of which would be the kneelers you find in churches. This was obviously a popular activity as the Hunt & Co Commercial Directory of 1849 lists three women as Berlin Wool sellers in Parsonage Street. One can visualise the local women of the town popping into her shop (much like Inches, I feel!) to buy supplies and to chat.

But Mary Ann did not limit herself to selling wool and I daresay she didn't restrict her chat to the intricacies of tapestry either because she was also the local depot for the Christian Knowledge Society, better known now as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge or SPCK. This missionary organisation had been founded in the late 1600s by members of the Church of England primarily because there were 'scarce four ministers of the Church of England in all the vast tract of America' and, as a result of pressure from this group, Charles II made a large donation to set up a fund for suitable Christian literature to be sent to educate the colonists in America. By 1734 the society had turned its attention to the UK in its endeavours to provide Christian literature and the Annual Report for that year clearly states that 'they have, by the assistance of their Members, both at Home and Abroad, disper'd several Hundred Thousands of Bibles, Prayer-Books, and religious Tracts, as they have reason to hope, to the great Increase of Knowledge and Practice of our holy Religion'.<sup>1</sup> The SPCK went on to concern itself with prison reform and the setting up of Charity Schools in the UK but is still associated with the production of Christian literature.

Dursley in the middle of the 1800s was very strongly non-conformist and the Church of England as represented by St James' church was elitist, to say the least. But Mary Ann Wall – who was obviously a keen Christian and almost certainly staunch Church of England – saw it as her mission in life to make Christian literature available from her shop in Parsonage Street. She didn't just have a few leaflets and tracts lying on a shelf either but proudly advertised in several of the commercial directories from 1849 onwards so, clearly, she had been involved in this work independently before the death of her husband. Her census entry for 1861 lists her occupation as 'Christian Knowledge and draper' which demonstrates her priorities very clearly. In the mid-1870s, by which time Mary Ann has her younger sister, Catherine Loveday (a retired governess) living with her Mary Ann is 66 years of age, her entry in the Morris & Co Commercial Directory reads: "Berlin wool repository and depot of the Christian Knowledge Society" – evidence that she was still actively supplying Christian literature to the townsfolk.

According to the civil register, Mary Ann died in the Spring of 1880 aged 79. Mary Ann spent her life within the borders of Gloucestershire, some would dismiss her as a nobody. But I think she is memorable and an example to be followed because in her own small way she actively lived out her faith. We cannot know the impact her determination had but the fact that she operated on behalf of the SPCK for so many years surely suggests she was fulfilling a need in the town. *Patricia Main*

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Henderson-Howat, A. M. D. "Christian Literature in the Eighteenth Century." *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1961, pp. 24–34. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/42972913](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42972913). Accessed 30 June 2020.



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## Culture and me

A new series in which David interviews different members of the congregation. Our thanks to Sally Pearson for her contribution.

Do you have a favourite author or book?

**Chocolat by Joanne Harris. I read the whole book on a train journey from Birmingham to Cornwall. I was excited to watch the film when it came out but disappointed to find they had made unnecessary changes to the story**

What are you reading at present?

**Forgiveness: How the Bible can Help us Understand. By Frank Cottrell Boyce novelist and screenwriter who worked with Danny Boyle on the Olympic Opening Ceremony. I wouldn't normally go for something like this but I heard him on Radio 4 and his take on the Prodigal Son was intriguing so I thought I would give it a go.**

Is there a book which you feel you should have read?

**I have piles of these next to my bed!**

Is there a song or piece of music you turn to, to cheer you up?

**Things ; Robbie Williams and Jane Horrocks. Used to sing this with the boys on the way to school**

Do you have a favourite piece of music?

**Western Highway. Maura O Connell. Great two part harmonies to sing in the car**

Do you play a musical instrument? If not what you like to have learnt?

**I always wanted to play the harp but my mum only had a mini so I had clarinet lessons instead. Since retiring I have had piano lessons. Practising is great relaxation for me but may not be for others in the house**

What is your favourite film?

**Local Hero. It is such a clever film – each time you watch it you see something else**

Do you have a favourite play?

**Wicked The Musical. The backstory for the Wizard of Oz.**

**I have seen it 5 times**

What about a favourite television series?

**I watch a lot of television so too many to choose from. Would find it difficult to choose between Afterlife, Upright, Killing Eve, the A Word and Cardiac Arrest which is a painful reminder of the realities of clinical medicine.**

If there was one painting you could own, what would it be and what is special for you about it?

**Ophelia by John Everett Millais. Exquisite pre Raphaelite painting of the Shakespeare character who drowns in a stream when her lover Hamlet, murders her father. The model was 19 year old Elizabeth Siddal, who Millais made to lie fully clothed in a bathtub over a cold winter. She caught a severe cold and her father sent Millais a demand for £50 to cover medical expenses.**

Do you have special building which means a lot to you and if so why?

**Blackwell, Arts and Crafts House on the shore of Lake Windemere. I could sit in the White Drawing Room for hours.**

Is there a place (town, village, a county?) where you have felt happiest?

**The terrace of the Salcombe Yacht Club, I dread to think how many hours I have spent there – great views, great food and always good company – whatever the weather**

You are having a fantasy dinner party for five – who would you invite? (This could be anybody from any century and from any country)

**I thought of Eva Peron, Tim Minchin, Lin Manuel Miranda, Edward Jenner and Jane Austen but have been to too many dinner parties with competing egos so my ideal dinner party would be with members of my own family – nothing can beat that!**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Lockdown receiving and giving.....**

Lockdown, a time when all of us have, to one degree or another, had our lives changed. We have all had to make decisions to safeguard ourselves and others, had to refrain from close contact with loved ones.

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus told his disciples 'Freely you have received, freely give.' For us, as we have self-isolated, it has been a time of learning to receive, accepting the kindness of friends and total strangers. It has been truly humbling to have a wonderful volunteer, someone we have never previously met, shopping for us, especially in the early weeks when panic buying made a task we normally take for granted such a challenge. Cooked food being delivered by more volunteers coordinated again by GL11. Neighbours have added items to their list whenever they went shopping, and our wonderful 'second family' not only have shopped but kept an eye on us to ensure our wellbeing, socially distancing in the garden and sharing time and conversation with us.

All this brought to mind a lesson learned years ago (though not always acted upon!) that receiving with grace is beneficial not just for ourselves as recipients but also for the giver. It has also caused us to consider how we could, during this time, become givers. The plants that would normally have been donated to the choir plant stall in May were becoming somewhat numerous and so we decided to put them on a table on our driveway, offered free but, should anyone wish to donate then the money would be forwarded to the local food bank. Not only have many plants flown off the table but generous people have donated such that we have, to date, been able to send £75 to the food bank.



It's wonderful to receive and equally wonderful to give.

*Kathie Rebbeck*

**Kathie and Brendan have now used up all their stock of pots so here is a plea for more to carry on the good work.....**

### *PLANT POTS NEEDED*

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## **Living the Faith.....**

The Greek Orthodox faith, much like the Jewish tradition, is very much an integral part of everyday living. Children are named for saints or similar - Apostolos for the apostles, Zoe which means life or ελευθερία (Eleftheria = freedom). The day on which the saint is celebrated is more important than a birthday and collectively celebrated with church services, feasting and other activities – for instance, S George is celebrated on Skiathos with horse races. Everywhere you go you will find icons – in the shops, in offices, in taxis and in most homes you will find a tiny shrine area with candles and icons.

This may seem alien to our Protestant, northern sensibilities but makes perfect sense in the Greek environment where virtually all socialising takes place outside the home. Skiathos is a tiny island which, until the 1970s, was inhabited by subsistence farmers and fishermen – people whose lives were controlled by nature; a freak storm might bring much needed rain but equally it might wreck a fishing boat and drown a crew. You don't have to spend much time wandering around in an olive grove at twilight to realise what a numinous place it is and I find it no wonder that the ancient Greeks saw divinities lurking behind each olive tree. Christianisation may have changed the names but the sacred places remained and many of the little churches incorporate stones taken from temples previously built on the sites they now occupy. What is even more interesting is that the saints chosen would invariably reflect the areas over which the previous deity held sway – for example, a temple for Mercury (the messenger of the gods) would be replaced by a church dedicated to angels.

But I digress. The importance and involvement in Greek Orthodoxy is never more obvious than when one sees the crowds gather for large festivals. Easter and Epiphany are the major ones although Skiathos does have a specific one of its own. The story goes that in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century a monk saw a light shining in the middle of a pine wood. Upon investigation, he discovered an icon of the Virgin Mary swinging on a branch of a tree. The icon was retrieved and from that time on the Virgin Mary was the protector of the island – various miracles have been attributed to her. Not least amongst these is the tale of how when the German army abandoned the island at the end of the war vindictively setting fire to what was left of the town, the locals prayed and the Virgin Mary sent a massive rain storm which put out the flames. In celebration of this protection, every 20<sup>th</sup> November the icon is removed from the church where it is kept and handed over by the priests to the people. It is then carried back to the monastery where it was originally found. This is a journey of approximately 12 km mostly along steep footpaths and is undertaken by people of every kind. I saw troops of scouts, families with small children, elderly, black-dressed women

carrying massive candles, groups of young men (firing rifles to scare off the bad spirits), anyone who could be there in fact – and this was a weekday. There is a certain amount of rivalry amongst the people, fighting to be the one carrying the icon in its beautiful frame and everyone battling to get close enough to kiss the glass. Penitents walk barefoot. Once at the monastery, a service is held and everyone settles down for the night, returning the next day with the icon which is paraded through the town before being returned to its church. What is most striking is the affection demonstrated by the people towards the mother of Jesus – this is no distant holy woman but a personal and local friend, a member of the community.

*Patricia Main  
July 2020*



*More pictures from Living the Faith.....from Patricia Main*



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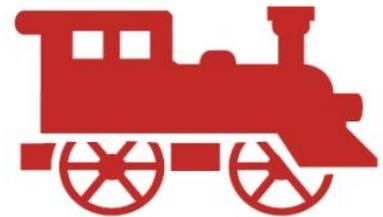
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