



St Peter's Parish

e-newsletter

29th April 2020

www.stpeterrealing.org.uk

The Vicar's Letter

Week 5 is not an easy week...or at least I've not found it easy. My Apple account tells me my screen usage is up some 357%. I have mixed feelings of joy and sadness when I see friends, family, colleagues and my Christian family via Zoom. It is such a joy to see your faces, to see that you are all well and engaged and laughing. It is so sad not being able to shake your hand, give you a hug or squeeze your shoulder; to have a personal, one to one conversation and idly pass the time of day. Initially it was novel, challenging but rewarding when problems were overcome and solutions found. Now it is becoming a new normal, but quite a tiring one.

Then you go out of the house and people avoid you, cover their faces and keep their distance. I know why people wear them, but I must share with you, I really don't like face masks. They go against everything I hold dear about human contact. Dealing with that every day is tiring.

Week 5 has also been creative. Rediscovering words in a new way. Reaching back into poetry and scripture; searching out God in prayer and learning again how to rely on God. Holding on to Easter promises and even exploring old terrain with new eyes feeds and encourages. Whilst settling in to a new normal (for how long...who knows?), it is good gaining space to find God alongside all those other new discoveries about ourselves and our lives we are making (I am sure).

There is much in this week's newsletter to consider and hopefully enjoy. I encourage you to think about how prayer and reading can be part of your daily routine, finding space and time for you and God. Maybe there is a new path for you to take, or old terrain to view in a new light that will bring you closer to God and a new sense of fulfilment and purpose. Maybe week 6 will be better.

Fr David



Today I ironed six shirts...

Today I ironed six shirts and a pair of pyjamas. Nothing unusual about that, you might think. But I don't have a domestic bone in my body, and for years I've paid someone else to come and do a collection of chores which I absolutely hate. When I was at school

we had to choose between Latin and Domestic Science, and although I didn't much like Latin this was a no-brainer (and as it has turned out, the research I'm now doing would be a lot more difficult had I gone the household route). While I was ironing unintended creases into those shirts and then trying to iron them out again, I started to think about all the other things we take for granted and the people who make them happen. Suddenly we find ourselves in circumstances where the services we rely on begin to look decidedly shaky. In normal times we pray regularly for doctors, nurses and carers, sometimes for the emergency services and armed forces, occasionally for farmers, fishermen and 'those in authority over us'. So we should! But yesterday I was really pleased to see the dustmen come round, and they found their way into my evening prayers.

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Think about the people who work in warehouses, load essential supplies into lorries, drive them to where they are needed, co-ordinate the deliveries. The people who keep the lights on, the water clean, the traffic lights functioning, the trucks and buses on the road, the trains rolling, the ticket barriers working. The shelf-stackers, checkout operators and trolley-collectors, families who run corner shops. The hospital porters, cleaners, cooks, maintenance and reception staff without whom the front-line medical workers would be unable to operate. The technicians who keep our phones and internet up and running, and the broadcasters and engineers who make sure we have news and entertainment. Just knock one or two blocks out of the complex Jenga tower of our lives, and everything starts to collapse.

These people are on the front line, working steadily in increasingly difficult conditions and at substantial risk to their own health. We may have clapped for carers; we should also shout for shopworkers, tinnabulate for technicians and exult for engineers. They need prayer too – could you include a group of these essential workers in your prayers each day? If you are one of them, let us know and we can pray for you by name. And when you see someone going about their important daily work on our behalf, say ‘Hallo’ and ‘Thank you’ – at a safe distance, of course.

Margaret Joachim

A Letter from the Treasurer

As you know from Father David’s message in last week’s Newsletter, our church is in serious trouble financially due to the current crisis. Our income has fallen sharply due to the loss of Hall rentals and weekly collections, while we still incur ongoing expenditures. Immediate cost reduction actions were taken – our Administrator was furloughed, the heating was turned right down in our buildings and I notified the Diocese that we would be forced to cut our monthly Common Fund payment (covering the costs of our clergy, the vicarage and support for the central church) by 50% to £3,550 for the next five months. This last amount is merely a deferment and will put the church into debt of up to £18K over the next five months.



The good news is that many of our congregation are still supporting us via monthly standing orders, and two generous donations have already been made by people who read last week’s Newsletter and were moved to help. My heartfelt thanks for this! I recognised that some individuals and families may be suffering financially due to the crisis, and this appeal is not addressed to them. However, there are others who are not impacted and may have the financial bandwidth to offer support.

How can you help? Generosity is a personal matter and we are all inspired to give according to our own hearts and means. I ask that you prayerfully consider:

- Making a one-off donation to avoid our church going into debt again - we finally paid off our last debt to the Diocese at the end of 2019 - and to build up reserves (currently zero)
- Our normal Stewardship Campaign is not happening this year, so now would be the right time to increase your existing standing order amount
- If you do not have a standing order because you use the collection plate, set one up.

All of the above can be processed via on-line banking:

Bank: HSBC; Account: 60377082; Sort Code: 40 11 58

Or, if you prefer, just drop a cheque into the vicarage

If you would like further details on the church finances, I would be very happy to discuss them with you. My email - lindafos@aol.com Linda Foster

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St Peters Pastoral Assistance Programme has become the WLL Community Shopping Service.

Members have volunteered to shop, chat on the phone or collect prescriptions. Margaret Joachim is co-ordinating this and if you'd like to help, if you know someone who could do with some help or indeed if you yourself need help then get in touch. The phone number to use is 07595 911178.

We have suggested you might like to contact your neighbours, if you haven't already, and may be wondering what you can say. Here are some words you might find helpful. Pop them on a card or a notelet and pass it through their doors. Better still, if you can, send an email:

Dear Friend,

As the UK faces the impact of coronavirus, St Peter's has set up a support network for people in our congregation and others in the parish, so that we can shop, collect medicine, run errands or provide a listening ear for each other, especially if whole households will need to self-isolate.

*If you need anything, please feel free to contact us on the number below. It could be to buy and drop off some shopping that you need, or post a letter, or simply for a friendly chat on the phone. We can leave shopping** on your front doorstep and ring you to let you know it's arrived. It's no trouble at all.*

If people are already helping you, that's splendid. We are particularly concerned to contact and help people who are alone and don't already have friends or family to help them – especially if they are also elderly and less likely to use websites or social media. So please tell your neighbours about this, and anyone else that you think would find it helpful.

*** By the way – we can't guarantee to find everything you might want in the shops just at the moment, but we'll do our best*

Please also note the new Ealing Borough website: <https://ealingtogether.org/> Loads of information help and advice is there.

Finding your Way round your Bible: History 3

You might be rather tired of standing in the History section all this while, so hopefully your imaginary bookshop is one of those ones with inviting armchairs. We ended last week turning the glossy pages of the reign of King Solomon, but as warned, the story gets murkier, so you might want to sit down.

Before we launch into the next shelves a bit of an overview might be helpful. In a nutshell: after Solomon there is civil war and his kingdom divides in two. The Northern Kingdom (called – confusingly – Israel) had its capital first at Shechem, then Tirzah and finally at Samaria, and the Southern Kingdom (called Judah) had as its capital Jerusalem. Each had kings of their own. This map shows the boundaries

[Map of Israel and Judah](#)

Some of the kings are good, some are very bad indeed. Prophets come and warn them that God is displeased by their faithlessness, but they do not listen. In 722 BC the Northern Kingdom is defeated by the Assyrians and the people are taken away into slavery. In 586 BC the Southern Kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians and the people taken into exile in Babylon.

In 538 BC they begin to return from Babylon to Jerusalem, eventually rebuilding the city and the temple. (There is some very interesting material online – amidst lots of nonsense – on the “Lost Tribes” of Israel. These are the ten tribes making up the Northern Kingdom who went to Assyria and never returned....)

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After the Exodus, the Exile is the greatest defining moment in Jewish history; but while the Exodus speaks of God's love for his people, the Exile tells of the people's rejection of God and God's reaction to this rejection. The Exile is both a devastating blow and a time of reformation.

As also warned, the genres get very mixed here, so some pretty heavy theology gets tangled in with the historical narrative. For our purposes today, accepting that this is a simplification, we should note:

1 and 2 Kings were written during the Exile to explain to the Jewish people suffering in Babylon their history – and what had gone so wrong.

1 and 2 Chronicles were written after the Exile to encourage the Jewish people returning to Jerusalem and Palestine that God still had a hand in their history and cared about their future.

These books cover broadly the same events and period of history, but the difference of intention means that the writers pull out different aspects and emphases.

Let's get up now and meet some of the players in this action:

The Prophet Elijah

1 Kings chapters 17 – 19 and 21 are worth reading right through as they show us the kind of man Elijah is – and what he is up against as he takes on evil King Ahab and of the Northern Kingdom, and his Canaanite queen – Jezebel (one of the names in the Bible that still resonates in popular culture).

- Fed by ravens: 17 verses 1 – 6
- Fed by a widow –miraculous flour and oil: 17 verses 8 – 16
- Revives the widow's dead son: 17 verses 17 -24. (NB the importance of verse 24)
- Defeats the priests of Baal showing the power of God: 18 verses 20 – 39. (Glimpses of dark humour here.)
- Meets God not in the earthquake, the wind or the fire, but in the silence: 19 verses 11- 18
- Jezebel and Naboth's vineyard: 21 (See also gruesome death of Jezebel in 2 Kings 9 verses 30 -37)

Elijah is taken up to heaven and his mantle falls upon Elisha: 2 Kings 2 verses 9 -14 Before we leave him though, just look at:

2 Kings 1 verse 8 (NIV version best here) and then Mark 1 verse 6 and Mark 9 verses 2 – 4

The Prophet Elisha

If you find yourself confusing these two prophetic gentlemen you will not be the first. They have some similar experiences – to authenticate perhaps Elisha as Elijah's true inheritor of God's voice to his faithless people.

Compare and contrast these exploits with Elijah's:

- A widow's miraculous oil: 2 Kings 4 verses 1 -7
- Reviving the widow's son: 2 Kings 4 verses 8 – 38

Read also:

- The Healing of Naaman: 2 Kings 5 verses 1 -19 (Fascinating insight into the human ills of the period and the complex national, social and religious context.)
- Death of Elisha and miracle of his bones: 2 Kings 13 verses 14 – 21.

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King Hezekiah

Although the prophets Elijah and Elisha were similarly unimpressed with the goings on in the Southern Kingdom, most of what we have looked at refers to the Northern Kingdom – taken over and captive by the Assyrians. As in the North the South too fluctuates between the reigns of good kings and bad kings. King Hezekiah of Judah – a good king - sees off the Assyrians and cleans Jerusalem of its pagan shrines and practices.

The writers of the books of Chronicles are keen to give much detail and credit to this as – we remember – the intention is to encourage the next restoration of Jerusalem some centuries later.

It is worth reading 2 Chronicles chapters 29 -32 in their entirety to get a picture of:

a) The reign of King Hezekiah and the life of Jerusalem before the Babylonian exile c 700 BC (Notice who else will be writing about this time: 2 Chronicles 32 verse 32)

b) The lessons from this time for the hearers of Chronicles returning to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile c 330BC

Although God spares Hezekiah the devastation of Jerusalem in his lifetime, in the end the Babylonian axe falls and so does Jerusalem. Read about it in 2 Chronicles 36 verses 11 -21

The book of Ezra could be called 3 Chronicles as it picks up from the end of 2 Chronicles and gives an account of the exiles returning to Jerusalem and their rejection of foreign gods. (See Ezra's Prayer: Ezra 9 verse 5 – 10 verse 5)

Nehemiah is a good, fairly quick, read and immerses us in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the people's return to faithfulness. (See Nehemiah 8 verses 1 – 12.)

Esther

This period of history dominates later Jewish thought and we shall be spending quite a bit of time meeting various prophets and critics of the period in later weeks. For now you might like to read the book of Esther – the Bible's Miss World and Persian King Ahasuerus' queen. A quick and enjoyable read with a strong flavour of life in Exile.

And for perhaps a more familiar glimpse, look at Psalm 137: "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion..."

A break from History next week when we move into Fiction – controversially perhaps!

Susan Peatfield

An acrostic from Val Stevens

Look out of the window, what do you see?

Only empty streets and paths

Can you remember how it was some weeks ago?

Know we are all together at this time

Don't lose heart lets pray for

Ourselves and all who are suffering

We can get through this, stay strong and

Never forget He is with us all the way

[What can offer for the newsletter? Ed]

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Corona Quiz – Week 5

1. What do a quantity of champagne, an oxide used for orientation, a virgin's song, a town between Liverpool and Ormskirk and a non-invincible line have in common?
2. One had crosses, one picked up after a wedding, one was a Stuart king's mistress, one wrote an extremely popular hymn, one married a teddy. Who were they?
3. Where would you be, and doing what, with:
 - o Chaps
 - o Chapattis
 - o Chaptalisation
 - o A chappow
 - o A chaparral
4. Arrange in order: Andrew, David, George, Michael, Nicholas, Patrick, Peter, Stephen.
5. Who worked for an advertising agency, climbed the rigging, traversed the Apennines and attempted a mountain in Nuristan?
6. Multiply boatmen by musketeers, an Indian sign and (Wimsey's tailors+1), divide by the famous and subtract pieces of silver to arrive at life, the universe and everything. Show your working.



Answers – Week 4

1. Windows: the defenestration of Prague, his song 'When I'm cleaning windows', the window tax, the Johari window (a tool used for self-understanding and communication management which was developed by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingram).
2. Trying to comfort Job, an activity in which they were singularly unsuccessful.
3. 'If I've a syllable de trop
I cut it off without apol
This simple subterfuge, I know,
Will irritate the schol,
But all will praise my dev'lish cunn
Who realise that Time is Mon.'
Poetical Economy, Harry Graham. (It's worth finding and reading the whole poem, for a chuckle.)
4. Great. (Charlemagne was Carolus magnus – Charles the Great.)
5. These are periods of geological time in the Tertiary and Quaternary eras, with the exception of Plasticine (a modelling material - the correct geological term is Pleistocene) and Anthropocene (a term proposed for the current time when humans are having a significant effect on the geological record, but which has not yet been officially defined or accepted). Officially we are still living in the 'Recent' period.
6. They all begin with 'pip': a pippin, a pipistrelle, a pipette, a pipkin, a pip.

Clap for our Carers: Thursday 30th April at 8pm <https://clapforourcarers.co.uk/>. Bang those saucepans!



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Worship this week:

Sunday 3rd May

09.15am Kids Church for all our younger members (via Zoom)

10.00am Parish Worship (via Zoom)

5.30pm Evening Prayer (via Zoom)

Monday – Friday

9am Morning Prayer (individual prayer)

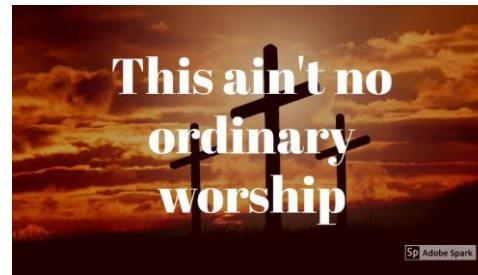
9.30pm Compline (via Zoom)

Monday-Tuesday, Thursday – Friday

5pm Evening Prayer (individual prayer)

Wednesday

5pm Contemplative Prayer (via Zoom)



You can download Zoom onto your device or you can call in by phone, dialling the number given in the email. You will also need to have downloaded the Daily Prayer app onto your device or find it via the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer)

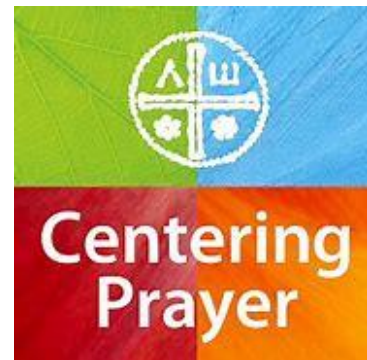
Ring The Archbishop!

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus.

Daily Hope, which is available from today, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

Centering Prayer Group. Centering Prayer, a form of contemplative prayer, encourages the practitioner to keep themselves mindfully in the presence of God, using silence in fellowship. It is not easy, but then it is not difficult either. Like most things worth doing it just takes a little encouragement and practice. This is an ancient form of prayer which has waxed and waned in popularity; being rediscovered in the life of faith and some of us are keen to explore this as part of our own faith journey. It is not for everyone but for those who explore it centring prayer can be challenging, powerful and fulfilling.



The programme we use at St Peters was modelled by Br Thomas Keating, an American Cistercian Monk. His small community in Massachusetts explored modern ways of prayer and developed Centring [their spelling] Prayer which looks to acknowledge then exclude the concerns of the world to help the practitioner find the presence of God within.

With lockdown the group at St Peter's stopped meeting. Now we are going online. As from Wednesday 6th May we will be Zooming a centring prayer session each week. The

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session will be no longer than 30 mins. We will start with a word of explanation at 5pm, then have a period of silent prayer which begins and ends with a bell. Then a reading is offered from a spiritual writer, the Lords' Prayer is said and we finish with the Grace. We would be delighted if you would join us. When the session is booked we will send it to the Parish email list. If you would like to join us just click on the link, don't be afraid. We'd love to see you.

Supporting Local Business –

Steak on the Green, Haven Green. Please think about supporting a local business by visiting Steak on the Green's Steak Shop website and having excellent quality steak and other ready to cook food delivered to your door. (At least three parish households have made the most of this and recommend them!) Visit <https://www.steakonthegreen.com/shop>

ECC: Electric Coffee Co., Haven Green. As a follow up to the piece last week on the ECC I did place an order for bread flour. True to his word, after making the BACS transfer of £6 Simon appeared the next afternoon with two 1.5kg bags of flour that have made splendid loaves. The service was friendly and easy. I would recommend. Check out their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Electric-Coffee-Co-187327251353877/). They list their wines there too as well as an interesting array of stock to sell. The email Simon on simon@electriccoffee.co.uk with your order. He'll give you the banking details, you make the transfer and voila! another happy customer.

Helping the homeless: Thorgill Estate Agents are taking and distributing clothes and other useful household items to those in need. This is what they said:

Thorgills Estate Agents Collection Programme.

“Some local homeless support centres have reluctantly had to close their doors because they can't practise safe distancing measures at the moment. Some others such as the fantastic Ealing Soup Kitchen are using volunteers to deliver food as well as distribute from their centres.

At Thorgills we are supporting an organisation based at Brentford Baptist Church Hall that provides food, essentials and support to homeless people.



How can you help? You can donate your unwanted clothes (men's are most in demand) and basic home items that are desperately needed by people in our local area without a stable home. All you need to do is put them in a bag, send us a message and we will arrange a day to collect them from your doorstep. For details of what you can donate, check the images below.



And to clarify, used pants and socks are definitely worth donating as they are very well received!”

As you take the time you now have to clear out cupboards and wardrobes, if you have clothes or goods to donate either contact Henry at Thorgill HQ via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ThorgillsHQ>) , or contact me. Thorgill's will collect what ever you have to offer.

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Thank you for continuing to support Ealing Foodbank with food donations, we really appreciate the generosity of the public during these current circumstances. Please find our April Shopping List below:

UHT Milk - whole and semi skimmed (not skimmed please);
Dried Milk; Long Life Fruit Juice & Squash - 1 litre size please;
Long Grain Rice - 1kg/500g size; Mayonnaise & Ketchup; Tinned Fruit; Savoury Biscuits & Crackers; Instant Custard - tins or cartons
Tinned/Dried/Instant Potato; Jam & Peanut Butter;
We've got plenty of Pasta; Baked beans; Porridge & Cereal; Pulses

This foodbank is run in partnership with local churches, facilitated by Ealing Foodbank. Registered charity number 1156369 | Registered in England and Wales

Prayer requests:

Please pray for:

Suzi; Cicely Pratt; Elaine Dunkley; Keith Win; John Pullan;
Babak Khoswroshahi.

Recently deceased: Peter Tilly; Sarah Bailey; Peter Holmes (priest)

Those we can't be with now and who weigh heavy on our hearts.

Carers and health workers; those keeping supplies lines operational

Each other and ourselves.

(if you'd like names added to this list please send them to Fr David)



Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Contributions.

It would be so great (and make my life easier) to have more contributions from our readers. Material to me at the email below by Wednesday would be great. And if you get the answers to Margaret's quiz it would be good to know. They are fiendish questions.

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