



Stay Home, Stay Safe!

POTTEN **END**
& **NETTLEDEN** **CHURCH**

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020



EDITORIAL

Welcome to our 'lockdown' issue of our Newsletter for May. Due to the on-going situation we were unable to get this issue printed and distributed, so we hope that you will still get the same enjoyment from reading it.

During this unprecedented time we have seen the community really come together showing various acts of kindness to one another and offering help especially to those who are vulnerable in our Village. Our 'Live' streamed services have been extremely popular and we must publicly thank Joe and his family for working so hard keeping our church 'at the heart of the Village'.

In the past we have all had different experiences of the NHS, but during this period they have done a magnificent job. Thank you and God bless you all for your hardwork and dedication. Inside this Newsletter there is a poem which sums up everyone's feelings and the magnitude of the job they are doing.

Our Village Shop - Cedars' and Rumbler's Farm have also done a remarkable job in keeping the community supplied with essential food items.

Of course this month on Friday 8th May we should be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of VE Day but this now won't be as public as it would have been and at the end of the month there is another Bank Holiday which won't be the same.

In fact, will life ever be the same again? It's a good question and nobody really knows, but due to apps like Zoom, House Party and Facetime maybe social communication with our family and friends will be different and especially with apps like Teams, the way in which we work may also change. Working from home isn't for everyone, but not having to commute for hours at the start and end of each day certainly isn't being missed!

Finally, thank you to our regular contributors, who have always made the deadline for submitting their articles. We really appreciate your support as well as you, our readers.

Who knows when we will be able to go back to a printed copy, but until then, please stay home, stay safe and protect the NHS.



Wash your
hands



Use a tissue
for coughs



Avoid touching
your face

Tuesday 'online' Gathering

*A time of fellowship
and conversation*

Meeting ID:
795-6497-6202

Password:
htpetues

Join us on Zoom,
Tuesdays, 10-10.40am





FROM Rev. JOE ROBERTS

Team Vicar of Holy Trinity, Potten End and Director of Schools' Ministry (Associate Priest) for St Peter's Berkhamsted.

What a difference a day makes - well it was perhaps longer than twenty four little hours but while there might have been some indication as to what was to lay ahead, I don't think any of us could have fully envisaged what transformation to our lives, our relationships and to our community, this

coronavirus pandemic would bring.

I remember writing last month's Newsletter introduction and while changes were beginning to happen and the impact was starting to become clear, I never for one moment thought that in such a short space of time nigh on all the services, events and goings on advertised within it would be cancelled because the government guidelines changed overnight to simply 'stay at home'. Thankfully though we still had the ability to print and distribute it, and was able to include a vital flyer that included information about how the community would offer support when we had some idea of what all this might look like. Huge thanks to the Parish Council for paying for the cost of printing this and to some fantastic community minded individuals who drew people together to set up what is now known as the 'Potten End Nettleden Frithsden Covid 19 Mutual Aid' Group and the great work that is being undertaken.

The work of this group, the rallying around of many, the networks of support and care that has been created, the outpouring of gratitude to all those in the NHS and all those who are key workers, is such a positive outcome in what is a horrendous and difficult situation that we find ourselves in. That there is glimpses of light in the present darkness should offer us hope, strength and assurance that humanity cannot just prevail but is also able to flourish.

Yes, there has been unprecedented change. Yes, our lives have been turned upside down. And yes, it seems we are in it for the long haul, but it is awesome to see just how in our responses and adaption, that we are finding a new normal. Even within the church, I have been so encouraged by all those who are connecting into our worship and prayer pattern and engaging in vastly different ways. Not gathering in the church building on Sundays, especially for Holy Week and Easter continues to be difficult - our identity as practicing Christians is wrapped around a sense of physical gathering, a communion in the broadest sense of the word. However, in discovering ways in which we can still experience fellowship, how we can still hear, reflect and act upon God's word, and find creative ways to pray (prayer jogging included!), we are still 'church' and we are still God's hands, eyes and ears, in a time where listening, being attentive and responding are vital.

During this time of isolation, we are being given a serious opportunity to reflect upon our lives, our actions and our relationships. Just who do we want to be as individuals, as a friend, a neighbour, a community, a church, as one humanity? It allows us to go to the very essence of our identity as human beings and ask ourselves what I want the new normal to be in me and to begin that process of change.

Instead of ending with a final selection of prayers, I came upon this pertinent and profound reflection that I want to share with you from Christine Sine, facilitator of the website Godspace and former physician: ➡





FROM Rev. JOE ROBERTS cont'd

"The life that sprang from Jesus' death and resurrection reshaped the world. His disciples were never the same again. It reset their priorities to have a totally new set of values at the centre - a set of values where love of God and love of neighbour held centre stage.

COVID-19 will probably reshape the world too. We can try to go back to the old normal and let the media hype convince us that the old ways are the best ways, or we

can reach for a new normal where we look after each other, are concerned for the vulnerable and relish once more the awe and wonder of the world in which we live.

As I look at the beauty of creation around me and listen in awe to the wonder of the new birdsong I am hearing at the moment, I think "This breathtaking brilliance and glorious song is what I have been missing" and wonder what else of God am I missing because in the old normal I was too hurried, too distracted and too self-focused? Am I missing the depths of God's love for me? Am I missing the extent of God's care for me and the myriad ways this is connected to God's care for the rest of humankind and for creation? Am I missing the kind of balance that God wants me to have in my life between work and rest, solitude and community, self-care and care for others? These are questions that have been lodged in my mind in the last couple of week."

While we still do not know what the future holds, let us all hold fast together, open our hearts to believe in God who brings ultimate peace and transformation, and dare to live life in all its uncertain fullness. **Every blessing, Joe.**

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE UPDATE

On behalf of the whole of the PCC this is a continued message of thanks to all those who have kindly and generously donated towards the cost of creating our new Garden of Remembrance and its surrounding area. The Appeal for this has now closed, as our focus shifts towards the general finances of the church.



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, work has had to be postponed on the landscaping of the garden and the laying of an accessible path. We are hoping this will commence over the summer months and we will make sure we update you when we have any further news.

The Garden is 'open' for internments. Therefore if you have cremated remains of a loved one(s) and would like to 'lay' or scatter them to rest in the Garden, please contact me (vicar@holytrinitypottenend.org.uk / 01442 865217) in the first instance. We can sort all the arrangements and, if you wish, I can undertake a short service of remembrance for the deceased in the church (as a continuation and conclusion of the funeral) before processing out to the plot and committing their mortal remains to the goodness of the earth. Anyone who is resident (or who has lived) in the parish; anyone whose name is on the church electoral roll (or has been in the past); anyone who has died in the parish; or anyone with a strong connection to Holy Trinity and/or Potten End (subject to approval of the vicar), can be interred in the Garden of Remembrance.

Holy Trinity strives to be present offering comfort, care and love through the various rhythms of life, from birth to death to letting go, so please let us journey with you in good times and in bad, in sorrow and in joy. **Rev Joe.**



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

First and foremost, we would like to say how moved we have all been by the community spirit demonstrated over the past weeks. This period is challenging, upsetting and even devastating for some, but the strength of the friendship and support that it has prompted has been an incredible discovery and something to cherish when we emerge from this pandemic. Last Thursday's 8pm doorstep symphony

was particularly uplifting, with the sounds of trumpet players, violins, whistles, bells and of course clapping reverberating around the village.

The neighbourhood volunteer network is also thriving - the biggest challenge appears to be finding enough tasks to keep them busy! Well done to all the organisers and volunteers in this amazing effort - you are all a credit to our community. We hear there is stiff competition to be the first to volunteer for any Cedars Village Shop deliveries, with response times now measured in seconds. You know who you are!

Like all of you, we have been adjusting to working slightly differently in these strange times. Our last public meeting was held over Zoom, and we were able to have members of the public participate as well. Joining details will be posted on our website in advance of the next meeting (21st of May) if you want to tune in.

Parish council business does carry on, albeit differently. Parish land (mainly The Green, Spencer Holland, the sports ground, the Old Green) has been largely maintained. The Spencer Holland playground, however, continues to be closed in line with government guidelines. Kevin, the Parish Warden, has started to clean the village benches and signs and treat the timber where appropriate. He has also put up our "Tommy" silhouette in honour of VE day.

A number of highways issues, including the speed limit on The Green, have been put on hold as county staff have been re-allocated to more urgent matters during the pandemic. Despite the current constraints, Dacorum BC continue to clear fly-tipping promptly. If you see any fly-tipping please report it either to the Parish Clerk or directly to Dacorum.

If residents need any support beyond the local volunteer networks, Hertfordshire County Council have a number of ways to access help:

- If you have been identified by the NHS as being on their Most Vulnerable List you should have received a letter with details of how you will be supported and who to contact ("Operation Shield"). If you haven't received this letter please contact HertsHelp on the number below.
- If you are self-isolating and in need of support, or want to request help on behalf of a Hertfordshire resident, please visit www.hertshelp.net, email info@hertshelp.net or call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044 ("Operation Support").
- If you are currently using a social care service you should expect that to continue and if you have urgent care needs you should speak to them first, or call 0300 123 4042.
- If you would like to volunteer to help, e.g. by delivering supplies or being a friendly voice over the phone, please visit www.thvolunteering.org.uk or call Herts Help on 0300 123 4044.

You can visit us at <https://nettledenpottenendpc.org.uk>, or contact our Clerk on 01442 781124



CHURCH FINANCE UPDATE

Due to our Newsletter printers temporarily closing and the fact that magazine door-to-door delivering is not a responsible course of action at present, this electronic Newsletter will almost certainly not be 'distributed' as far and wide as our usual 800 print-run. As such there are no adverts included in this format, and for those

who do advertise, we are moving the date the adverts run from forward until our Newsletter goes back to 'normal'. The same is being applied to those organisations who hire the Church Room - we are allowing them to rearrange or not charge them. Therefore, the church is not getting vital revenue for as long as this goes on.

While some of our operational costs have decreased, mainly through not using the church building (although this is not as substantial as you might imagine - including no reduction in a proportion of Joe's stipend) it is still costing around £1,200 a week. On the flipside our income has also significantly decreased, mainly through not using the church building, Church Room and Newsletter.

While we don't want this to be a plea about giving money, as with many charities at this time, who are getting no government aid (and please be aware that the church does not receive anything from the state anyway), this is a cause for concern for us and we are currently in discussion about having to use our reserved funds to sustain our cash flow.

We hugely thank all those who have donated towards the ongoing work and mission of Holy Trinity, and those who have continued to give by Standing Order or the Parish Giving Scheme. If you would like to set up a standing order for a regular amount or leave a legacy in your will towards the church, then please email treasurer@holytrinitypottenend.org.uk for more information. If you would like to make a one off donation, then please send/deliver a cheque to Rev Joe at the Vicarage, or visit our GivingMachine page www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/causes/holy-trinity-church-pcc to donate online or find out how when you shop online at over 2000 retailers you can support Holy Trinity.

Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to help further and support not just Holy Trinity but also other charities and volunteer organisations at this difficult time. *"Let each one give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9.7).

BIBLE READINGS FOR MAY

If you perhaps can't view our Sunday worship on our website or Facebook page or you can't download the orders of service, and you'd still like to follow our appointed readings, then please find them listed below. Due to time constraints we will be only having one reading on Sunday - the one in bold on the list. If you don't possess a bible but have easy access to the internet, please visit www.biblegateway.com to view many different versions to suit your reading style. At Holy Trinity, for our public worship, we use the New International Version (NIV).



3rd May Acts 2.42-end
 John 10.1-10
10th May Acts 7.55-end
 John 14.1-14
17th May Acts 17.22-31
 John 14.15-21

24th May - Ascension Day

31st May - Pentecost

Acts 1.1-11
Luke 24.44-end
Acts 2.1-21
John 20.19-23



STAYING CONNECTED WITH HOLY TRINITY

There are various ways that we are trying to keep people secured together in worship, prayer and support during this unprecedented time of isolation, uncertainty and worry.

Together in worship:

Every Sunday - join live on our Facebook page at 11am or watch the service pre-recorded on our website. The order of service can be downloaded from our website or through our e-news.

Every Wednesday - a reading and short reflection will be uploaded to our website for your own time of personal prayer.

Monday & Friday - 8am Morning Prayer live streamed on our Facebook page.

Tuesday & Thursday - 5.30am Evening Prayer live streamed on our Facebook page.

Collective Worship at 10am Wednesdays - live streamed on our Facebook page then put on our website.

'Offline' worship resources and support are available from Rev Joe.

Together in prayer:

Prayer resources and support can be obtained from Rev Joe.

Visit our website for various resources to aid you in you and your family in their prayer life.

Visit www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer

To undertake your own Daily Prayer.

Together in support:

Tuesday 'online' Gathering - 10 till 10.40am on Zoom.

Join us for a time to socialise, relax and have fellowship together. Please provide your own refreshments!

Visit our Facebook page for more information as to how to access this.

E-news weekly email - sign up on our website or contact Rev Joe.

Keep praying for each other. Reach out to one another by all safe means possible.

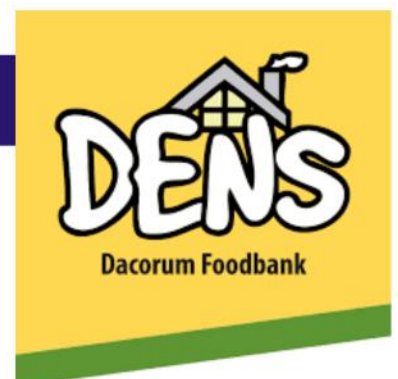
Contact Rev Joe if you are lonely, would like a chat or a time of prayer. Let us not be alone.

www.holytrinitypottenend.org.uk vicar@holytrinitypottenend.org.uk / 01442 865 217

Facebook - www.facebook.com/holytrinitypottenend or search Holy Trinity, Potten End on Google. You do not need an account to view our content.

DENS FOODBANK COLLECTION BOX

Outside the village shop is a box for items to be donated for the DENS Foodbank. DENS is run in partnership with The Trussell Trust and provides emergency food parcels to anyone who is struggling in the community, not just those who are homeless. Currently when many are struggling financially their work is vitally important.



On the box is a list of items of greater need that the charity is currently asking for and this will be updated regularly. DENS asks that NO baked beans, cereal or pasta are donated at this time and that items are unopened and within their best before date. Holy Trinity will regularly empty and deliver the items and ask that if you have a large donation, please drop it off at the Vicarage.



BOOK REVIEW

CONCLAVE by Robert Harris

Cardinal Lomeli, the Dean of the College of Cardinals, is seventy-five years old when the call comes. 'The throne of the Holy See is vacant.' In other words, the Pope has died. And

it falls upon Lomeli, to manage the election of his successor. As Bellini, another cardinal says, 'Thank God for our Dean ... we may have need of his diplomatic skills in the days to come.'

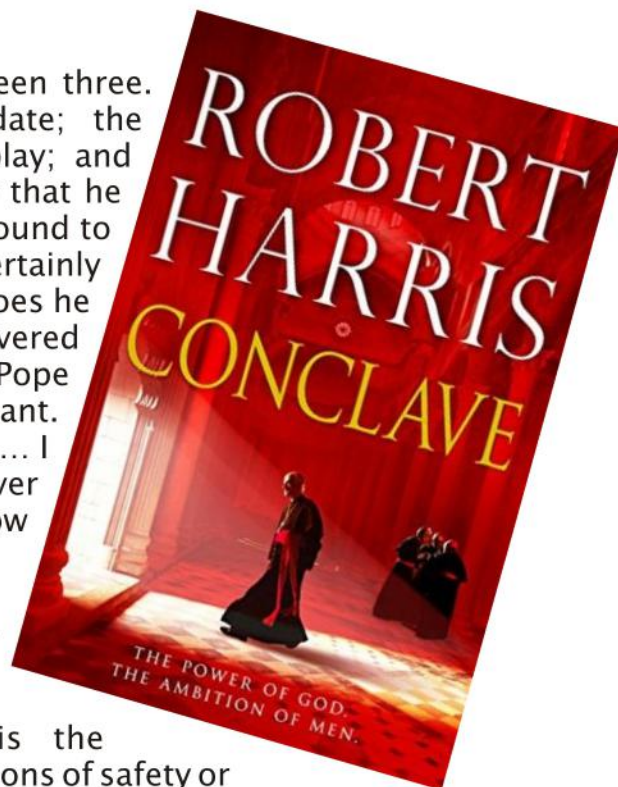
At first it seems that the contest will be between three. Bellini himself, sincere and a good candidate; the somewhat overly suave and ambitious Tremblay; and Adeyemi who carries within him the possibility that he may be the first black Pope. The latter two are found to have skeletons in their ecclesiastical closets. Certainly Lomeli does not stand out as a contender, nor does he wish to be. Spiritual, devout, and recently recovered from cancer, Lomeli had approached the late Pope about retiring. But the Holy Father was adamant. 'Yours is not a pastoral role. You are a manager ... I need you here.' Lomeli is hurt - a manager? However in the days of the Conclave that follow we see how right the Holy Father was. Lomeli has to manage.

His first problem is the arrival of the cardinals. A hundred and seventeen cardinals are ticked off the list. But then another arrives, one whom nobody was expecting. Vincent Benitez is the Archbishop of Baghdad, created secretly, for reasons of safety or politics, by the late Pope.

Benitez is unassuming, and, indeed, unknown. Except by reputation. His ministries in the Philippines and in Africa were both active and dangerous. Many wish to meet the man who did such good work. But Benitez is quiet and modest. Slight of build and softly spoken, he is of marked contrast to the other cardinals. Is he genuine? Has the Conclave been duped? Or is he a fascinating, and deeply spiritual, man?

The novel is concerned with the characters of the cardinals, together with their motives and machinations for power as the Conclave votes, and re-votes, to decide on the next Pope, guided, as Lomeli believes, by the Holy Spirit. Lomeli is, himself, touched by its workings, too. This is a really good read with a very big surprise when the new Pope is elected. And an even bigger surprise at the end.

LitChic



STAY HOME - STAY SAFE!



FRED'S TIPS FROM THE POTTING SHED

May is here and the sun is shining. It's a nice bit of positivity during these unprecedented times and it's the perfect opportunity to do a spot of gardening and maybe some veg growing. The soil is getting warmer and sowing and planting out bedding can start, but don't be in a hurry to put any tender crops outside until frosts are over in late May.

Top 5 jobs this month

1. Mow lawns weekly as they thrive in warmer temperatures.
2. Regularly hoe weeds with a sharpened hoe.
3. Earth up potatoes and promptly plant any still remaining.
4. Sow runner beans, French beans and sweet corn outside directly in the soil.
5. Check for nesting birds before clipping hedges.

Watering and Rainwater Collection

We had very little rain in April and May can be one of the driest times of the year. Most gardens begin to dry out later this month so make sure seedlings are kept watered. Newly planted trees and shrubs also need regular watering using cans or buckets.

Use water butts to collect rainwater. Fixing the butt to the downpipe of your house or shed roof will enable you to collect rainfall which is much better for plants than the hard tap water we get locally.

The benefits of gardening

Research has shown that gardening can directly improve people's wellbeing.

With lots of time on our hands whilst self-isolating, it's very beneficial to spend time outdoors in the garden, maybe tackling some of those projects you have been putting off for years. There's nothing better than getting exercise whilst gardening, with the reward of freshly grown food, bursting with vitamins and minerals.

Garden humour

A toddler was found chewing on a slug. After the initial surge of disgust the parent said, "Well, what does it taste like?" "Worms," was the reply.

LAUGHTER - THE BEST MEDICINE

Having just read that the President of the USA was suggesting taking disinfectant to eliminate coronavirus, it wasn't long before we heard a story about a vicar's wife in the USA, who injected her husband with disinfectant. Unfortunately, the vicar passed away soon after being given the fatal injection.

The police were called to investigate the death and the wife was subsequently charged with Domestic Violence and also with a Bleach of the Priest!

Whilst queuing outside Sainsbury's the other day a young man approached me and asked "Excuse me, but is there a B and Q in Hemel." I said "No, it's spelt H.. E.. M.. E.. L!!!!"





NEW BEEKEEPER'S DIARY

I have just completed online the British Beekeepers Association Annual Winter Colonies Survival Survey 2019/20. This aims to determine its members' honey bee colony survival and to understand the causes of success and failures in overwinter colony survival.

I reported my 2/5 hives survival. I was concerned to hear from a fellow beekeeper in the district of 30 years standing, that she too had lost three out of her five hives. One reason put forward is that last Autumn we had a lot of ivy flower, and we know that the nectar, when stored, crystallizes in the comb - setting very hard like Kendal Mint Cake. The bees then find it difficult to access later in the Winter and whilst there are technically stores in the hive, the colony can starve. This matched my experience.

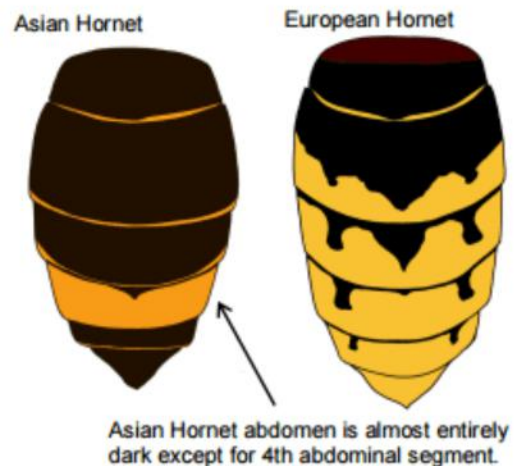
Whilst Covid 19 is of no concern to the bees, the UK Government restrictions have already had an impact leading to wholesale cancellation of the apiary meetings, training courses and the Spring Beekeepers Convention with some 1500 participants registered.

This is likely to impact on the rate of education and knowledge of beekeeping, but of more immediate concern is the on-going and increasing threat of the Asian Hornet into the UK which I have mentioned in past months. Since 2006 there have been a total of 17 confirmed sightings of the Asian Hornet in England and nine nests were destroyed. Further south in Jersey the number was 60 nests. To remind - the Asian Hornet is an invasive species which will decimate honey bee colonies. One Asian Hornet can decapitate up to 50 honeybees in a day as they seek food for their own brood and are active from April to October.



The general public - you! are asked to look out for these pests and with the Asian Hornet Watch App on your phone you can report sightings directly to the National Bee Unit. Meanwhile I am putting out Hornet Traps.

The good news is that my two surviving hives are well. Queens are laying and I can see the tiny eggs and white larvae and an increasing amount of "capped" brood which will hatch into young bees 21 days after the eggs are laid. The colony size will be increasing from around 10,000 Winter bees, who will die off having survived for six months, up to 60,000 in June/July, and will provide the foraging work force to continue collecting nectar, pollen, propolis and water. Spring is sprung!





A POEM - LEST WE FORGET!

We received this lovely poem that Ann Charlton has been circulating to her friends during this 'lockdown' period. Its a fitting tribute to all those who work in the NHS and on behalf of Holy Trinity Church we thank each and everyone of them.

I'll tell you a tale, that's been recently written.
Of a powerful army, so Great it saved Britain.

They didn't have bombs and they didn't have planes.
They fought with their hearts and they fought with their brains.

They didn't have bullets, armed just with a mask.
We sent them to war, with one simple task.

To show us the way, to lead and inspire us.
To protect us from harm and fight off the virus.

It couldn't be stopped by our bullet proof vests.
An invisible enemy, invaded our chests.

So we called on our weapon, our soldiers in Blue.
"All Doctors, All Nurses, Your Country needs you".

We clapped on our streets, hearts bursting with pride.
As they went off to war, while we stayed inside.

They struggled at first, as they searched for supplies.
But they stared down the virus, in the whites of its eyes.

They leaped from the trenches and didn't think twice.
Some never came back, the ultimate price.

So tired, so weary, yet still they fought on.
As the virus was beaten and the battle was won.

The many of us, owe so much, to so few.
The brave and the bold, our heroes in Blue.

So let's line the streets and remember our debt.
We love you, our heroes,
Lest we forget.

Matt Kelly 2020



STAY HOME - STAY SAFE!



FRENCH CONNECTION

NOTES UNDER HOUSE ARREST

France being France I suppose it was inevitable. In fact, given the rapid evolution of 'Apps' for everything, it's surprising that it took so long. This particular 'App' is called 'C'est la Grève' - 'It's the strike'. Modern French history, as I mentioned last month, started in 1789 with the Revolution. And continued in 1830 with another one, and again in 1832, and in 1848, and in 1871 with the Commune, the bloody insurrection in Paris following the disastrous Franco-Prussian war. And so on, sometimes more democratically than others, like, for example, the separation of Church and State. Or allowing railwaymen to retire at 52. Both decisions taken in the first decade of the 20th Century have haunted the state locally and nationally ever since.

Oversimplified, modern French history has been a tug-o-war, often violent, between the left and the right, more vituperatively than in the UK. Protest is a sacred right, which is fine until it becomes violent. Which it often does. Striking, especially on the railways, is a national pastime. Rail unions are avowedly extreme left/communist. However, we have zero public transport in Central Brittany due to politics and chronic short termism during 19th century railway development, which after 20 years of manoeuvring led to the lines following the south coast to Quimper and the north coast to Brest. Transport strikes are therefore irrelevant, but nonetheless I installed the App to know what I'm missing.

Then our lockdown arrived, rather as the Assyrian destroying Sennacherib, but without the gleaming cohorts. On March 14th, all bars and restaurants closed at midnight by decree. On Tuesday 16th, we had free movement until midday, before we needed our bits of paper - "attestations dérogatoires" - to leave the house. We switched to ordering everything online from the supermarket drive-through. And the village shop 6 km away has been reborn (maximum four customers simultaneously). The town hall immediately reviewed its list of people 'at risk'. Everyone has rallied round.

Consequently, I was surprised yesterday to read a Times Online report by Charles Bremner from Paris suggesting that France is riven by fear and mistrust. It might be in some places, but judging by the many online comments from expat British, less rather than more. And certainly not round here. Of course, France has its problems, but a Parisian worldview is usually flawed. I know of no incidents in which the police have been over-officious. There's been no panic buying locally. Naturally, the restrictions have been drawn up by bureaucrats: only a bureaucrat with free printing would create a single use form*. The Ouest France newspaper has started publishing four blank 'attestations' per day. I created an A5 version and I use Tippex to change the date and time. Mind you, I've not been stopped yet! Call it house arrest 'light'. But at least we know what we can and can't do. But here's the question: is it working?

Two weeks in, I glanced at 'C'est la Grève'. On the 6th January there was a national lawyers' strike. Unremarked. No surprises there then. A general strike proposed for 31st March was cancelled. The communist CGT union proposes a public service strike from the 1st to the 30th April, courageously taking the view that life, or rather disruption of it, must go on. Wholly admirable. One unintended consequence of this debacle has been the longest period of social calm since we came to France 25 years ago (excepting the Summer holidays when even demonstrators/strikers need a break). And the marketing calls have stopped! The sun is shining, silage has begun and the heifers are back in our meadow. Every cloud has its silver lining...

*STOP PRESS: Smartphone version of the "attestation" became available 6th April. **Vagabond**



VE DAY CELEBRATION SERVICE

VE Day Celebration Service (& stay at home street parties)
Come together for a short live streamed act of worship on **Friday 8th May at 11am** on our church Facebook page to give thanks for all those who fought for peace across Europe. This will be an act of celebration and remembrance including prayers and liturgy from the first national VE Day church services held 75 years ago and a time of silence.
Once the service has been live streamed it will be uploaded to our website before 12noon.

On that day you also might like to have a 'stay at home' street party in your own home or front garden! We are aware that not everyone has a garden but hopefully you'll be able to find something red, white or blue to adorn a window or door. If you are picnicking outside remember to keep a safe distance from your neighbours.

For ideas from bunting, food to music, please visit: www.ve-vjday75.gov.uk/plan-your-ve-day-party.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK - 10-16 MAY

As the Covid-19 virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. You've already shown incredible kindness to your neighbours. Now is the time to reach out to your neighbours both near and far.

Your love protects. From storms, from drought, and now from coronavirus. Your love protects our global neighbours battling the spread of this illness. Your love protects. With soap, clean water and medical supplies.

By supporting us this Christian Aid Week, you can reach out and protect more of your neighbours today.

Please visit www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week to find out more about their vital work and how you can support financially.

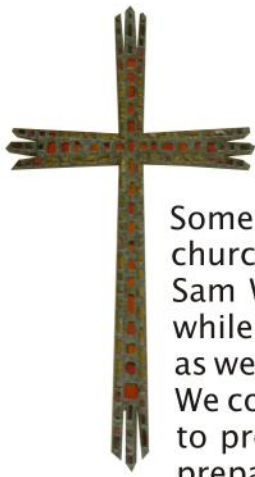
Christian Aid prayer for times of isolation:

God of heaven and earth,
in these times of isolation,
apart from loved ones, distant from friends, away from neighbours.
Thank you that there is nothing in all of creation,
not even coronavirus, that is able to separate us from your love.

And may your love that never fails
continue to be shared through the kindness of strangers
looking out for each other,
for neighbours near and far
all recognising our shared vulnerability,
each of us grateful for every breath,
and willing everyone to know the gift of a full and healthy life.
Keep us all in your care.

Amen.





SOMETHING MORE INFECTIOUS

Something More Infectious For all of us who are missing physically gathering in church for worship and prayer, below is a poignant reflection from the Revd. Dr. Sam Wells, vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, which while were made on 15th March this year, they are still timely and perfect for us as we sit in this season of Easter - a time of new life, hope and love.

We come to church each Sunday, we pray and read our Bibles through the week, to prepare ourselves. Jesus grew up in Nazareth, travelled around Galilee to prepare himself for Jerusalem. In Jerusalem people discovered who he truly was, and what his words and actions really entailed. We've spent decades, many of us, preparing we knew not what for. Well, now we know. This is the moment when the world finds out whether being a Christian makes any difference or not.

In Britain, we say pray for a sunny day, but take an umbrella. I'm not saying in the face of the virus we don't take sensible steps. We must follow public health advice. We do so not because others are a danger to us, but because we might, directly or indirectly, be a danger to them. We're a community defined not by fear but by trust, not by scarcity but by plenty, not by anxiety but by communion. It's time to show our true colours.

This is the time to find ways to overcome isolation that don't involve touch. We have this opportunity to explore the hinterland of the word with, that doesn't always involve physical presence, but still means solidarity and kindness, generosity and love. We will limit our contact to protect the most vulnerable, but we still need to proclaim that there's something more infectious than coronavirus - and that's joy and peace, faithfulness and gentleness.

It was in its most bewildered hour that Israel in exile found who God truly was. This is our chance to discover what God being with us really means. None of us would for a moment have wished this crisis on anybody, let alone the whole world. But our faith teaches us that we only get to see resurrection through crucifixion; that we see God most clearly in our darkest hour.

Remember what Isaiah tells us. You shall cross the barren desert; but you shall not die of thirst.

You shall wander far in safety - though you do not know the way. If you pass through raging waters in the sea, you shall not drown. If you walk amid the burning flames, you shall not be harmed. If you stand before the power of hell and death is at your side, know that I am with you through it all. Be not afraid, says our God. I am with you like never before.

This is our faith.

STAY HOME - STAY SAFE! PROTECT THE NHS!!