

A plea from our school charity The Friends of the Three Schools (Reg. Charity 1056791)

We have missed you! Under normal circumstances we host a variety of events throughout the school year, where we see you and, at which, you unfailingly support us...Thank you.



Your help, encouragement, support and contributions are what make our fundraising events such great successes - raising funds for incredible opportunities for our children, such as;

- * Educational visits
- * Play equipment
- * Classroom resources
- * Renovating our outside spaces
- * Forest School
- * Social, emotional, health and wellbeing facilities
- * Transport to the pantomime, subsidised tickets and an ICE CREAM! (always important)
- * Coaches / transport for school trips
- * Books
- * Outdoor and exercise equipment

We've always been very grateful for your continued support of our events. But we do need some more help. The impact of Covid-19 is far reaching and our schools have not escaped unscathed. Thankfully, our wonderful staff and pupils remain happy and healthy - but unfortunately our bank balance less so. As The Friends of the Three Schools hasn't been able to host any of the fundraising events that we had planned (Easter Bingo, Smarties Competition, School Discos, Popcorn Nights, our Summer Fete and Sports Day) we have a deficit of around £4,600, which works out at approximately £22 per pupil.

The financial impact of Covid-19 on our wonderful schools

Due to lockdown, our schools have been unable to offer the normal additional childcare (wrap around and after school clubs) that so many of us rely on - and which bring in critical funds for the schools. Our schools offer a plethora of enhanced opportunities for our pupils, Forest School, Play Therapy, Counselling and Whole-Class Musicianship to name but a few. These 'extras' are funded by private income the school generates itself through Wraparound, Consultancy support for the local authority and hosting training.

Approximately £35,000 revenue has been lost since March but there has been no reduction in school running costs. These costs haven't been offset by a central government pot, schools are not eligible to claim for loss of income, they have been funded by the schools directly. Thousands of pounds have also been spent on getting out wonderful schools Covid-19 compliant to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of staff and children in this unprecedented time. The thermometers alone are £80 each, not to mention the deep cleans at £1,000 per time and carpet cleaning at £700 per school, along with each child having their own dedicated stationery. In short our schools have had significantly increased and unbudgeted outgoings, with considerably reduced incomings.

How you can help

School have already received some generous donations that have been put to great use in meeting increased costs - thank you. We are hoping we can further redress some of our losses with your help. We are asking parents and carers to make a donation to The Friends of The Three Schools if you are in a position to, so that we can continue to contribute towards providing the best facilities and opportunities for our children. Perhaps you'd consider donating the price of a dinner you have missed or an event that has been refunded due to lockdown? For example a donation of £10 buys two new books, £18 buys a new classroom chair, £65 pays for a new classroom table or, if anyone has a good lottery ticket, £255 would buy Mrs Sandmann a new outdoor water tray. We did consider asking you to support your child in a sponsored skipping/baking/running/hopping /reading/maths challenge - but we thought perhaps you would prefer a simple donation request. We are all parents too, we understand. The Friends of Three Schools want to use this money to support the following spend goals - which are unachievable at present without increased funds.

- A new storage shed for Drayton Parslow outdoor equipment and furniture for the Early Years (circa £2,000)
- A role play area at Mursley (circa £400)
- Grass matting for the Kingfishers play area (circa £2,000)
- Outdoor gym equipment for Swanbourne (£10,000)

As always we are grateful for your support, by whatever means. If you would like to make a donation please visit our JustGiving page which will allow for gift aid to be added. <https://www.justgiving.com/friendsofthreeschools> Please feel free to see if the grandparents and extended family want to get involved and contribute too. Thank you for your continued support.

Open Gates

August 2020

The monthly magazine for the 5 parishes

The Slide

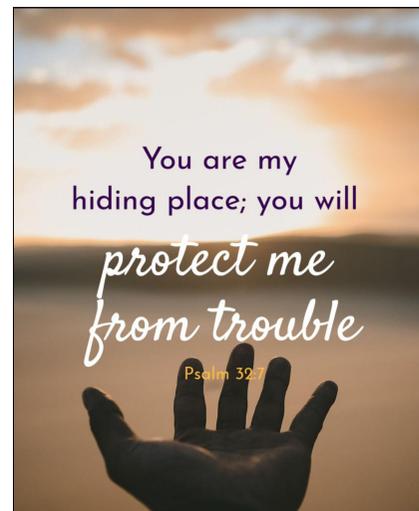
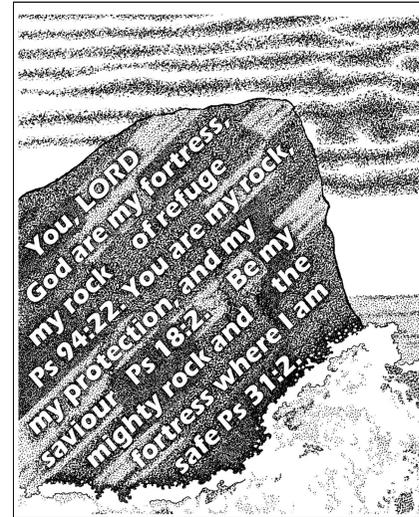
As I watch
She climbs the steps steadily,
Holding the handrail,
Her two-year old feet following each other
Rhythmically, unhesitatingly
To the platform at the top
Where she sits down
And freezes.

Holding tight to the sides,
Knees up, feet flat
She judders down a little way
Then looks up.
Her eyes meet my smile, my outstretched arms -
And she takes her hands off the edge of the slide,
Shooting forward with a squeal of delight,
Trusting the love she knows.

Lord, I have climbed so steadily,
I have come so far, in my own strength,
Holding on, holding back,
Sometimes freezing.
But I am your child,

Today I will lift my eyes
And meet your smile, your outstretched arms,
I will lift my juddering feet -
And take my hands off the edge of the slide
Released to ride, by your Spirit,
Into the freedom of your will,
Trusting the Love I know.

By Daphne Kitching



Contact Details

Rector: Revd Simon Faulks, The Rectory, Main Street, Mursley. MK17 0RT
Tel: 01296 728531 Email: simon@5parishes.org.uk Day off is nominally Saturday
Associate Minister: Revd David Talks, The Rectory, Drayton Road, Newton Longville. MK17 0BH Tel: 01908 366330 Email: david@5parishes.org.uk
Nominal days Fridays - Sundays
Retired Minister: Revd Jackie Brown, 5 Berry Way, Newton Longville. MK17 0AS Tel: 01908 270159 Email: jackie.br@tiscali.co.uk

Please contact the Clergy or your Church Wardens to make arrangements for any special events eg weddings, baptisms or funerals or other pastoral matters.

Church Wardens:

Little Horwood	Vacant		Vacant	
Mursley	Andrew Cowell	720425	Bey Christian	720630
Swanbourne	Jill Bailey	720498	Vacant	
Drayton Parslow	John Preston	720426	John Perry	728847
Newton Longville	Stephen Creasey (01908) 648800		Anne Robinson	631109

Churches in the Benefice

Little Horwood	- St. Nicholas
Mursley	- St Mary the Virgin
Swanbourne	- St. Swithun's
Drayton Parslow	- Holy Trinity
Newton Longville	- St. Faith's



Information for September 2020 issue by 12th August please to

Bey Christian or Caroline Pettit,

Old Stocks Church Lane Mursley, MK17 0RS

Tel: 01296 720630 or

e-mail:- bey.christian@yahoo.co.uk

or your Village Contacts:

Little Horwood Olivia Bull - 714061

Mursley Caroline Pettit - 720785

Swanbourne Jill Bailey - 720498

Drayton Parslow Susan Piddock - 728163

Newton Longville Tom Bartlett - 07482 247287

All articles in writing please

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Please direct your enquiries to

**Bey Christian or Eleanor Robinson
(Treasurer - 01296 720409)**

We are very grateful for the support of our advertisers and for the information about village events. However this does not imply endorsement by the Editors or the Church.

Mursley Church Reopened for Services

Mursley church building is now open again for Sunday services. Services have been held since 5th July led by churchwardens and lay people. During August churchwardens and lay people will lead 9.30am Morning Prayer on 2nd, 16th, 30th and 11am Family Service on 9th and 23rd. Our clergy are continuing to lead the benefice zoom service for those who prefer the virtual service at this time. Clergy will join us for services when they are available.



Services are currently said as we are unable to have communal singing. However we are able to once again meet together and take time out to reflect, pray and support one another as we come to terms with the times in which we now live. These times are some of the most disruptive and disturbing that we have lived through for generations. Our church has seen many changing times over the centuries and has been a place where previous generations have sought comfort and courage among the fellowship of Christians. Our church bells are again calling people to worship as service ringing recommenced on 19th July.

Mursley Church building continues to be open daily from 9am to 5pm for private prayer and reflection. Food bank collection point is located in the church porch. We hope that you will take time to either call in during the week or for one of our services.

If you would like to know more please contact one of the churchwardens, Bey (720630) or Andrew (720425).

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

I have an exciting opportunity for a local school leaver to work with myself as an apprentice whilst studying at college for a **Horticulture Landscape Operative Apprenticeship Level 2.**

If you are passionate about the outdoors and interested in gardens and gardening, please contact me for more information. Thank you.

Clare Hodges

clarehodges65@gmail.com



From the other Rectory

'Why is my computer so slow today?' 'What's it doing?' As an ex-IT person even I ask the question - although I (usually) know the answer! It's so tedious having to wait for its brain to focus on my task! Understanding helps, but it is still very frustrating! Human brains, like my PC, prefer predictability. They also like novelty - but in small doses! Give a computer too many new things to do too quickly and it will do them slower than if you asked it to do them serially. And it may just 'curl up and die!' - you have to reboot and start over!

In this edition, I feel it's important to write a double-length reflection to address the issue of 'collective trauma', lest we suffer the same fate! In recent months several theologians, ministers and psychologists have sought to help us understand 'collective trauma', its symptoms, and the frustrations presented. An important note they make is that trauma is what we experience inside as the result of an external event that overwhelms us. Responses are unique to an individual. We flee, fight or just freeze. Our response is 'normal' to us and may be very different from other peoples'.

Collective trauma is related – leading to personal trauma and often dragging up past, personal, repressed traumas. If numbers are very large, as in this global pandemic, trauma 'radiates' between individuals, communities and even nations.

The pandemic has assaulted the structure of community, been life-threatening to many, presenting us with lack of predictability, lack of control, grieving: impacting the very way we live. It is an invisible enemy, threatening all that we have built in businesses, churches and communities. Even the process of meaningfully gathering to lament what has been lost is extremely hard. The situation is still unfolding and there are many losses yet unrevealed.

The implications are exhausting. We are constantly being thrown new information to process. So when trying to deal with a routine decision, our brains are slow to engage with the task and we might ask, 'what's my (your/his/her) brain doing?' 'why is it so slow?' Understanding helps, but it is still very frustrating!

On the positive side, biological research tells us that the simple act of 'naming a truth' builds new neurological pathways in our brains. Thus naming each loss we notice within ourselves, and approaching each with gentleness, helps us to earth ourselves and concentrate better.

Many people are asking what life will look like when this is 'all over'. Tied up in those questions are hopes that out of this loss might come new patterns of life that are better than the old ones. It is probably too soon to be fleshing out such hopes, or prescribing directions for their fulfillment, but it is not too soon to be consciously planting seeds or noticing new life appearing.

Continue overleaf

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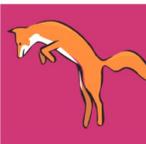
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Editor: We continue our occasional series on different common flowers. By Kirsty Steele, a retired teacher and active church organist. You could invite your readers to look out for rosebay willowherb, and to send in pix of any they find in your locality.

The stately Rosebay Willowherb

If wildflowers were to compete in terms of height, Rosebay Willowherb would have to be one of the contenders for first prize. By mid- to late-summer its height can reach four feet or so [120cm] with pyramids of pinkish-purple flowers cheering up the most unlikely places, for it is happy to grow on railway cuttings and embankments and amongst ruined buildings and disturbed ground. Indeed, during the Second World War, Rosebay Willowherb was often one of the very first plants to cheer up London's bomb-sites, and even ground that had been cleared by fire, resulting in it having another, but far less attractive name - Fireweed.

Spring flowers tend to have white or yellow petals - snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, wood anemones and celandines. This trend is abruptly changed when bluebells make an appearance. By midsummer however, warmer colours have made an appearance, and Rosebay Willowherb is no exception. The flowers, with deep pink petals intercepted by purple sepals account for the first word of the name, while the leaves, which grow in spirals around them, are responsible for 'Willowherb' being added, as they become narrow at each end, and therefore resemble [loosely!] those of a willow tree.

In the times of Queen Victoria this wonderful plant was a treasured addition to many gardens and it was not nearly as abundant in the countryside. However, Mother Nature soon dealt with that! Once the flower is pollinated, seed capsules form. When ripe, they split to release many, many billows of seed, all ready to be blown far and wide by autumn winds.

So, we now have a plant loved by many, often from a car or train. But while the size and vibrant colour mean it cannot hide, the fluffy seeds tell us that autumn will not be far away.



FROM THE REGISTERS

Funeral

19th June	Anthony Paul Hilton	Swanbourne
9th July	Diana Frances Titley	Newton Longville
15th July	Joan Elizabeth Airs	Newton Longville

Burial of Ashes

15th July	Adrian George Thomas	Mursley
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From the other Rectory continued

'Where is God in this?' Much writing about trauma cautions against getting caught up too soon in this question. We should be patient with uncertainties of the heart, to 'love the questions themselves' and to live them, without seeking answers.

So we need to look after ourselves. Trauma affects us bodily as well as emotionally. Accept unexpected emotions. Don't try 'getting back to normal' too soon, if at all. Lean toward life-giving and sustaining things because we are nowhere near 'post-trauma'. We will see significant effects for several years to come. Take life more slowly as our brains are processing so much behind the scenes.

We can also grow through trauma, learning wiser lifestyles. Reap the wisdom of these times – but don't jump to the end. It's a bit like the Bear Hunt game: 'Can't go over it, can't go under it, can't go round it – got to go through it!'

Jeremiah was a prophet of the Old Testament who, amidst the huge events of the ruin of the temple, and exile of his people, causing acute collective trauma, yet writes with hope. While lamenting for their collective and personal losses he pauses to note his fervent and certain hope which I commend to you:

[21] Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

[22] Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

[23] They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

[24] I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

[25] The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

[26] it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.
Lamentations 3:21 (NIV)

David

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Wildlife on Mursley's doorstep Part 2

In my last article I urged you to explore the footpaths to the north and south of Mursley village. Today I want to send you off west and help you to find butterflies. Walking west down Church Lane you will have on your right the impressive belt of tall poplars where Greater spotted woodpeckers can often be heard. As you progress, the wildflowers and woodland edge shrubs become more diverse. During July check the scattered elms - although now rather shaded, you might just spot a White-letter hairstreak butterfly, either high up drinking aphid honeydew from the surface of leaves or taking nectar from nearby bramble flowers.

The stream that winds its way through the trees passes under the road to form a marshy patch with Bulrushes and other tall wetland plants. This is a good place to spot dragonflies and birds like Reed buntings. Make sure to scan the lakes over the field on the left - as well common water birds, Grey herons and families of Greylag geese this area occasionally attracts passing raptors, including an Osprey a couple of years ago.

At the end of the road take the footpath straight ahead, and after two stiles and a kissing gate you enter a wonderful triangular field. This is not only the last remaining patch of good quality semi-improved grassland in the whole parish, with a diverse range of wildflowers and insects: it also shows a complex intersecting ridge-and-furrow pattern dating from a pre-enclosure large field system. It is sympathetically managed by Swanbourne Estate, with low level sheep grazing allowing sheets of Cowslips to flourish. Other wildflowers like Bird's-foot trefoil and Pignut mean it is a great place to spot summer butterflies like the Common blue and the day-flying Chimney-sweeper moth. This is probably one of the best places to see many of our common butterflies.

Walking the path that stays close to the southern hedgerow, on a humid day with a few sunny periods, I spotted 16 different butterfly species, including many Commas and Red admirals enjoying bramble flowers in the hedge. The taller grassy field edge here was being enjoyed by Marbled whites and both Large and Small skippers. There were also dragon/damselflies ranging from tiny Common blue damselflies, drifting about in the still air, to chunky Broad-bodied chasers, darting from perch to perch.



If you walk on, through a small wood, and then cross the road at Dodley Hill Farm you can explore more meadows and woodland before returning via Duck End, the Betsey Wynne and the lakes. Contact me for a parish footpath map or to let me know what you find - jonesmick365@gmail.com

Mick Jones

**Mursley Sports Association
Anyone for tennis?**

If you would like to play tennis, we now have a brand new tennis net on our astro turf pitch at Mursley Playing Fields. So why not book to play for an hour....or two? Just £7 per hour for Mursley residents.....

To book, either call or text Sandra (Bookings secretary) on 07711 823198 or 01296 720074 or message via our MSA Facebook page, or email: msafinance@outlook.com



**Mursley Village Hall will re-open
from 3rd August**

200 Club - Due to restrictions for door to door collections impacting subscriptions for this year, the 200 Club will not be holding any draw's for the 2020-21 year. For those people who have paid their subscriptions we will be allocating each person an extra number in next year's draw and it is also anticipated there will be the ability to increase the prize funds at some draws. **However if you would prefer to have your subscription refunded please contact David Bartlett on 01296 720177.**

Village Hall AGM will be held Wed 14th October at 730PM - people wishing to attend should register their interest with a committee member

Mursley Church, Village Hall and Sports Association Update

Andrew Cowell (church), Barry Agnew (VH) and Duncan Jones (MSA) have continued to discuss the joint approach to events in 2020 and 2021 as we understand the relaxation of Covid-19 lock down. We are still very much in the learning phase of what we can do as a community in larger groups. We want to get events going as soon as it is practical to do so but at this point a large scale event seems beyond what restrictions permit. We have spoken about a non-fundraising activity day which is still our intention, this now looks like the autumn at the earliest.

Our events that are in the pipeline are listed below, we will continue to review as restrictions are lifted.

- Church/VH/MSA non fundraising activity day. On Hold
- 24 October 2020 Pig Racing On Hold
- St Patrick's Day 2021 celebration event On Hold
- 26 June 2021 Fete, date in the calendar
- Artisan Food and Drink Festival 2021 On Hold



We are pleased that in our community the sports field is being well used, our church has now reopened and we can enjoy a drink in the Green Man. We hope that we can soon get back to planning and enjoying the events listed above.

Any thoughts or comments please contact Andrew Cowell (07990 534940), Barry Agnew (07810 587498), Duncan Jones (07989 921052)

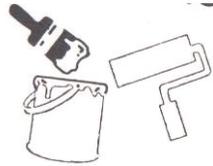
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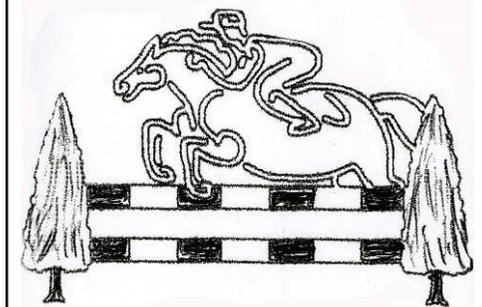
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Editor: Nigel Beeton says: "I have really enjoyed being out and about and seeing a bit of life coming back into the town... just to go out and see people, what a joy!"

The Lockdown Lifts

There's life in the town!
No longer 'locked down'
The people stroll out in the sun
The majestic trees
Sway in the light breeze
Like they wanted to join in the fun!

Like light after dark!
We can walk in the park!
Buy our tea, and sit out on the grass!
We can chat to our friends
As our loneliness ends
And we smile at the strangers we pass!

Yes there are still queues
Which cease to amuse
But things are no longer so black!
As they sing in that song –
You miss what is gone,
But it's great when at last it comes back!

By Nigel Beeton

Editor: Megan Carter recalls: "Whilst looking at the Westminster Catechism, I thought a lot about the opening line 'What is the chief end of man?' It is this thought that motivated me to write the following poem."

The Chief Purpose of Man

How clever man is, he has conquered the skies,
Reached for the stars and stepped onto the moon,
But he still does not know why he is here
Or what is the purpose, or why he was born.

And did it all start with one big bang
As stars and galaxies burst into space?
Or was it the hand of a mighty Creator
Who lovingly fashioned this wondrous place?

Into this world God planted a garden
And placed man there to enjoy its delights,
But he soon disobeyed, and sin entered in,
And so, man was banished and thrust from God's sight.

How gracious God is, He has reached out again
To reconcile man and bring him back home,
Sin's debt has been paid by the death of His Son,
To know God as Father is why man was born.

By Megan Carter

Holy Trinity

The Church is now open for said morning prayers (lay led) on 26th July, 9th and 23rd August at 10am. The church also remains open on Wednesday evenings from 6-7.30 pm for private prayer. Visitors are kindly requested to use hand sanitation on entering the church and to respect social distancing. Any comments or queries, please contact the Church Wardens.

Church Mice raising money for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity

While we have unfortunately not been able to celebrate Mousefest2 at Holy Trinity this year, we are able to help raise some funds for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. To celebrate 70 years of the NHS and to show our gratitude during these very difficult times, we are selling nursing mice. Handmade with love, each mouse is approximately 13cms (5ins) in height. As with so many charities, the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the Florence Nightingale Hospice with many of their fundraising activities being cancelled. We would therefore appreciate a minimum donation of £7.50 per mouse. Every penny of your donation will go to the hospice charity.



We also have angels and choir boys for sale to support Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. They are the same size as the nurses and are also £7.50 min. donation. To order a mouse, please contact Susan via email spiddock@john-lewis.com Thank you for your support.

The Pavilion, Drayton Parslow Sports & Social Club For information on hire please telephone Sarah on 07970 820342.

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Swanbourne Methodist Chapel

During July, we have been holding services in Brises Farm barn, but from the beginning of August, we will be returning to the chapel. However, due to the need to stay physically distanced, we are limited in the number of people who can attend on each occasion to 8 individuals or household pairs. **So anyone planning to attend should phone 720454 beforehand to check that there will be room.** If we cannot accommodate someone one week, we will try and arrange a space on a future occasion. So please do come and join us if you would like to.

Our services are at 5 p.m.

August 2nd - Rev Keith Edwards

August 9th - Rev Donna Broadbent-Kelly

August 16th - Mr Arthur Sara

August 23rd - Rev Richard Atkinson

August 30th - Rev Keith Edwards

Ken Harris

St Swithun Church is also holding occasional services, please check church notice board for details.

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Beetroot hummus (Sandwich ideas)

By Dr Rupy Ajla, From Cooking in the Doctor's Kitchen

Preparation time less than 30 mins; no cooking required; Serves 8

For the hummus

1 tsp cumin seeds; 250g/9oz cooked beetroot, drained and quartered; 400g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed; 1 garlic clove, peeled; 1 tsp ground coriander; ½ tsp flaked sea salt, and to taste; 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil; 2tbsp fresh lemon juice; ground black pepper

For sandwich option 1

1 slice sourdough bread; generous dollop beetroot hummus; handful watercress; 1 tsp mixed chopped nuts and/or seeds; drizzle tahini

For sandwich option 2

1 slice wholegrain bread; generous dollop of beetroot hummus; 2tbsp kimchi

For sandwich option 3

1 slice rye bread; generous dollop beetroot hummus; small handful sprouted lentils and/or sprouted beans; few parsley leaves, few mint leaves, torn drizzle olive oil

Method

Toast the cumin seeds gently in a small dry frying pan for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.

Put the beetroot, chickpeas, garlic, coriander, salt and olive oil in a food processor. Add the cumin seeds and lemon juice and season well with freshly ground black pepper. Blitz until smooth. Check the seasoning to taste, adding a little more salt, pepper or lemon juice if needed, and blitz again.

Use the hummus as a spread for sandwiches and wraps or as a dip. Keep covered in the fridge for up to 3 days, or freeze.



Boundaryless

We are surrounded by boundaries which keep our lives, communities, and society orderly and generally smooth-running. From parish and village to benefice, deanery and diocese ; district, county, nation, kingdom, union (for now), all the way up to continents with aquatic boundaries.

Jesus teaches us to love and act without boundaries, and the example of an itinerant, homeless Messiah is compelling. Paul and others followed , crossing borders and leading others to the Kingdom, ignoring the boundaries within which they lived.



We are in the grip of a pandemic which has crossed many boundaries, and which has largely kept us confined to our homes and village... but we can still reach out and help, across the boundaries. St. Faith's will be re-opening to some degree in coming days (stay tuned for more details) ; can we re-open our hearts to people and places we don't know who are in urgent need ?

Both the Disasters Relief Committee (DEC) and United Nations (UN) have launched appeals for donations to help the hundreds of millions of people in developing countries whose lives and livelihoods have been further threatened by the pandemic. Visit www.dec.org.uk

Closer to home, if you'd like to support struggling individuals and families by phone, email, post or social media across the county/borough boundary in Milton Keynes, contact Tom.bartlett@aspireoxford.co.uk, or 07717 893585.



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Parable: The Strength of a Seed

At this time of year we enjoy the fruits of our gardens, fields and hedgerows: vegetables ripen, crops are harvested, and berries begin to show bright among the leaves. Much of this growth started with a few seeds in spring: the miracle of life coming from small dead-looking things. There is a league table of long-lived seeds. The winners so far are from the narrow-leaved Campion, buried by squirrels in the Siberian permafrost over 30,000 years ago. When those seeds finally germinated, they became healthy plants that flowered and produced seeds of their own.



The Bible contains many links between seeds and spiritual growth, and the parable of the sower is the most famous (in Matthew 13). A person may hear or experience something of God which has the potential to germinate into a life of following Him, resulting in the fruit of others coming to know God too. But things can happen that snatch that seed away, killing it before it has finished germinating, or choking its growth.

What about the knowledge of God that gets trampled, churned too deep in the mire of life to receive the warmth and light it needs to develop into faith? Buried seeds don't always die, but they can lie dormant, remaining alive but inactive until the earth is turned over. The possibility of that moment of connecting with something divine, scrap of knowledge, or snatch of conversation resulting in a changed life may seem infinitesimally small, but it's not zero. The seed may be incredibly tough, just waiting for a chance to grow.

The Gospel narrative plays on the fact that it took a long time for the disciples to understand the full implications of Jesus' teaching: a germination process that took many of them three or more years. They could have been discouraged, but Jesus was not. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to draw out of the parable of the sower to include the observation that it can take a long time, sometimes decades, for people to work their way through the various barriers, sticking points, and phases of forgetfulness that may keep them from following through on their spiritual experience. When we finally receive – or are open to – the encouragement, challenge, or experience that helps our faith in Christ grow, we can experience the rich fruit of a transformed life.

Dr Ruth M Banciewicz, on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Little Horwood Church tower restoration. After a short pause due to the Coronavirus lockdown, we are pleased to announce that it's full steam ahead for the bell project.

We have a start date of late September, when the old bell frame will be removed, and if there are no further delays, the new frame and bells will be installed and ready to ring by early next year.

Although most of the funds have been raised, there is still a shortfall of several thousand pounds. We will be asking for donations and resuming fundraising in the near future, watch for details.

To celebrate the start of the work and kickstart the fundraising we will be holding an event on August Bank Holiday Sunday (30th). We hope this will involve cream teas and if possible, trips up the tower to see the old bell frame.

Thanks for your support so far.
Cheers
Jeremy



The project is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Thanks

I was overwhelmed with the kindness of villagers who offered to get shopping for me during the lockdown. It was hugely appreciated.

Special thanks goes to the chocolate fairy (you know who you are!) without whom I couldn't have survived.

What a generous, amazing village we live in!
Carol
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What have you missed most during lockdown?

It's a good question, because it is about the things that make us tick. When I examined my list, I found obvious things - going to church, live sport on TV, meeting up with friends for a coffee or a beer. But as I thought more deeply about it, I realised that what I missed most was TOUCH. For nearly four months I have not touched another human being!

That is an astonishing deprivation. When a baby is born, its first experiences are all of touch. The strong hands of the midwife, mother's excited and loving embrace, tiny hands reaching out to feel mummy's face. We touch our way into life. And then it goes on. Holding hands with friends, being hugged by grandma, your first serious kiss, and perhaps a last tearful one at the end of a much-loved life.

We greet each other with a holy kiss, the Bible says. And why not?

Sight, smell, hearing and touch. Four senses. And I think lockdown has taught me that the greatest of these is touch!



Garden Page

GARDENS ARE GOOD FOR US!

August is traditionally holiday time but if you are not going away this year, enjoying your garden and other outdoor spaces in nature can be just as good. It has been proven that being in a garden may offer your health a boost by lowering stress levels and even improving sleep. Many charities and health services are tapping into gardening therapy, often in walled gardens, which give a sense of enclosure that is a hallmark of many healing environments.

It can be really exciting to start a new garden project and you might like to invest in your well-being by creating a 'snug' in your own garden – a place to go for meditation and cultivating mindfulness. A flower bed for your senses, set against a hedge, or a wall with space for a small sheltered seat at the back, is perfect - surrounded by plants with a protective wall of foliage at your back.

Physically tending our gardens is good for us too. This month, enjoy the warm weather outside and get your garden in shape at the same time. Here are some gardening jobs for August:

1. Watering! Water patio pots, fruit and veg and new plants if dry, but be water-wise using grey and stored water where possible.
2. Continue weeding borders and dead-heading flowering plants to keep your garden looking good.
3. Raise mower blades during dry spells to help grass retain moisture. Don't worry if your grass does turn brown as it will recover when rain returns. If you have allowed an area of your grass to grow long to encourage wildlife (please do) carefully mow now after flowering.
4. Trim hedges once birds have finished nesting and the new growth looks untidy.
5. Summer pruning Wisteria by cutting back the whippy green shoots to five or six leaves.
6. If you grow your own, harvesting veg takes priority now, but you can also sow carrots for a treat next year and plant winter brassicas.
7. If your garden needs some late summer colour, extend the season by adding ornamental grasses, Crocosmia, Helenium, Japanese anemones, Penstemon, Sedum, Phlox, Hydrangea and Ceanothus 'Autumnal Blue' to name but a few.



Happy, healthy gardening everyone!

Clare Hodges
Gardener and Yogini

Support your local charity shops

Are you feeling the financial squeeze just now, but still enjoy shopping? Why not visit some of your local charity shops?

Never have charity shops needed you so much. Coronavirus has meant a huge drop in donations, and many charities face huge financial shortfalls.

The good news is that charity shops are well worth visiting this summer. Vast amounts of clothes and household items were donated following the lockdown this Spring. Grounded at home, people decided to declutter and clear-out!

The result is that, as a spokeswoman for Oxfam says: "People can expect to find some really great treasures to buy."

It should be very safe to shop, for as Julie Byard of Cancer Research UK, explains, the charity shops put all donated items into isolation before putting them on the shelves. She adds: "We're grateful for all donations and to everyone who volunteers and shops with us."

CAP still helping people out of debt

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) have been thanking their donors for helping "some wonderful things happen" despite the challenge of coronavirus.

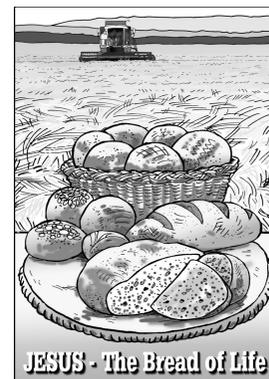
"These beautiful moments were made possible by your support," says Paula Stringer, UK chief executive of CAP. "We've been able to make sure our clients don't go without essentials like food, fuel and staying in touch with loved ones. Our frontline workers have distributed 345 instances of emergency client support so far, and they will be able to continue providing this for many more.

When one client could not get to the supermarket because her car needed repairs, she was astonished to find that her Debt Coach, Beth, had arranged for a delivery of groceries to her house. In return, she sent this message:

"I was so shocked and welling up. It was such an amazing thing to do. Your gift came at the right time, as I wouldn't have had enough to get that much food."

During lockdown, CAP has adjusted its service to offer phone appointments to clients, 479 of these so far.

"We've also seen a fabulous 494 people become debt free during lockdown! Despite the new challenges, we're seeing that there really is always hope," says Paula Stringer.



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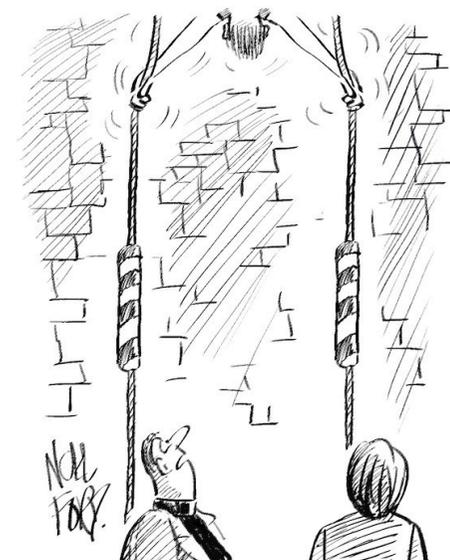
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Eric took social distancing
while bell ringing very seriously.



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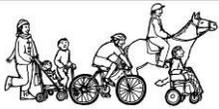
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Full info available at www.rideandstrideuk.org/

"The world and all
that is in it belong



to the Lord, the
earth and all who
live on it are His."

Psalm 24:1

Editor: by Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former Director of Communications with the CofE.

When Christ stood in Trafalgar Square I'm not a big fan of statues - but my favourite was the life-sized figure of Christ that stood in London's Trafalgar Square during the Millennium celebrations. It stood on the square's previously-empty fourth plinth, going almost unnoticed among the surrounding grand statues and with Nelson's Column towering above it.



The statue, called Ecce Homo (Behold the Man), was built by conceptual artist Mark Wallinger and erected in 1999. He explained: "I consciously made Him life-size. We are made in God's image, and He was made in our image. "So for the statue to stand in contrast to the overgrown relics of empire was definitely part of the plan."

The figure was made of white marble resin, and depicted Christ standing before the multitude with His head slightly bowed.

I found the statue of Christ deeply moving and kept returning to Trafalgar Square to stand and gaze at it. Because to me, the statue declared Christ's vulnerability. It stood as a reminder that the God of all creation came to earth as a man and lived among us. He gave up His life so that we might have salvation. There, with London's traffic rushing by, pigeons coming in to land, and tourists snapping photographs of each other, Christ stood unobtrusively. Standing, you could say, at the door of our consciousness, and asking to be let in.

In a BBC interview at the time, the artist said that he wanted the statue to be an antidote to the "spiritually empty celebration" then taking place at the Millennium Dome in Greenwich.

It certainly had a deep effect on me. In April 2017, the statue of Christ was placed on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral during Easter. Again, I watched as tourists passed by not noticing the figure. It was a modern-day parable in marble resin.

When the Apostle Paul took a stroll around Athens, he spotted the various altars and statues to the Greek gods. He found an altar 'To an Unknown God' and declared that this was "the God who made the world and everything in it" who had made Himself known in Jesus Christ.

Just as Mark Wallinger took possession of the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square for Jesus Christ - the reason for the Millennium celebrations - so Paul claimed the 'unknown God' altar in Athens for the Christian gospel. The Bible has always been wary of putting people on pedestals. It shows us all sides of the people it describes, warts and all. It tells us that Moses was a murderer, that David was an adulterer, that Paul persecuted the first Christians and that Peter denied Christ.

But all of us have feet of clay, and few of us deserve to be memorialised for centuries in stone or marble. Rather, we are gently encouraged to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

CHURCH SERVICES AUGUST 2020

Information & Service details in the Benefice

A new email list for the Benefice, for sign up form either click straight through to here <https://www.subscribepage.com/o9h0v3> or you can visit the website at www.5parishes.org.uk and click the link 'stay in touch' which you will find under the contact tab.

Please do pass this round to anyone you think might be interested, you can ask to be updated about just things specific to your parish or the whole Benefice (we would particular recommend including the Benefice at the moment as much of our online stuff will be for all). You can update and unsubscribe from lists at any time by clicking a link at the bottom of each email.

Benefice Zoom Service Sundays 10.00am

The Online Services from the past few weeks is also available for viewing under the Blog section.



Join us online at 10am Sunday morning Diocese of Oxford

The Diocesan live-stream will begin at 10am from around the Diocese and three of our bishops working together, each from their own homes (God willing).

- ◆ Download the order of service
- ◆ Watch the service on the website, on Facebook or on YouTube

Everything you need can be found at oxford.anglican.org/livestream

Sunday 2nd August	Mursley	9.30am	Said Morning Prayer
Sunday 9th August	Drayton Parslow Mursley	10.00am 11.00am	Said Morning Prayer Said Family Service
Sunday 16th August	Mursley	9.30am	Said Morning Prayer
Sunday 23rd August	Drayton Parslow Mursley	10.00am 11.00am	Said Morning Prayer Said Family Service
Sunday 30th August	Mursley	9.30am	Said Morning Prayer

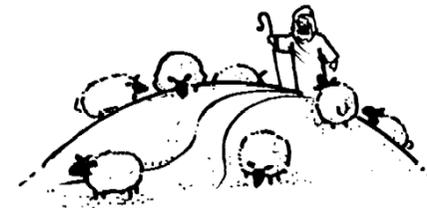
Services will be Warden/Lay led with Clergy participation when available

Please note the following points for Mursley

1. We have a safe capacity for up to 38 households.
2. A distance of 2m should be kept between individuals at all times.
3. There will be a one-way system around the church, with entrance through the South porch as usual.
4. The toilet will be closed but will be available if required in an emergency.
5. Please sanitise your hands upon entry and follow the instructions of the sidesperson and notices.

Those who are at extra risk and "clinically extremely vulnerable" are advised of the risk of attending public worship, a decision to do so is theirs alone.

Bey Christian (01296 720630) and Andrew Cowell (07990 534940), the churchwardens,



CHURCH SERVICES SEPTEMBER 2020

Sunday 6th September	Mursley	9.30am	Said Morning Worship
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