

Steyning and Ashurst

Church Magazine JULY 2020



ISSUED FREE



**Steyning Parish Church,
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Our church buildings re-opened for individual private prayer following the easing of government restrictions effective from 15 June.

As this magazine went to press the government had announced its intention that meetings in places of worship could resume under 'Step 3' of its timetable for lifting Covid-19 social restrictions. Indications were that this would not take place before early July.

Please join our email list to be kept informed of unfolding developments. You can contact the Parish Office with your details on:
office@steyningparishchurch.org or 01903 813276.

We plan to continue to provide worship resources on our website (and by post for congregation members without email) after we are permitted to gather again for worship to meet the needs of those who need to stay at home for the protection of their health.

Fr Mark, Vicar of Steyning and Rector of Ashurst

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THE OFFICE REMAINS CLOSED BUT IS STAFFED REMOTELY

Post is being picked up and the telephone diverted to the

Parish Administrator: Pat McMullan.

FR MARK WRITES



Dear Friends,

The old Scottish word for 'church' is 'kirk', just as in Germany it is 'kirche', and 'kerk' in Dutch. In French and Welsh on the other hand the words are 'église' and 'eglwys'. These latter words (and 'iglesia' and 'chiesa' in Spanish and Italian) come (via Latin) from the Greek word, 'ekklaesia', meaning **assembly** or **gathering**, of people or citizens.

The origins of Scots 'kirk' and English 'church' are more obscure. Both words probably mean simply **the Lord's** – what belongs to him, his house or dwelling place. It is the same across the Scandinavian and Slavonic languages. Again, the root word for 'Lord' is originally from the Greek, 'Kyrios' (as in 'Kyrie eleison', 'Lord, have mercy').

The idea that the Lord God dwells in a house or tabernacle is an extremely ancient one. In the Old Testament of course it goes all the way back to the exodus of God's people from Egypt. Just as the Lord led them, as a pillar of fire or cloud, when the people were moving, when they stopped, Moses would encounter God in the 'Tent of Meeting' (Exodus 33:7-9). Eventually the Tent became the Temple with its Tabernacle, the 'Holiest of Holies'. Whilst the prophets made clear that God's presence was not limited to any early habitation, this sanctuary was regarded as the ultimate holy place, the Lord's 'footstool', the place where God's presence rested on earth (Isaiah 66:1-2).

So, don't let anyone tell you that 'the church is the people not the building'. Yes, the church *is* the assembly of people, breathing stones that are built into the 'living temple' that is Christ's presence on earth through the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 2:5). But the word 'church' also correctly refers to the building, where prayers have been offered and God has been worshipped, century after century. Our churches are important in much the same way that Moses and the Israelites needed signs of God's saving presence on their journey through the desert.

This explains why, in these months of 'lockdown', we have missed that place where we find this significant sense of divine and abiding peace – just as the bread and wine offered in Holy Communion are outward signs of God's invisible but effective and real sacramental presence. However ancient or modern, humble or magnificent, our cathedrals and churches remind us not only of how generations proclaimed the faith in the past, but that the faith has a future too; one that cannot be constrained under arches or confined within stained-glass windows.

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Church doors are supposed to be unlocked. Now that we have opened our church doors again, let us remember that this is not only so we may enter the Lord's House but also to depart from there – as heralds and ambassadors of the gospel we are called to live by, and to proclaim.

fr Mark

FROM THE EDITOR:

Welcome to the July edition of this Church magazine. Thanks go especially to those who have sent in articles. It is a real joy to be able to put together a magazine that has you at the heart. So much has been written about coronavirus, and of course it is still uppermost in our minds, but my hope is that this magazine will allow us a few moments to think hopefully about the future, our faith and the sure promise of redemption.

Please send in something for the next edition of the magazine-
steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

Take care and stay safe

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell will be confirmed as the 98th Archbishop of York at 11am, Thursday 9 July in a service available on the Church of England's web site. Arrangements for an enthronement service will be announced later this year.

DEATHS

Alan Robert Stenning

Died Saturday 23 May

James (Jim) Buckman

Died Monday 25 May

Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them.

Our love and prayers for Alan and Jim, and all their families during this difficult time.

PRAYERS

God of love and light,
In this time of fear, give us your peace.
In this time of isolation, give us your presence.
In this time of sickness, give us your healing.
In this time of uncertainty, give us your wisdom.
In this time of darkness, shine your light upon us all.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

This summer, church weddings in Steyning and across the UK have been postponed. Please pray for all couples as they face disappointment and reorganisation.

O gracious and holy Father,
Give us wisdom to perceive you,
Diligence to seek you,
Patience to wait for you,
Eyes to behold you,
A heart to meditate upon you,
And a life to proclaim you
Through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

St Benedict

A prayer for children when a friend is ill

Dear God, *(name)* is ill.
They cannot go to school, or come over to play.
I'm sad because I miss *(name)*.
(Name) must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.
Please be close to *him/her*.
Please be with all the people looking after *him/her*.
Please help *(name)* to get better and to know that you love *him/her*.
Amen.

PRAYING FOR YOU

The weekly Sunday electronic bulletin gives all the information about what is happening with services, local support etc, and how to access these. There is also the list of those needing our prayers. Any new prayer requests should be sent to office@steyningparishchurch.org

TANKER TALES

At the start of lockdown I felt drawn to my book shelf, from which I pulled out three books for me to read again over the coming weeks. I have a tendency these days to make a point of actually reading the contents page, it gives the reader an overview or structure of what is to be discovered within the pages that follow. A chapter from each of the three books included the titles – The Prayer of Faith; Listening to God; Sifting Through False Intelligence. We need to try and make sense of the times we are living through and the above chapters are just as relevant as they ever have been.

As a key worker my perception of reality may be different from others. I have continued to work through this time and have never been so busy, when so many people have been made redundant or furloughed I do thank the Lord that I have a job to go to. Each day I have the same routine and apart from some significant changes at the office, once I am out and about life carries on as normal.

What is normal?

I will be honest, when this pandemic started I was petrified by what may happen. I was not sleeping well and each day I would run different scenarios through my head of what might be, each as horrific as the other, it was wearing

me down considerably. But this was to change at a delivery to a customer.

It was to a large farmhouse and the customer had several tanks to fill and at first he annoyed me as he insisted on accompanying me throughout. Up to then I had been treating every customer, every person, as a source of contamination as if they had the plague and I would go out of my way to avoid all contact. On this occasion however, we soon built up a natural rapport and we shared our interest of motorsport after I had spotted the Honda NSX in his garage. We spoke of the Goodwood Festival of Speed and past memories but also of joyful times to come. Yes, there were moments when the distance between us reduced to less than what we are told is safe, but, you know what...I really did not care. At this moment this customer, unwittingly, was ministering to me. As I left I felt so wonderfully uplifted and all fear had been lifted from my heart to be replaced with hope and joy.

Fear is a poison and it will prevent you from thinking critically and make you less effective. The best thing I did was to turn off all media. I would check in occasionally during the course of a day just to stay informed, but otherwise the radio and phone – all would be off.

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What this silence allowed me was the realisation that what I am being told and what I am seeing are not necessarily the same.

I did not need to look far in mainstream media to see contradictions.

Who or what should I believe?

With so much information available how are we to discern what is factual and what is false or maybe what is deliberately misleading?

The one thing that has remained true and will continue to do so for all ages is the truth we find in Jesus Christ – “After all that has been said, or that can be said, on the subject of faith, we come back to the simplest definition of all.

It is believing in Jesus Christ. All that seems to make it so difficult and complicated is due to nothing more or less than the assertion of man’s own ideas” (*E Howard Cobb*).

Time and again I have reflected on that passage and it has given me the strength to carry on. The author also says that we all start from the same level and we each have to come to the Cross of Christ.

Perhaps many of us have used this time of isolation to face our fears, accept our vulnerability and reached out to the Cross to rediscover the one truth that we ever need to know, and then to let that truth work in us and through us to teach and strengthen us – “to wait on the Holy Spirit to convince us of the reality of the presence of the Lord” (*E. Howard Cobb*). The power of Christ is working in us and in others but we can only see it if we allow the Holy Spirit time to overcome the stranglehold of fear.

The angel of death is not stalking every street corner and fellow humans are not to be feared, but to be welcomed as Christ himself. The hardest part of the lockdown has been the lack of the physical. We are all yearning for physical touch and interaction again, and as I go about my work I have now ditched my facemask and replaced it with my smile, a sign that expresses far more than words and yet tells the other that they are loved.

Steve McGrath



DID YOU KNOW..... That 2020 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, and also the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louisa Twining. Louisa Twining was an English philanthropic worker who devoted herself to issues and tasks related to the English Poor Law.



MAGAZINE DEADLINE for AUGUST 2020

MONDAY 6 JULY

Email address: steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

FAMILY SUPPORT WORK

Sue and I would like to share with you a recent letter from Martin CEO, and the Family Support Team.



"Over the last couple of weeks, we have received lots of thank you messages from our families, who are incredibly grateful for the continued support. For some families, they are thankful for receiving a food bank delivery, and for others, it is just being able to speak to a practitioner over the phone for some comfort."

Here are some of the messages:-

"Jacqui has been a great distraction for me and my family, she is always there, no matter the time or reason, for a friendly ear to listen"

"Thank you for everything, the food is great and my son loves the book. He's really happy with it"

"Thank you for bringing me my food delivery. I really appreciate it and everything you do for me, whether it's a food delivery, or a chat over the phone when you ring me on a regular basis, without your input I don't know where I would be."

We are so grateful for your continued support,

Sue and Wendy

JOYCE RICHARDSON

On Tuesday 9 June Vanessa, Sarah and Jill went to help celebrate Joyce Richardson's 90th birthday. Her daughter Deana was at the door with her, and the sun was shining enabling Joyce to sit with her ever-smiling face. She looked out onto the grass while we sang "A Happy Birthday to You" which was once our special church birthday song, which Joyce recognised. There was clapping and cheering, then we presented Joyce with her cards and flowers from the church family and friends. God Bless Joyce.



SAINT OF THE MONTH



BRIDGET OF SWEDEN (1303-1373)

FEAST DAY 23rd JULY

Bridget was the daughter of a rich governor of Uppland in Sweden and, at the age of fourteen, she was married to Ulf Gudmarsson, a landed squire. She bore him eight children and, in 1335, she was summoned to the Court of King Magnus II to be lady in waiting to Queen Blanche. She began to experience supernatural visions some of which were critical of Magnus and his Court making her unpopular. In 1343 her husband died and she had a vision calling her to a life of prayer and the founding of a monastery.

This she did in 1346. A distinctive feature was that it should be a double monastery consisting of sixty nuns and twenty-five monks who were to live in separate cloisters but worship together in the same church. King Magnus was generous in his patronage but Bridget decreed that all superfluous income should be given to the poor. The Order prospered and at one time there were seventy houses in many countries.

In 1349 Bridget braved a plague-stricken Europe travelling to Rome to ask the Pope for authorisation of her Order. This was not granted until 1370 by Pope Urban V. Bridget remained in Italy waiting patiently for a decision whilst devoting herself to a life of prayer and caring for the poor and needy. In obedience to her visions she went on pilgrimages to Compostella, Bethlehem and Jerusalem enduring many hardships and dangers.

She died on 23rd July 1373 and was canonised in 1391 as a mystic whose revelations were influential to the Faith during the Middle Ages. An example of her medieval spirituality is her Second Prayer –

“Blessed may you be, my Lord, my God and my love most beloved of my soul. O you who are one God in three persons. Glory and praise to you, my Lord Jesus Christ. You were sent by the Father into the body of a virgin; and yet you ever remain with the Father in heaven, while the Father, in his divinity, inseparably remained with you in your human nature in this world. Amen”

JAMES (JIM) CECIL BUCKMAN 1923 - 2020



Jim was my uncle. He liked to think he was our 'wicked uncle' but that was his sense of humour. He was anything but wicked!

Jim went into employment when he left school but after serving in the Royal Navy during WW2 he was delighted to be able to go to the University of Bristol where he gained a degree in Geography and Geology. He relished University life and was in the crew of the University rowing team. In 1952 he was asked to help set up a college for the sons of Government workers in Sargodha, Pakistan. This was the start of his teaching career.

My grandparents, James and Ethel Buckman, had retired to Steyning in the 1950s and lived in Kings Stone Avenue. When Jim returned from Pakistan in the 1960's we were very excited to meet him and hear stories about his adventures. The most memorable story was how he survived a crash landing on an aircraft in the desert in Egypt while travelling to Pakistan. In the circumstances all were lucky to get out alive. Jim believed that God was protecting him. Jim maintained links with colleagues and pupils from Pakistan and some of them continued to visit him in his last three years in Winchester. He really made his mark as a Geography teacher and House Master both at Sargodha and Aitchison Colleges. One of his former pupils wrote: *He will be dearly missed by so many of his former students, friends and relations. We all take comfort from knowing that he had a good, respectful and successful life and having completed his missions, he has gone to a better world than the one we are in.*

Another has written:

Rest in peace, my friend my Teacher. We learnt much from you and we owe much to you for making us what we all turned out to be in our lives.

Jim found his faith at the age of fifteen when his sister, (my Mother, Margaret Whelan), introduced him to a group of young people at a local church in Sanderstead near Croydon where they lived, which had an inclusive and friendly atmosphere. He started to listen to God every morning to give him direction in life. One of his first 'directions' (in 1938) was to make friends with his father. To do this Jim helped his father in the garden one evening each week. Together they discussed buying an Anderson shelter for growing mushrooms. This proved to be a wise move and the family spent many hours in this shelter in 1940!

Jim had many passions in life. Cycling was one of them. Some of you might remember seeing Jim cycling around Steyning, even into his 90's. Peggy tried to persuade Jim to hang up his cycle clips at this great age but he was not to be persuaded. Another passion was support of rural railways. Jim had been very much against the closure of the Steyning line which I remember we used when we travelled to Steyning to visit my grandparents. He wrote a book developed from his Masters degree thesis called 'The Steyning Line' and, I believe, gave many local talks about the matter. His detailed research was impressive and enthusiasm for the topic was infectious. Jim settled into life in Steyning with his wife Peggy towards the end of his teaching career. My parents, Tom and Margaret too had retired and were living across the road. All four were

devoted members of the congregation at Steyning Parish Church.

We have found an essay that Jim wrote in his retirement, titled 'What my faith means to me'. In this he writes about how he feels he was guided by God in all the major decisions of his life. As a boy of sixteen, he remembers hearing the broadcast of King George at Christmas 1939, in which he quoted from a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins called 'God Knows'. These words had a clear influence on him:



And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

Jim completed his missions in life. Although very sad at Peggy's passing, he was well cared for at Sunrise in Winchester in his last years and months.

Rosemary Smith

PRAYER DATES IN JULY

18 July Nelson Mandela International Day As we remember Nelson Mandela's life today, we pray for an end to racism and prejudice in our world.

Loving God, we pray for the Anglican Church.

May it be a light and a source of hope and peace to many. USPG

25 July St James the Great

James, man of prayer,
pray that we may listen and respond to
God's call in our lives.

James, holy apostle,
pray that we may be disciples of Jesus in
word and action.

James, devoted friend of Jesus,
pray that we may be strong in our devotion
to one another.

James, the fisherman, patron of labourers,
pray for us in our labours and help those
seeking employment.

James, witness of the transfiguration of Jesus,
pray that we may see the glory of God
revealed in our lives.

James, compassionate teacher,
pray that we may serve one another in love.

James, faithful to God's call,
pray for us in our efforts to live our catholic
faith.

James, comfort of the troubled,
pray for those who are suffering.

James, holy martyr,
pray that we may be prepared to accept our
own death.

Blessed James, may your inner spirit of
peace, good work, discipleship and prayer
always be an inspiration to us.

Holy Apostle, walk with us on our journey
of faith. May your prayers obtain for us the
wisdom to discern God's call and the
strength to endure, so that we may grow in
holiness and rejoice in communion with all
the saints. We ask this through Christ our
Lord. Amen.

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE

From USPG magazine KIONONIA, the General Secretary writes:

“.....These months will have given us an extraordinary opportunity to reflect on what it means to be an individual, a member of a household as well as part of a community and indeed, as a nation. Perhaps also a global community. Covid-19 has brought to the UK and ‘the West’ a reawakened sense of precariousness, risk and insecurity that we simply have not known at the level of society for decades. It has shaken our sense of security built upon an assurance of good health, on having a home and enough income to live a reasonable untroubled life.

Fear and anxiety have thus stalked our many lands. Understandably so. And yet, of course, many people in numerous societies know this precariousness not as an exception, but as a rule, the norm, the normal. They have had similar (or worse) experiences in recent years....Covid-19 provides cause for real concern, yet we were anxious before. Indeed levels of anxiety and depression have been on the rise for many years in ‘the West’. But feelings of insecurity and the realistic assessment of risk are very different matters. Jesus’ words imploring his disciples not to be anxious and to take their cue from the birds of the air and the lilies of the field is shot through with awareness of this reality. For the desire or perhaps lust for security, is in fact deeply connected to the feeling of insecurity itself. They are two sides of the one coin.

This isn’t to dismiss or diminish human suffering, but rather to point to a truth identified by Thomas Merton: ‘The truth that many people never understand is that the more you try to avoid suffering, the more you suffer’, because smaller and more insignificant things begin to trouble you, in proportion to your fear of being hurt.

Many of the societies and cultures of the global South place considerably more emphasis on the primacy of human relationships. That greater emphasis on living with and towards others is expressed in what might be described as the hashtag of African theology: ‘I am because we are’. This deeply known knowledge happens to chime with all the modern scientific findings on happiness. Whether, in a deeply mysterious and curious way we have learnt something of this for ourselves in our locked-down societies....I will leave with you”.

Revd Duncan Dormer

General Secretary United Society for Partners in the Gospel

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

We can and we must act.

When Ebola ravaged West Africa in 2014, it was local churches that helped lead the fightback. In Sierra Leone, Christians used video and radio broadcasts to spread vital health messages. Churches gave practical help to people in quarantine and church members provided food, water and toiletries.

We are already seeing the church rising to the challenge of coronavirus. In many communities around the world, it is Christians who are coordinating local care, creating neighbourhood WhatsApp groups, dropping off food and toiletries to those who are self-isolating, and being there to provide emotional response.

How should the church respond?

The church should be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). As the shadow of coronavirus falls across the land, the church's mission is to shine brightly.

We must follow Jesus in showing God's love, bringing healing to a broken world and responding to people's needs: economic and emotional, spiritual and physical, both locally and globally.

Creating a better world

If we lean deeper into God's love, choosing faith instead of fear, we may find that new opportunities emerge. There is the potential for communities to come together more than ever before; for families to re-discover themselves; for busy people to slow down and build a rhythm of rest into their lives; for people to reconnect with God and his world; for nations to re-tune into God's word; for churches to learn how to use digital technology to enhance ministry; and for us to develop more local, environmentally-friendly economies.

One day, we will make it out of this crisis. But what sort of world do we want there to be on the other side? Can we repent of the world we have created, and instead look to build one without such a huge gap between rich and poor – a world where we live in harmony with creation, in which we understand that the well-being of one is bound up with the well-being of all?

In Christ, there is always hope. We can let that hope motivate how we live our lives today as we hold on to God our rock. And, with the love of Christ in our hearts, let us continue to reach out with compassion and determination.

This is a shortened article written for Tearfund by Dr Ruth Valerio.

Dr Ruth Valerio is a theologian, environmentalist and author, and leads Tearfund's global advocacy and influencing work.

REFLECTION FROM THE CATHEDRAL ON 13.5.20

...Recently people will have had very different experiences of life in lockdown. For some it has been a frantic time of trying to look after children while still working full time. For others it has been a quiet reflective time of reading and gardening. But for all of us in the last few weeks life has focused on our household.

We may have had to adapt spaces in which we live for remote working or home schooling. We may have had a good spring clean, turned out some cupboards, or done a bit of DIY. We may have needed to work at our relationships with whom we live. In different ways we all have had to work out how to make the household function best for everyone.

The household is the unit of society over which we have most control and responsibility. In the ordination service all clergy are instructed to order their household in a Christian way. But that's true of all the baptised, and whether we live alone, or with friends, in a family or in community, Christians should do their best to order their household in a way that takes account of everyone within it, as well as looking generously and hospitably to those outside.

Although we are told that Jesus was himself an itinerant without a fixed home, quite a few of his parables are about the ordering of a household – from just stewardship, to showing generosity to neighbours in the middle of the night, and even the material on which the house is built.

The household therefore becomes an important metaphor in the New Testament for the new community of the Church.

St Paul says in the letter to the Ephesians that we are no longer strangers and aliens, but citizens with the Saints, and members of the household of God.

So, the church is meant to be a big household that, like our own, takes account of everyone who lives there because everyone is a child of God.

If we think of the church as a project of shaping strangers into a household, then that informs a Christian vision for our wider society and nation too. It is worth remembering that the word economy comes from the Greek work 'oikos' which means household.

What this pandemic brutally exposes is the people who are overlooked in the ordering of the household – the people whose lives and livelihoods are too precarious to withstand this kind of disruption, and that seems particularly unacceptable when so many of those people – nurses, care-workers, supermarket employees, refuse collectors, cleaners – are those on whom our economy – our household – is crucially dependant at this time.

So as lockdown slowly lifts we will be emerging from the confinement of our individual households, but let us hold onto the image of the household; a place ordered in the interests of all who share it, as the model for the fairer, kinder world we would like to see when this crisis is over.

Revd Canon Dr James Walters

CREDIT UNIONS

As I write this at the end of May we are beginning to see a glimmer of light at the end of the lockdown tunnel. Perhaps before many more weeks we will be back to something approaching the “normal” we knew before. But what will that new “normal” be like? One fact will be inescapable – the enormous financial cost of the debt built up during the lockdown period both by the national economy and by individuals. Although we will all have to take responsibility for this cost, the effect will be felt most by the lower paid, particularly those on zero hour contracts, who are likely to be the first to lose their jobs when the government support schemes are withdrawn.

Whilst the better paid amongst us have always been able to weather periods of financial hardship by borrowing either by increasing the mortgage, obtaining an overdraft or maximising credit card usage, such avenues are not available to those who cannot provide proof of the ability to repay, particularly the unemployed and lower paid. This has led to the growth of Pay Day Lenders, businesses offering loans without security to be repaid weekly at enormous cost. Such loans often result in the borrower running further into debt. Following a campaign in 2013 by Archbishop Justin Welby some curbs were introduced on the Lenders and some went out of business. The Archbishop backed the use of Credit Unions as an alternative to Pay Day Lenders.

Credit Unions are an association of people with a common interest, perhaps living in a particular area or sharing an employer. They have been around since the 1960s. Membership is restricted to those who qualify and either make a deposit or take a loan. The members are the owners of the Union and elect the management board from amongst themselves. The board are unpaid but they will employ staff to manage the Union on a daily basis. Deposits with the Union do not earn interest but might receive a distribution from any profit. The Union earns income by charging interest on the loans made to members, usually at a lower rate than that charged by a bank. There are restrictions on the percentage of deposits which can be loaned out and all deposits up to £85000 are guaranteed by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

The need for Credit Unions in the months to come is likely to be overwhelming. Although they might not give a return on an investment, and what deposit does at the present time, at least if you were to become a depositor you would have the satisfaction of knowing that your money was being used to help someone with a common interest.

David Fitton

Ed: Thank you for the poems / writings that have been sent in. I certainly have enjoyed reading each one - **keep sending in to me, please.**

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Aedh is a Gaelic first name.

W. B. Yeats 1865-1939

Sent in by Miranda Harding

QUARANTINE QUATRAINS

Malcolm Guite composed some quarantine quatrains as a lockdown journal. "Looking back on these I see a progression, or pattern, through which many of us have been moving: I started with a sense of the unexpected opening out of time and apparent leisure:

*Awake to what was once a busy day
When you would rush and hurry on your way
Snatch at your breakfast, and start the grim commute
But time and tide have turned another way.*

In May, when I retreated to my garden from a zoom session, I found myself bathed and soothed by birdsong...and wondered whether this crisis might lead to a chastened and gentler way of being in this world.

*Perhaps in all this crisis, all this pain
This reassessment of our loss and gain
Nature rebukes our brief authority
Yet offers us the chance to start again*

*And this time with a new humility,
With chastened awe, and mutual courtesy;
To re-accept the unearned gift of life
With gratitude, with joy and charity.*

*Perhaps we'll learn to live without so much,
To nurture and to cherish, not to clutch,
And, if I'm spared, I'll hold the years I'm given
With gentler tenure and a lighter touch."*

Malcolm Guite

*A shortened version of the article in
The Church Times*

DIARY OF A CHURCH MOUSE

Here among the long discarded
cassocks,
Damp stools, and half-split open
hassocks,
Here where the vicar never looks
I nibble through old service books.
Lean and alone I spend my days
Behind the Church of England Baize.
I share my dark forgotten room
With two oil lamps and a half broom.
The cleaner never bothers me,
So here I eat my frugal tea.
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;
My jam is polish for the floor.
Christmas and Easter may be feasts
For congregations and for priests,
And so may Whitsun. All the same,
They do not fill my meagre frame.
For me the only feast at all
Is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
When I can satisfy my want
With ears of corn around the font.
I climb the eagle's brazen head
To burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
And gnaw the marrows hanging there.
It is enjoyable to taste
These items ere they go to waste,
But how annoying when one finds
That other mice with pagan minds
Come into church my food to share
Who have no proper business there.
Two field mice who have no desire
To be baptised, invade the choir.
A large and most unfriendly rat
Comes in to see what we are at.

He says he thinks there is no God
And yet he comes...it's rather odd.
This year he stole a sheaf of wheat
(It screened our special preacher's seat,
And prosperous mice from fields far
away
Come in to hear our organ play,
And under cover of its notes
Ate through the altar's sheaf of oats.
A Low Church Mouse, who thinks that I
Am too papistical, and High,
Yet somehow doesn't think it wrong
To munch through Harvest Evensong.
While I, who starve the whole year
through
Must share my food with rodents who
Except at this time of year
Not once inside a church appear.
Within the human work I'd know
Such goings – on could not be so,
For human beings only do
What their religion tells them to.
They read the Bible every day
And always, night and morning, pray,
And just like me, the good church
mouse
Worship each week in God's own house
But all the same it's strange to me
How very full the church can be
With people I don't see at all
Except at Harvest Festival.

*by Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984) He was
UK Poet Laureate from 1972*

Sent in by Tom Aubrey

THE UNINVITED STRANGER

It seemed to come from nowhere, just appearing at our door.
This uninvited stranger, what had it come here for?
To take our normal life away? To make us run and hide?
To make us question everything? Is this why people died?

It started off just one or two, but seemed to spread so fast.
Invisible and frightening, like nothing from the past.
It steals upon you by surprise and suddenly you're struck.
Now was it something that you did, or was it just your luck?

We've yet to really understand the way it moves around,
And everyone is longing that a cure will soon be found.
And if you've had it once before, then will it come again?
And does it have a preference, for women or for men?

So far the only thing we're told, of this we can be sure,
If you don't want to catch it, don't step outside your door.
If you don't want to pass it on, make sure you wear a mask.
Don't touch, don't talk, don't smile, don't walk, just get on with your task.

And if you find that you succumb, what will the symptoms be?
And how will you react to them? That really is the key.
Cos that makes all the difference – how quickly it will spread.
For each of us must do our part – that's what the wise men said.

Now I suspect you're thinking this is all about today.
You're right of course, but actually I've got something else to say ...

For I believe when Jesus died, he left us something new.
And that's the Holy Spirit, which he gave to me and you.
For how could I compare the two? It surely isn't right.
They couldn't be more different. One's darkness, one is light.

The one we want to kill it or contain it if we can.
The other is a saviour to be passed from man to man.

So now I find myself rewriting verses one to five,
The Holy Spirit leading me and bringing it alive.

It seemed to come from nowhere, just rushing at their door.
This uninvited stranger, what had it gone there for?
To take away their sinful lives and be their earthly guide.
To answer all their questions and explain why Jesus died.

It all began at Pentecost, with fire from the sky.
And then they start to speak in tongues. The people wondered why.
It seemed to take them by surprise, they didn't understand.
Why had they been selected? This was not what they had planned.

(continued on next page)

We still don't really comprehend the way the Spirit goes.
What makes it move around the place, no one really knows.
The only way to be quite sure that you're not next in line,
Self-isolate and don't go out, don't give the Church your time.

And once you have it in you, will it always be around?
Who'll be the next to catch it, and where can it be found?
But if you want to pass it on, make sure your voice is heard.

You'll touch and talk, you'll smile and walk, and always share the word.

If you succumb to symptoms of the Spirit in your heart
Just how will you react to him, and will you do your part?
Cos that makes all the difference – how quickly it will spread.
Go forth and tell the world of God, for that's what Jesus said.

By Sue Bradshaw

This poem has been sent in by Gavin Flowers -Leek. Sue Bradshaw is a niece of a good friend.

YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS



Glorious iris found in Reg and Barbara's garden



A visitor joined Steve for his lunch overlooking Portsmouth.

Steve McGrath

THOUGHT FROM JAMAICA

"Behind the clouds the sun is still shining. Some days may be dark and dreary, but, behind the clouds the sun is still shining"

Susan Mitchelin sent in this lovely thought that she has cherished all her life as her grandmother taught it to her when she was a young girl. It has given her a lot of strength.

A BIT OF LOCKDOWN HUMOUR

New monthly budget:

Gas £0

Entertainment £0

Clothes £0

Groceries £2,799.

Breaking News:

Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommend. Not so much to stop COVID-19, but to stop eating.

When this quarantine is over, let's not tell some people.

Not to brag but I haven't been late to anything in over 6 weeks.

It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes a vineyard to home school one.

You know those car commercials where there's only one vehicle on the road - doesn't seem so unrealistic these days.

They can open things up next month. I'm staying in a bit longer to see what happens to you all first.

The spread of Covid-19 is based on two things:

1. How dense the population is.
2. How dense the population is.

Appropriate analogy:

"The curve is flattening so we can start lifting restrictions now" = "The parachute has slowed our rate of descent, so we can take it off now".

People keep asking: "Is coronavirus REALLY all that serious?" Listen, the churches and casinos are closed. When heaven and hell agree on the same thing it's probably pretty serious.

Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank clerk wearing a mask and ask for money.

Home School Week 3:

I'm trying to figure out how I can get this kid transferred out of my class.

Putting a drink in each room of my house today and calling it a pub crawl.

Coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We wander around the house looking for food. We get told "No" if we get too close to strangers and we get really excited about going for walks and car rides.

Finally:

The dumbest thing I've ever bought was a 2020 planner ... Enjoy your day. You don't have anything else to do.

Found on Social Media, and sent in by Christine Aubrey

THE CHURCHYARD IN MAY



The churchyard at Steyning Parish Church is a closed churchyard as it is now full. There are a small number of parishioners who keep the beds beside the lychgate footpath tidy, and indeed Messy Church have also contributed to this over the past year. The rest of the churchyard is kept by the District Council. This beautiful swathe of wild flowers was captured for us by John Edwards in the middle of May.

Thank you, John, these are a joy to see for all of us who are self isolating.

Roses with love.

Roses are probably the flower most often given as a gift in memory of a loved one, with names such as Compassion, Sweet Memories and Golden Wings. They are traditionally linked with romantic love in the giving of a single or bunch of red roses to a valentine. Roses named Wedding Day, Golden Anniversary and Ruby Wedding are given to celebrate those occasions.



These are some of the beautiful roses growing in the churchyard, and given with love.

*Jill
Brown*

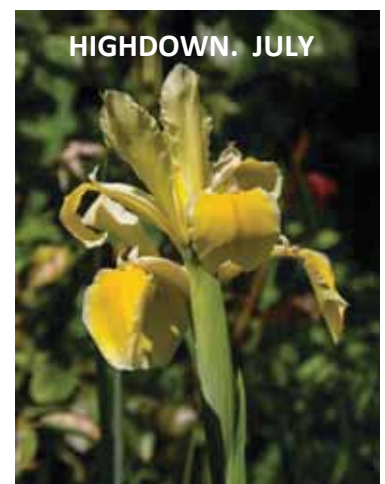
THINKING ABOUT YOUR GARDEN IN JULY

Here I am talking about July already! It is a busy month in the garden with all the watering (especially in any very dry period) and the dead-heading to be done. I hope it is not all work and that you are finding time to sit back, relax and enjoy the garden. The scents, sounds of birds and the beauty definitely bring you closer to God.

Here are some tips for July:

1. Dead-head bedding plants and roses to encourage further flowering. Remember not to dead-head roses, for example Rugosa, that produce hips in the Autumn.
2. Baskets and containers can dry out quickly in the warm, sunny conditions and may need watering twice a day. Feed regularly to promote flowering - liquid seaweed is good.
3. Dead-head Delphiniums, Foxgloves and Verbascum. After the flower spike has faded and gone over, cut it back by severing the flower head only. Not the whole stem because where there are side shoots surrounding the flower head, these may produce a second flush.
4. To keep Sweet Peas flowering it is important to keep picking. Also, the flowers that have gone over and left a seed head, need removing.
5. Cut back early perennials. Many early perennials can look tired by July, and their foliage looks tatty. If these plants are cut back now many will produce fresh leaves and even a second flush of flowering. Give them a feed and plenty of water. Eg. Oriental Poppies, Alchemilla Mollis, Nepeta and many hardy geraniums.
6. This is a good time to divide clumps of bearded iris. Most have finished flowering. After dividing they will have time to form roots and flower buds for next year before the cold weather arrives.

I wish you continued joy in your garden



Robert Hill - Snook

JUST FOR FUN

Hidden in the following story are 17 books of the Bible. Can you find them?

It could have only been a fluke that led us to the market yesterday. We arrived just in time to see our favourite comic. Ahhh! What a treat. We learned that the comic had just signed several new contracts to perform in our area. We also enjoyed the banjo elements of a blue grass band. And, we arrived just in time for a huge rainstorm!

Working quickly, my mum chose a lovely melon and some delicious low-sugar jam, estimated to have just 5 calories per serving. (If you want to know the truth, I seriously doubt that claim!) When we asked one vendor why her tomatoes were so large, she explained how she could format the watering system to run only, and always, when needed. What a great way to do the job! With the rain now coming down in sheets, her plants would need no watering today.

We noticed a mostly-empty stall where someone could probably make a lot of money. In fact, we started crunching some numbers, wondering if we might be able to sell our garden produce there in the future.

After a short while, we took a break under a roof. My elderly mother needed to rest her feet. Then I realized I was exhausted, too. (It's not in the genes, is it?)

Meanwhile, my big brother tried to be a hero. Man, someone should tell him to be more careful when he runs into the street to fetch a little boy's football! He should more accurately judge speeds of oncoming traffic, especially in the rain!

As we were leaving, we again discussed the empty market stall and talked about trying to sell our extra garden vegetables there. After making some careful calculations, my big brother said, "Nah, umbrellas are the way to go. Lots of people sell vegetables, but no one is selling umbrellas!"

Today that would have been a great item to sell.

ANSWERS

1. fluke = Luke 2. market = Mark 3. comic. Ahhh = Micah 4. contracts = Acts 5. banjo
elements = Joel 6. chose a = Hosea 7. jam, estimated = James 8. truth = Ruth
9. format the watering = Matthew 10. job = Job 11. a mostly-empty = Amos 12. numbers =
Numbers 13. rest her = Esther 14. genes, is = Genesis 15. hero. Man, someone = Romans
16. judge speeds = Judges 17. Nah, umbrellas = Nahum

ANAGRAM FOR JULY

How did you get on in June? (I have just heard that Len made 170 words - wow!)

This month I am keeping to the saint theme in special recognition of St James's Church, Ashurst.

REMEMBER:

No plurals (very easy in this one to slip in a plural)

All words to have 3 or more letters

No capitalised words.

SAINT JAMES

You will need some STAMINA to find the words here. My favourite is a little word.

AMEN.

WHERE AM I?



Steve is on his travels for work.

Where is this church?

A small clue:

He is still in West Sussex.

ANSWER Bury

Plant it and they will come

Do you remember that Kevin Costner movie, *Field Of Dreams*? Kev plays an Iowa farmer who, after hearing strange voices, transforms his land into a baseball pitch and summons the ghosts of a long-dead baseball team. Ridiculous. Yet, when I bought my first home eight years ago and stood on my new, perfectly manicured 15ft by 20ft suburban front lawn, all I could hear were voices in my head telling me to destroy it.

Rumours spread of my debauched gardening plans. My new neighbours eyed me with suspicion – especially when they overheard that I was planning to hire a stripper for the weekend. The clattering of the petrol-powered turf stripper was only drowned out by my maniacal laughter as I razed the 300 square feet of lawn to mud. You could hear the house prices dropping all along the cul-de-sac. The neighbourhood watched from behind twitching curtains as I carefully broadcast native wildflower seeds over the bare soil. Through the wet winter my front lawn looked ready to host a re-enactment of *The Battle of Agincourt*. And then spring came.



Meadow Buttercup, Oxeye Daisy, Cowslip, Yellow Rattle, Lady's Bedstraw, Crested Dogtail, Red Clover, Ragged Robin. The ground erupted into a riot of colour. And then the wildlife arrived. Bees, bee-flies, beetles, burnets and butterflies. Unusual species appeared too: Wall Brown and Brown Hairstreak butterflies, Ghost Moths, Wasp Spiders and a lone Common Spotted Orchid. On summer days my mini-meadow sang to me; a choir of buzzing bumblebees and chirruping grasshoppers. My own nature reserve;

beautiful, wild, endlessly fascinating and filled with life. I am genuinely bemused as I watch my neighbours struggle with their lawnmowers each week. Why go out of your way to kill something when you can just sit back and let it live? I simply swing my scythe and mow my meadow once at the end of the summer. I imagine I look like that shirtless bloke from *Poldark* (although I actually resemble a chunky but cheerful Grim Reaper).



Wildflower meadows were once a widespread feature of the English countryside but since the 1930's we have tragically lost 97% of our flower-rich fields. Many have been improved with fertilisers, re-seeded with faster growing grasses or ploughed for arable crops. This in turn has caused a massive decline in many species of wildlife that depend on them. By creating my own humble field of dreams it feels as if I am

summoning the ghosts of the English countryside and giving them life. And then, last month, I turned the corner to see a deer, an actual wild Roe Deer, lost in suburbia but stood seemingly at home in my meadow. Ridiculous.



If you're interested in creating your own wildflower meadow search 'Sussex Wildlife Trust' and 'garden wildflower meadow' online.

Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

PSALM 23

The picture on the front cover is to illustrate the first line of Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

1. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

A Psalm of David

If anybody needs to use The Hub please call 0800 955 4359 and talk to one of the helpers there.