

## A Psalm for people like us

Psalm 23 has been a source of strength for thousands of years. Let's pause and say it every day at 11 am through this crisis we now face.

*When we are isolated and alone, we remember God is with us; we place our hands in his hands...*

> **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.**

*When we are tired and confused...*

> **He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;**

*When we are worn out with worry...*

> **He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.**

*When we are sick and afraid and if we lose those we love...*

> **Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff - they comfort me.**

*When we face difficulties today and we hope for a better tomorrow...*

> **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

*In the face of trouble & difficulty of all kinds, we remember Jesus' promise of life beyond death...*

> **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

# From the Editors

*Sally Hemsworth and Nicki Stevens*

Hello to everyone who reads this. This month we can only put The Chronicle on the web as we are not able to print or circulate. However, we will also try to email those contributors where we hold email addresses, with a plea to telephone others who rely on paper copies, and let them know the Cowley Chronicle continues to be produced, even if it is smaller than usual. When we are back to normal we can print back numbers (not certain how many there will be at the moment!)

A date has been selected for the Parish Holiday – 26 October 2020, for four days from Monday to Thursday, and the cost is £345. What a lovely break this will be after self-isolating and leading restricted lives, so we hope it will go ahead. (Contact 01235 799717)

We expect you have many ways of keeping busy – we have heard that people are getting through their reading pile, cleaning cupboards, spring cleaning, gardening and exercising, but what about knitting? We know that the Mothers' Union members regularly give knitted items to the Special Care Baby Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Can you add to the "pile" which they donate on a regular basis. Betty Mitchell shares this easy knitting pattern (especially easy if you have Size 8 needles and one 100 gm ball of wool!) The size should be 18" by 24" (sorry for the metric users) when finished. Cast on 100 stiches and complete approximately 160 rows, although you will need to watch the size as it will depend on the pattern you use.

The May edition will commemorate the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War seventy-five years ago. It looks extremely unlikely that we will be able to attend any events to celebrate this – but we would like to have your memories to print in the Chronicle. Face-to-Face celebration will, we are sure, take place later.

As you will already know, church services have been suspended, but if you are a computer user, you can go to Virtual Church on Facebook on our Parish of Cowley page – Monday to Saturday at 12 noon (daily prayers) and church services on Sunday at 10.00 and 10.30 am.

All our best wishes to you all.

Sally and Nicki

## A word from the Rectory

Who would have thought we would be here? January the 1<sup>st</sup> saw newspaper headlines declaring: '10 years to save the world', and predictions of 'A decade of prosperity'. Neither of them picked up how thin the knife edge on which we live. 14 weeks into the year and the horizon looks very different. People with what have been viewed as good stable jobs have been given furlough (Government funded release from work) and the nation has been ordered to stay both at home, and in our homes. We have friends fighting for life against a virus that is sweeping across the world like a swarm of locusts.

It all brings to mind the story about a farmer who looked to build barns for an abundant crop. In Jesus' story, the man dies and finds himself standing before the throne of God the Father. The farmer had an assumption that the world was stable, and patterns were secure. As a nation we have believed it is safe to live against the edge of disaster. Safe, as long as we remain just on the good side of the edge. It was Dickens' character Micawber who said:

*"Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen [pounds] nineteen [shillings] and six [pence], result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds*

*ought and six, result misery."*

The good news is that those living faithfully, need have no fear of that meeting with the Father. Our great celebration of Easter holds the resurrection truth of life in abundance with not just Father, but Son and Holy Spirit.

That is fine for the future, whenever we are called. But for the here and now, there is a question about how we live. Is life in abundance only for the future, or does Jesus want it for us today? And what does abundance mean? Can one truly have abundance if another goes without? Does one find abundance when we live a knife edge away from disaster?

The call of the Gospel is to live as kingdom people, by kingdom values. Images of the creator, Jesus Christ.

In these tough days we walk together. Brothers and sisters in faith. Sharing a journey. Supporting each other.

May you find blessing and support from each other and Christ this Easter.



Benson Cottage

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

I know that things are very different at school these days but I wonder whether you have ever heard about 'fables'? They are interesting stories that people would tell to teach about history or ways to do things, often using examples of customs or habits known to that particular clan or family. They are not frightening at all but might warn of dangers that exist and show how to be careful. Then there would be short phrases to sum up the teaching like 'Practice makes perfect'. Some people think that you need to show them how to do something once only, and they will be able to do it perfectly every time afterwards. This may be so with simple things but if you are like me you will need to repeat the action once or twice more, or even several times, before you are really safe to do that job properly and correctly every time. Some jobs in life and work take years to learn, like being a doctor or teacher and you are always learning if you drive a motor car because new things are added or the law changes and you have to change how to drive.

I remember from my early school days one of Aesop's fables. The birds of the forest were to have a concert and each would be invited to sing their best song. As you probably know birds have different songs at different times of the year. (it is to attract their girlfriends. or sing about their young).

Everyone started to sing when the sun came out and they were happy and warm. Every-

one except the crow. 'I am not going to waste my voice practising' he said. "I'll wear it out and have a sore throat if I keep singing all day, so I will lose the concert. No, you carry on and sing as much as you like. I'll save my voice for later.' As the year carried on so the songs became sweeter and stronger so that the woods were full of bird-song and everyone was happy.

Then the day of the concert happened. Everyone sang their best song, starting with the smallest and eventually to the big black crow. "I'll show them' he said .... And nothing happened. .... The woods went silent with all the birds waiting patiently for the crow to sing his party piece that he had been swanking about, but nothing happened .... Until a croak or Caw sound could be heard. He tried again .... Just a Caw, caw, caw .... Because he had not practised, his singing voice had gone and to this day, all the crows in the world can only caw.

From my own experience I remember that when I was working in a large office block, it was one of the rules of the company that we should have a fire drill, usually once a month, just in case there was a fire or accident at any time. Fire drills are usual when you go to work, especially if there are several hundred people in the same building. I have even been at a church when they had a fire drill. If you are in a tall building you have to use the stairs, and so if there are young people or

very old people, someone is always there as a leader to show you the way out, especially if it is dark. Every building open to the public has a notice to tell you the way to get out of the building and where to go for safety. That way, everyone gets out safely.

We had practised the routine quite often in this new building, and the fire alarm sounded only two days after our last practice so we were very annoyed that we were interrupted in our work, yet again. Only this time it was not a practice. There was a real emergency. When we were allowed back into the building, about half an hour later, we found that

some of the glass office windows had fallen onto computers to sound the alarm. No one was hurt and the office block was made safe in a few minutes because everyone knew what to do and where to do. We had done our practice.

So when your teacher asks you to do some simple task several times, for practice, or if you play a musical instrument or have to improve your handwriting, your teacher or parent is only trying to help you, because 'practice makes perfect'. I am still learning. Be good and do your best.

Uncle Ben

BIBLE  
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If you order anything on line or by phone from the Bible Society, please use the unique Parish reference number 12044 or select the 'Parish of Cowley' from the drop down menu when placing an order and we will benefit from the 'More than a book' cash back scheme. It's that easy! We have just earned some more from our latest 'Open the Book' resources order – not a huge amount but useful!

Do look at the on-line shop for Easter cards and gifts – Bibles, prayer books, cards, courses, fiction, DVDs etc.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/>

## Prayer Space

"The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength."

2 Timothy 4:17

So let's never give up. In good times and bad, never give up. When the journey ahead is hard and feels like too much, never give up. Whether we're at the start or the end. With Him beside us, we never give up.

WHEN THE JOURNEY AHEAD IS HARD AND  
FEELS TOO MUCH,  
NEVER GIVE UP

From Soul Fuel by Bear Grylls

# From the Archives

## MAY 1962 - BLACKBIRD LEYS CHURCH

A church is to be built on the Blackbird Leys Estate which will match the progressive design and planning which are typical of the whole of this impressive development. It will cost £50,000.

Blackbird Leys was declared a Conventional District, with Littlemore as its parent parish in 1960, when about 550 of the proposed 2,800 dwellings had been built. The Reverend W.P. Malton was appointed as Priest - Missioner and at first, Holy Communion was celebrated in various people's houses, then the Health Centre was shared with Roman Catholics for separate Sunday Services. Subsequently, a temporary wooden hall was used as a church building on Sundays.

It was then decided to build a church and a Building Committee of Priest – Missioner, three men and one woman, was elected by the parish meeting. Mr. Colin Shewring, A.R.I.B.A., M.S.I.A., Dip. Arch., met this committee and subsequently prepared his design and it is now hoped that the building will begin next February. The church is to be part of a complex which also includes a five - bedroomed house for incumbent, a hall, a kitchen, three classrooms, parish office, cloakroom, etc. The church itself is of "Free Shape", consisting of serpentine concrete walls which surround the liturgical area. The roof is flat externally whilst internally is in the form of an inverted dome, so that it is lower over the altar and pulpit than elsewhere. Lighting and sound services are built into the thickness of the roof canopy. Inside the building, the altar and the pulpit stand together on a single step in the centre. There is a separate place for the choir so it does not come between the altar and the people, whilst the choir area, with its organ and console, will form the weekday seating for small services. A ring of lights within the canopy will illuminate the altar and pulpit at night and provision is made for a wall recess to take a sculptural group of the Holy Family, to whom the church is dedicated. The incumbents house and other buildings will be of black brick

## APRIL 1965 - BLACKBIRD LEYS DEDICATION

We have to realise that but for the generous giving of many people to the Bishop's Appeal for New Churches, which must include many people in your parish, such a project as this would have been impossible.

We also have to realise that without Peter Morton, my predecessor who gave so much in time, energy and prayer, we wouldn't be where we are today. The Church here in Blackbird Leys started in the front room of Peter's own council house and it stayed there until was possible to put up a temporary hut, which has been the place of worship for the last three and a half years.

The Church has grown in size and we now have a good nucleus of people, but nothing like as many as there should be on an estate of this size.

If you haven't seen the new church building, you ought to pay us a visit. Don't come with any fixed ideas of what you should find, or you will be shocked or disappointed. The church certainly doesn't look like what most people think a church should look like. But remember, this church was built as a result of people in the parish sitting down and working out just what a church should be, rather than an architect showing them a plan and saying 'here is what you must have'.

The building is oval, the altar is round with the pulpit very near the altar. Both pulpit and altar are in a position of equal importance, showing that the ministry of word and sacrament are of equal importance. The font, too, is in a position where it can be seen by all. It is a part of the triangle made up of the altar, font and pulpit.

The word is preached, the person is received into the church at the font and then proceeds to the altar for communion.

But: Come and see it for yourselves!

Researched by Les Hemsworth

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## FLO'S - THE PLACE IN THE PARK

Rymers Lane, OX4 3JZ

FLO'S REFILL SHOP remains open on Wednesdays 12:30-8:30pm and Saturdays 12:30-5:00pm. Only one customer is allowed in at a time, so please wait outside at a safe distance from each other. Please also be patient as staff wash their hands between serving each customer. Stay safe and well.



Updates on opening times (which sometimes change at short notice) and current stock can be found on Facebook updates: <https://www.facebook.com/flosxford>

Shop local and plastic free for unpackaged staple foods from [Infinity Foods](#) and [SESI refill detergents](#). All products are sold by weight or volume, which means you can buy exactly what you want, and bring back the empty container for more!

### *What is usually in stock?*

pasta, muesli, brown rice, oats, raisins, red split lentils, brown lentils, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, almonds, cashew nuts, bicarbonate of soda, vinegar, coconut shampoo & conditioner, aloe vera shampoo and conditioner, olive oil soap, fig hand soap, washing up liquid, laundry liquid, fabric conditioner, all surface cleaner, toilet cleaner

# Edward Bear Club

Our new Edward Bear Club - online streaming of Songs and Stories for our groups Little Stars and Seashells.

It is amazing how when we had to stop meeting each Monday and Tuesday we had to think of how we could connect with our families, God gave a vision of doing something else. We missed meeting all the families and small people we had contact with. So every few days Geoff and I stand in our dining room and talk, sing, play the guitar and do actions to no-one as our mobile phone records us. Passers-by must wonder what strange things we are doing. Light levels have caused us a problem as you forget how dark those old cottage rooms are. So we have had extra artificial light which has generated strange shadows.

So to why Edward Bear Club? Well in 1981 in Essex a group was set up for carers and preschool-aged children which was a short service of simple Christian songs, prayers and a bible story, followed by crafts and refreshments and a time for chatting. This group is still running today. In 1993, I set up an Edward Bear Club which evolved out of a

Pram Praise Group that I held in my home. I had decided with friends that we would set up a group just as our second children were being born so that our older and then younger children had a Christian group they could belong to before they could access a Sunday School group. So we wrote the words to the Edward Bear Club song to another Children's song tune and Edward Bear Club began. I am pleased to say it is still running. Geoff helped lead it when he returned to the area as the Vicar. What is great too is that there are lots of Edward Bear Clubs across the country now.

If you know anyone who would like to join us, we are on the Parish of Cowley website, YouTube Parish of Cowley, Edward Bear Club or EBC and on Facebook Parish of Cowley page also.

We will be very happy though in the future to meet up with all those at Little Stars and Seashells and we hope that it will be very soon.

Praying for you all at this tough time.

Mary Bayliss

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**We have been told to laugh so thought you would like to have a joke!**

We are about ten days into self-isolation and it is really upsetting me to witness my wife standing at the living room window gazing aimlessly into space with tears running down her cheeks. It breaks my heart to see her like this. I have thought very hard about how I can cheer her up. I have even considered letting her in - but rules are rules.

# Cowley Women's Institute

A few weeks back our WI enjoyed a fascinating talk about spinning wool. Before this meeting I had thought sheep's wool was either white or black. I soon discovered not only does it come in many lovely colours (differing shades of grey, brown, white/creams) but also varies in texture depending on the variety of sheep. Our speaker had made the turning of the wool into yarn look so easy. How wrong was I! Trying to co-ordinate feet and hands to spin the wool was difficult.

Our latest outing to the Oxford Bus museum was fantastic. The museum was the perfect size for a few-hours visit. Not only did we learn about the history of the buses, there was also a Morris Motors exhibition. To think the museum was put together and is solely run by volunteers is amazing.

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus we have had to cancel our March and April meetings and outings. We feel that meetings further into the summer will also need to be cancelled. However, we are going to review the situation early in May.

Our older members and those of us with health conditions are now needing to socially distance themselves. We will need to be creative and find ways to occupy our time. Luckily, we all have access to the phone so hopefully members will contact each other regularly to keep our spirits up. Having time at home does at least mean you can catch up on all those jobs that have been put on the back burner!

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## **NOTABLE PEOPLE & CHARACTERS OF COWLEY JULY 1959**

The death of Mrs. White was a grievous and unexpected blow. She had been a staunch friend of this parish for thirty years and had supported its work in many ways not known to the general public. She was immensely pleased when she heard that St. Luke's Church was to be built on land formerly her husband's property, and she gave the Central figure of the Rood Screen there in memory of him. She was for many years an active and useful member of our School Managers and was

regretting very much that she would have to give up her committee work this year.

It was to her and Captain White that we owe the considerable research which produced the rather unusual but historically interesting names of streets in many parts of the parish, and the name "White Road" is a lasting memorial to them both. May she rest in peace.

Researched by Les Hemsworth

From Benedictus – a book of blessings

John O'Donohue

*Irish poet, priest and philosopher*

This is the time to be slow,  
Lie low to the wall  
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let  
The wire brush of doubt  
Scrape from your heart  
All sense of yourself  
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,  
Time will come good;  
And you will find your feet  
Again on fresh pastures of promise,  
Where the air will be kind  
And blushed with beginning.

God of heaven and earth,  
In these times of isolation,  
Apart from loved ones  
Distant from friends  
Away from neighbours  
Thank you that there  
Is nothing  
In all of creation,  
Not even coronavirus,  
That is able to  
Separate us from  
Your love.

And may your love  
That never fails  
Continue to be shared  
Through the kindness  
Of strangers  
Looking out for each other,  
For neighbours near and far  
All recognising our shared  
Vulnerability,

Each of us grateful for  
Every breath,  
And willing everyone to  
Know the gift  
Of a full and healthy life.  
Keep us all in your care.  
Amen

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As we sit in silence

make us mindful of our world that we  
are destroying

Breathe the fresh air

Wonder at a flower  
a butterfly, or a bird  
The bright blue sky above

This frosty morning  
love you neighbour

Stop  
Be still

Listen to your heart  
and what it means to be human:-

Never before, or for so long, have we  
had this opportunity  
to know what is really important in  
this mad, frenetic and chaotic world.

Sonica Tassell



## AND THE PEOPLE STAYED HOME

Kitty O'Meara

And the people stayed home  
and read books and listened  
and rested and exercised  
and made art and played games  
and learned new ways of being  
and were still  
and listened more deeply

some meditated

some prayed

some danced

some met their shadows

and people began to think differently  
and people healed

and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant,

dangerous, meaningless and heartless ways,

even the earth began to heal

and when the danger ended

and people joined together again,

they grieved for their losses

and they made new choices

and dreamed of new images

and created new ways to live

and heal the earth fully

just as they had been healed

## YOU'RE NOT STUCK AT HOME –

## YOU ARE SAFE AT HOME

Terry Waite

*who spent 1763 days as a hostage, in isolation*

keep your own dignity – get out of your PJs

form a structure for your day

be grateful for what you have – shelter, a home,

possessions

read and be creative

## MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

March was a busy month for our branch of the Mothers' Union.

Early in the month one of the Diocesan Spring Meetings was held at CMS House in Watlington Road. Members came from all over the south of the Diocese and proceedings were opened by our new Diocesan President. The day was exceptionally well organised beginning with prayers led by the newly appointed chaplains. Lively and interesting group activities took up most of the rest of the time. It was also good to hear of the wide-ranging projects which branches (including ours) are actively engaged in.

Although not a Mothers' Union initiative a large group of members attended the World Day of Prayer service at the Sacred Heart Church in Blackbird Leys. Six members took part in the service which had been constructed by the women of Zimbabwe.

We were very fortunate to welcome the Revd Mark Oxbrow to our monthly meeting. Traditionally each year in Lent we set aside an afternoon of quiet prayer and reflection and Mark led this beautifully. At the meeting we regretfully made the decision that, due to the coronavirus infection which is restricting so many gatherings in the UK at the moment, we shall have to cancel all our future meetings until September at the earliest. Hopefully the Committee will be able to plan next year's programme in the summer.

Rosanne Butler

# ELECTORAL ROLL

Following the setting up of a complete new electoral roll in 2019, this year is just one for a revision, so we will remove any who sadly have died, moved away or just stopped worshipping with us and add new members. The formal notice for this was posted on 1 March:

The revision period technically closed on Sunday 29 March but that is obviously now somewhat meaningless as the church was closed. We do hope that eventually we will receive some new registrations but in the meantime the 2019 roll will stand.

For those who have newly joined the life of the Parish during the past year, or who have been with us for a while but never previously got around to it, forms of application for enrolment are still available from Lesley Williams, Electoral Roll Officer. Please contact her with your address or e-address and she will post/deliver one to you with a stamped addressed envelope for its return.

*It's free! It's your way of saying 'I belong here'. Please consider whether that applies to you!*

☎ 779 562 07982 439 828    ✉ [link@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:link@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

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## SAFEGUARDING IN COWLEY PARISH

As a Parish, we are committed to the Christian care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and all adults but particularly those who are vulnerable in any way.

So we ensure that our policies and practice on the selection and training of all those staff and volunteers with any responsibility within the Church are in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records checks where applicable.

We intend that St James and St Francis churches will be safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse, including domestic violence and bullying.

We will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust in our churches.

We follow statute, guidance and recognised good practice in all our safeguarding procedures and check that all users of our premises agree to do so too.

Our practice is focused by a new requirement to complete a 'Promoting a safer church' action plan. We find we must clarify some of our procedures and systems. There is the danger that we *think everyone knows what they should do* but we haven't checked on that.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – *please be sure to report anything you observe whilst at church or one of our events that causes you concern for someone's safety or wellbeing.*

*It is just as important during this strange time when we are all on our own in our homes; the situation throws up its own safeguarding and welfare issues. Please remain aware.*

Lesley Williams 01865 779 562  
07982 439 828 safeguarding@  
cowleyteamministry.co.uk

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## Citizens Advice campaigns hit the target in 2019

People often see Citizens Advice as a “quick fix” centre, rather like the garage that changes your car tyres – you pop into our office or ring Adviceline or you check the facts on our comprehensive website. But there’s more to Citizens Advice than quick fixes.

“Research and Campaigns” (R and C) is a part of Citizens Advice with a different task, a long-term one that demands much effort and patience. It has the job of collecting evidence on emerging social problems and then directly petitioning the people or organizations - including ministers, local MPs and government departments - that have the power to solve or alleviate them.

These campaigns have been remarkably successful, often making use of the media to put their point across. In 2019 R and C contributed to the surge of action that led to the scrapping of tenant fees. It also submitted a “super-complaint” on the Loyalty Penalty, whereby long-standing customers in some services (e.g. insurance) often end up paying more than new customers for the same service. Noting the rise in demand for food vouchers, R and C highlighted the issue of pressure on household budgets because of slow payment schedules for Universal Credit. R and C also issues occasional publications such as “Putting the house in order”, which described failings in the housing market.

Would you like to become one of these dedicated and hard-working volunteers, or work for us in a different role? Visit [www.caox.org](http://www.caox.org) for further details.

For more general help see our website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk), call Citizens Advice Adviceline on 0300 3309 042 or come and see us in person. For locations of offices and opening hours visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale>

## **CHRONICLE**

Editorial Team- Sally Hemsworth, Nicki Stevens

Deadline for the next edition: **Monday 20 April 2020**

If possible, please send entries by email to Sally at [chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk). Paper contributions should be left at Parish Office for the attention of Sally.

The Editorial Committee in no way accepts responsibility for goods or services supplied by our advertisers, errors and omissions excepted.

## I am keeping calm and carrying on

My activity in the Spring in recent years has involved sowing and growing-on plants from seed as well as receiving my ordered plug plants and potting them up. This year is no exception. I have already got the geranium plugs growing on and petunias, busy lizzies and begonias in plugs are to follow.

My seed order was completed last September and I already have four tomato varieties popping up with other vegetables, annual and perennial flowers to come.

Of course, this is all in preparation for the annual Plant Sale, which with growing certainty over the last few weeks, will not now be taking place. I am, though, carrying on as normal and glad that compost was bought before the garden centre closed down!

I have been thinking that I could have a table on my drive on some afternoons in May to sell my beauties and raise some money for the Flush Fund. I could have the parish card reader for contactless payments or ask for cash (no change). Then, my other half puts a spanner in the works by saying: "Surely that is against Government advice about not spreading Covid-19! Plants are not necessities!"

I might disagree with him over the last statement. Growing plants and gardening help enormously with one's peace of mind and give lots of happiness in the world. It keeps me

busy too.

So, though we are in lockdown now, I am hoping that there may be some lessening of restrictions by mid-May that I can sell my efforts and spread the joy to my neighbours and friends. I remain optimistic.

My Other Half (OH) and I have been taking our daily exercise on the allotment now that the rains have finished! OH pulled a hamstring while refereeing a few weeks ago and some recovery from that is allowing him to do short periods of digging. At least we cannot be tempted to get out and about under the present regime, my calendar is full of crossings out, and trips to our plot will be daily. It should be well presented this summer!

One wedding present 45 years ago (!), was a digging spade. That spade blade, over the years, has been worn down on the left side as for most of those years we have had an allotment plot. OH, left-handed as he is, has done most of the digging.

Joan Coleman



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# CHURCH WARDENS

The Diocesan has informed us that the deadline for parishes to hold their Annual Meetings has been extended to the end of October 2020, and that the current office holders will be able to remain in office longer than they would otherwise do so. This includes the appointment of PCC members and Church Wardens.

Our Church Wardens have forwarded articles for the Chronicle giving their thoughts on the current position we find ourselves in and being church wardens to support us during this difficult time:

Nick Dewey:

It started with stopping dipping the bread in the wine, then it became 'no hand shaking and no chalice'. Then the Church closed! It has been a bit of a ride with this whole Coronavirus thing starting off as something "over there" that needed prayer, to something over here, that was disrupting our daily lives. It first came home to me that this was real and not just some paranoid conspiracy nonsense when I went to Tesco and saw some empty shelves. People were panic buying and getting freezer supplies by the trolley load. One poor lady told me that due to her health problems she couldn't eat solid food and was down to 'cup-a-soups', all of which had gone.

Then the lockdown came, and we were given instructions by the Prime Minister himself. It's all been a bit of a shock! Then after the shock came the need to adjust to a new norm, living life online. My Toastmasters club started holding its public speaking competitions online, my Pilates class moved to online (which was a strange experience I must say!) and also the Church started having its services on Facebook and YouTube.

Thank God for modern technology giving us the ability to keep in touch and maintain some normal life during these strange times. In many ways the rhythm of my life has remained similar, but with less bus fares. This meant that the sense of connection remained the same, the sense of isolation got lowered and worship was still on Sunday.

It was a real treat to have Gemma on Facebook giving us readings, contemplations for Lent and prayers on Facebook and for our Sunday service to be live on Facebook and YouTube. Just what we need to uplift us in this time.

I could give my donations online (and, in my case, to give some money to the Oxford Soup Kitchen for the homeless) and still sense my feeling of connectedness with the community.

No matter what we are going through at this time, the Church is still with us and carrying on as normal, although in a different way. We could contribute to PC meetings via email and still help the community that way.

I have faith that once the crisis is over and we all appear, blinking into the sunlight again, the Churches of St James and St Francis will be stronger and with its community maintained.

It's not completely wasted time either. I have gone back to reading books that I have previously put down, watching movies that I haven't seen before and finding new ways to support my family and community. In many ways it's all good. None of us wanted this situation, but we have to accept it and to do so with good spirit. It's a great time to learn about ourselves and develop new skills on the way.

Sure shopping is still a challenge and takes a bit more thought, but when we do go out, the air is cleaner, the streets are emptier and

there is more of a sense that everyone is doing their part with maintaining social distancing and taking the Government's advice. We are all in this together. I also think it's wonderful that there have been so many volunteers for the NHS and there has been so much planning for the worst. One of my friends said over the internet "some good has got to come from this" and I believe that he is right. Maybe more disaster preparations to keep the people safe, more pandemic preparations in case this happens again. More economists and politicians learning what has to be done under difficult situations to help bring about security for the world in terms of food security.

Sure, it's a difficult time, but the more we hope for the best, the better this time will be.

Christine Woodman:

Three years ago our Rector, Geoff Bayliss, asked me if I would be interested in becoming Church Warden as no one had been nominated. He suggested I try it for a year and he would help me if I needed help. I am so pleased I said "yes". I have thoroughly enjoyed my time being involved in Church matters which otherwise I would have had no knowledge of.

We have two very challenging projects on the go at the moment at St James Church. The first is having a toilet installed which has necessitated meetings with the Architect and putting a Faculty in place. The second is installing a new digital projector system. These are very costly projects and need fund raising events and trying to obtain grants from various organisations. Sadly in view of the current situation these will have to be put on hold but we pray for them to be in our Church in the foreseeable future.

The quinquennial report is a document which gives you guidance on what needs to be addressed in Church over a period of five years. It is important to make sure the fabric of the Church both inside and out is safe and watertight and checking with the regular company that fire extinguishers for example are in good working order, and checking health and safety issues.

I have been on various courses at Church House which have been enjoyable, meeting the staff and putting a face to the many names you hear mainly through emails these days. Attending the Church Warden day at Marlborough School was a brilliant idea and brought us together in a good way, exploring and solving issues which were of concern to some present.

We were able to meet Bishop Steven in different situations. We spent a very rewarding evening at his home talking about his vision on how to be more Christ-like. His initial request that we should become more Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous has stood me in good stead. I think of these three and it focuses me on a daily basis.

The congregation at St James has a lovely mix of ages and we all get on so well with one another. It has the feeling of an extended family which we all recognise as being very special.

Finally, this role brings you nearer to God. You are working personally for him representing your Church and congregation. I am always available to have a chat with anyone who feels the need to bring something to my attention or wants help or guidance on a problem that is worrying them.

We need to put our worries and concerns at the foot of the cross in prayer and God will listen and help us come through this very worrying time.

## ECO CORNER

I'm calling this piece Eco Corner as it covers ECONOMY and ECOLOGY and the two are so often linked. If we are economical with resources we can also be helping the environment.

A couple of summers ago our country came very close to having a hosepipe ban because of water shortages and there were some interesting newspaper articles on the subject of how to save water. In Australia for example they've had a slogan for many years about flushing the loo ...If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down !!! We may cringe about such basic discussions but if you really think about it we have an extraordinary system in this country where top quality drinking water is used to flush our toilets!

These articles a couple of years ago focused on how we can all reduce our consumption of pure tap water by using Grey Water for things like watering the garden or flushing the loo. It's a case of working out a little routine and maybe getting a plastic jug, bowl, and bucket at the ready. Only do these things if it's safe to do so and don't carry buckets of water if you're unsteady on your feet.

Grey Water can be from...

- washing up
- bath or shower
- rinsing fruit and vegetables

It soon becomes an easy routine to collect grey water throughout the day especially during a heatwave so that plants and shrubs can be kept watered. I said in my last piece that I would explain how it came about that Thames Water reduced my monthly direct debit of £24 to £14 without me even asking!

If you have a water butt in the garden that helps enormously too.

I've found another money saving tip concerning cleaning products which is possibly kinder to the environment too. We live in a hard water area and limescale can be a problem and there can be an unsightly build-up of limescale in the toilet bowl. White Vinegar is my solution! I know a lot has been written about the various uses of vinegar in the home as its quite an old-fashioned remedy, but this is definitely one of my favourites. First get the toilet brush and brush as much water as you can out of the toilet bowl. Then slowly pour a whole bottle of white vinegar...around 50p from some of the supermarkets I know...and leave it to work for several hours or overnight if possible. I do this every few weeks. The vinegar loosens most of the limescale but the handle of an old plastic toothbrush can be used to gently scrape away any stubborn bits. You won't have had to use any harsh chemicals and you may even save money.

Another of my favourite vinegar tips is for cleaning windows, mirrors, etc. Dilute a small amount of white vinegar with water and fill an empty spray bottle. It really does as good a job as branded window cleaning products and saves money too.

I remember 50 or 60 years ago my Grandmother was very conscious of not wasting water. At the end of a meal, if any water was left in the water jug, she would pour it into the kettle rather than down the sink. Hats off to her!

Ruth Goodwin



# 30 day Lego Bible Challenge

	<b>Something to read and build each day - imagine, build, reflect and have fun!</b>	<b>Genesis 1:1-2:3</b> God created the universe. Build some stars and planets	<b>Genesis 6:9-7:4</b> Noah builds an ark Build some pairs of animals	<b>Genesis 9:8-17</b> The flood ends Build a rainbow.	<b>Genesis 37:1-11</b> Joseph's colourful coat Build Joseph with his colourful coat	
<b>Genesis 41:1-36</b> Joseph explains the king's dreams Build some healthy and skinny cows	<b>Genesis 44:1-34</b> Joseph tricks his brother Build a silver cup	<b>Exodus 2:1-10</b> Baby Moses Build a basket, like the one Moses' mother put him in.	<b>Exodus 3:1-14</b> Moses meets God Build a bush with flames.	<b>Exodus 14:5-31</b> Moses leads the Israelites to safety Build a parted sea to walk through.	<b>Exodus 20:1-19</b> Moses tells the people God's rules Build the holy mountain where Moses spoke to God	<b>Jonah</b> Jonah and the Big Fish Build a big fish with Jonah inside
<b>1 Samuel 17:1-58</b> David and Goliath Build Goliath and David as a minifigure	<b>Psalms 23</b> God cares for us Build a peaceful scene with some sheep.	<b>Luke 1:39-45</b> Mary visits Elizabeth Build Mary and Elizabeth in Elizabeth and Zechariah's house	<b>Luke 2:1-10</b> Jesus is born Build a stable with animals, Mary, Joseph, Jesus and shepherds	<b>Matthew 2:1-12</b> Visitors from the East Build a the visitors and/or their gifts.	<b>Matthew 3:13-17</b> Jesus is Baptised Build the River Jordan with John the Baptist and Jesus	<b>Mark 4:35-41</b> Jesus calms the storm Build a boat and a stormy sea
<b>Luke 9:10-17</b> Jesus feeds the crowd Build some fish and loaves	<b>Mark 6:45-56</b> Walking on water Build some waves for Jesus and Peter to walk on.	<b>Luke 10:25-37</b> The kind stranger Build the street with the wounded man, horse and the stranger	<b>Luke 15:1-7</b> The lost sheep Build a flock of sheep and a shepherd	<b>Luke 15:11:32</b> Two sons Build a welcome home party	<b>Matthew 6:7-15</b> The Lord's Prayer Build God in heaven	<b>Matthew 6:7-15</b> The Lord's Prayer Build some palm leaves and a donkey.
	<b>Matthew 26:26-29</b> Supper with friends Build a cup of wine and some bread.	<b>Matthew 26:47-50</b> Jesus is arrested Build the soldiers, Jesus and Judas.	<b>Matthew 27:32-44</b> Jesus is killed Build the three crosses of Jesus and the robbers	<b>Mark 16:1-8</b> Easter! Build the empty tomb	<b>Acts 2:1-4</b> The Holy Spirit Build the room and the disciples with flames on their head	

# 30 day Dough Church Challenge

	<b>Something to make each day - imagine, mould, reflect and have fun!</b>	<b>God created everything; the universe, planets and stars</b> Can you make some planets and stars?	<b>God created everything; the land and sea</b> Can you make some waves?	<b>God created everything; trees, flowers and grass</b> Can you make a garden?	<b>God created everything; fish, birds and animals</b> Can you make a fish a bird and an animal?	
<b>God created everything; everyone, including you</b> Can you make you and your family?	<b>God asked Noah to build a big boat because there was going to be a flood.</b> Can you make a boat?	<b>Noah filled the boat with animals to save them from the flood</b> Can you make some animals?	<b>When the flood ended God promised that the earth would not be flooded again, a rainbow is a sign of God's promise</b> Can you make a rainbow?	<b>A shepherd looks after their sheep, God looks after us like a shepherd looks after their sheep</b> Can you make some sheep?	<b>Jesus is God's son, he was born in a stable in Bethlehem</b> Can you make a stable with some animals and a place for Jesus to sleep?	<b>Angels told the shepherds where to find the baby Jesus</b> Can you make an angel?
<b>The wise men followed a star to find Jesus</b> Can you make a star?	<b>The wise men brought Jesus presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh</b> Can you make three presents?	<b>Jesus is the light of the world, that is why we light candles in church</b> Can you make a candle?	<b>Jesus was baptised by a man named John, who ate insects and honey</b> Can you make some insects and honey?	<b>When Jesus was baptised God's spirit came down as a dove</b> Can you make a dove (a kind of bird)?	<b>When we are baptised, we use water</b> Can you make some things that use water?	<b>Jesus fed a huge crowd with just a few loaves and fish</b> Can you make some loaves and fish?
<b>Jesus healed many people, making them well</b> Can you make some bandages?	<b>Jesus loves and welcomes everyone</b> Can you make a heart?	<b>Prayer is when we talk to God, we can thank God for good things</b> Make something that you would like to say thank you for	<b>We can talk to God about what we are worried about</b> Make something that makes you feel safe when you are worried	<b>We can talk to God about the people we love</b> Make the people you love	<b>We can talk to God about the big things that are happening in the world</b> Make the world	<b>Jesus loves us and the whole world so much that he died on a cross</b> Can you make a cross?
	<b>But after three days his friends found his tomb empty, he was alive again, this is what we celebrate at Easter</b> Can you make an empty tomb?	<b>A few days later Jesus saw his friends fishing on a lake, he made them breakfast on the beach</b> Can you make a boat for Jesus' friends?	<b>After 40 days Jesus went up to heaven through the clouds</b> Can you make Jesus in the clouds?	<b>God then sent his Holy Spirit to Jesus' friends, it looked like flames of fire on their head</b> Can you make one of Jesus' friends and the flames?	<b>We remember this day as the birthday of the church</b> Can you make a birthday cake?	

# CHRISTIAN AID

With every gift, we stop this climate crisis



Our planet is changing but some people are feeling the effects of this more than others. Due to the climate crisis, droughts are now more frequent and more intense, and one place that has experienced this is Kenya. In Kitui, eastern Kenya, 8 out of 10 people depend on rain to grow crops. Without water, staple crops like maize and beans wither up and die. People can't grow food, which means they can't earn a living, and go hungry. Drought forces people to walk further and further to collect water. This daily burden robs them of the chance to farm and grow food for their families. Elderly women and children are especially vulnerable on these dangerous and exhausting journeys.

## Strength and power - Florence's Story

What happens when the search for water does not consume people's lives? We can find out by meeting Florence: a woman who has transformed her life with access to a dam full of water.

A few years ago, Florence's husband died, leaving her a widow. At that time, she had no water to grow crops. She had to walk for hours to collect



water. 'Life was miserable,' she told us. Florence could easily have been defeated. But things changed when Christian Aid's local faith-based partner, Anglican Development Services – Eastern (ADSE), worked with her community to build a dam, just 30 minutes from Florence's house. Using water from the dam, Florence grows tomatoes, onions and chillies on her farm. Her children can eat healthy, nutritious vegetables, and she has enough left to sell. Florence also uses the dam to keep honeybees: the microclimate of plants created by the dam means the bees don't need to search long distances for nectar. She sells the rich, golden honey at the market. Smiling brightly, she says: 'I have been sustained by the earth dam. My life has changed. I am very happy. You can see it in my face: my face is shining. I have strength and power.'

Florence is a generous woman of faith. She knows others are struggling to cope with the drought and hopes they will experience the same blessings she has received: 'I am thankful to people who have donated to build this earth dam. I am praying God will increase their giving.'

Please donate this Christian Aid Week (10-16 May). Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, providing a vital water source in a desperately dry area of Kenya.

£4.40 could teach 10 farmers like Florence how to plant drought-tolerant crops that can survive the drought.

£10 could buy a tap at a water point which will be installed at an earth dam, making it easier for people like Rose to fetch water.

£1,560 could pay for all the materials, tools and equipment to build an earth dam.

Every pound raised, every prayer said, every action taken: these are expressions of our Christian love and compassion, of our belief that all life is equal and precious in the sight of God. Together, we can stop this climate crisis: and give brave, hard-working women like Rose the chance to thrive.

Join us this Christian Aid Week. Donate at [caweek.org](http://caweek.org).

## CHRISTIAN AID

### SUPER SOUP FAIRTRADE LENTEN LUNCH - Sunday 8 March

15 of us enjoyed three delicious homemade soups (*yes, most of us tested all three!*), bread & cheese & fruit. We raised £95 as our first 2020 Christian Aid Parish donation

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OXFORD ABSEIL has obviously been deferred from Saturday 9 May but there's a new date to look forward to - Saturday 17 October, 10.00-4.00

St Mary Magdalen Church (Mary Mags) tower, central Oxford, opposite the Randolph hotel.

Lesley Williams remains registered (£20) for her latest abseiling 'fix' and is now seeking sponsorship but would also welcome co-abseilers.

Register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christian-aid-oxford-abseil-tickets-81309646341>

There will eventually, when we are back worshipping in person, be a paper sponsor form but there is already a Just Giving on line page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lesley-williams-abseil-oxford-2020>

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## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2020 Sunday 10 – Saturday 16 May

### The theme

Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis. Rose and her family, and millions of people in Kenya, are struggling to get enough food and water. Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. People like Rose need every last drop to survive the drought.

Together we stop this climate crisis.

Because of Covid-19, there will sadly be no events – so no Big Brekkie or coffee morning – or door to door or Templars Square collections but the week WILL go ahead as a virtual one, generally on line. This will of course be difficult for those of you without internet access but we hope to make something possible for you.

### From the Christian Aid website :

As all of our thoughts are on the Covid-19 situation, we wanted to share an update on Christian Aid's response. We value our volunteers enormously and want to ensure you all keep safe when fundraising for Christian Aid Week. The health and safety of our community, including loyal supporters like you, is of the utmost importance to us, and we are monitoring the situation on a daily basis.

Instead, Christian Aid Week is moving online! We are building a vibrant, virtual Christian Aid Week so you can take part with our online community. We would love you to join in to show love for our neighbours near and far, as a global family.

### During Christian Aid Week

It's more important than ever that we come together as a community to worship and to share fun and fellowship. That's why during Christian Aid Week we will be live-streaming worship each day, and hosting a fun daily quiz to join and raise funds. These will be really easy to join – you will shortly be able to sign up to receive an email letting you know how.

### In Christian Aid Week or whenever suits you

Ask your friends and family for a donation using our e-envelope, coming soon! Or host your own virtual events to pray and raise vital funds. We will shortly be sharing everything you need:

how to hold a virtual Christian Aid Week service

order of service

sermon notes

prayers

how to hold a virtual quiz  
top tips for other virtual fundraising ideas

## Our global response

Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience to continue to stand together with communities living in poverty during this period. If infection rates start to develop as they are in Europe, then people in poorer countries will be hit even harder. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. We will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. Please pray for us in this vital work, and support us where you can by making an online donation.

We are praying for all those affected by this new virus, both in Britain and overseas, for all those working on the frontline and for wisdom for our leaders. We will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves. During this challenging time, we all need to take seriously the science and advice being offered, remaining calm but vigilant.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/about-us/christian-aid-week/coronavirus-guidance>

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## Film Club at the Centre

Last month's film "A Handful of Dust" was based on a novel written by Evelyn Waugh and was an interesting story about how one small incident in someone's life can lead to a chain of huge events. Despite the anxiety of the coronavirus infection we enjoyed a goodly number of members and guests.

Sadly, we are now going to be forced to postpone future club nights until this wretched virus is past. This is such a shame as this month's film was planned to be

"Easter Parade". So Fred Astaire and Judy Garland will not be parading in their Easter bonnets and sadly my own Easter bonnet will have to stay in its bag in the wardrobe until next year!

We wish all our members a safe few months and as soon as we can we will resume our 2020 programme.

Rosanne Butler

**ALL CHURCH SERVICES AND  
ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE—FACEBOOK DAILY  
PRAYER TAKES PLACE MONDAY—  
SATURDAY 12 NOON, CHURCH SERVICES  
ON SUNDAY AT 10am & 10.30am**

## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ST JAMES CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Sung Eucharist  
1.45pm Anglican Asian Living Church  
Sunday Lunch – the date varies so watch for notices

### ST FRANCIS CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30am Parish Eucharist  
1st Sunday All Age bring n/share lunch

## MID-WEEK SERVICES & MEETINGS

Morning Prayer	8.00am	Tue, Thu, Sat at St James; Mon at St Francis
Monday	10.00-11.30am	Little Stars Playgroup— St Francis
	2.30pm	Parish Mothers' Union— St James (3rd Monday)
Tuesday	10.00am	Seashells Toddler Group— St James
	12.00pm	Eucharist—Ranklin Room, St James Church Centre
	12.30pm	Tuesday Lunch Club— St James
Thursday	7.30pm	Local House of Prayer, St James

## HOME GROUPS

Leader	Time/Venue
Friends of St Francis (Katherine Reed)	2nd & 4th Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm St Francis Church
Geoff Bayliss	Alternate Wednesdays at 10am St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room
Mark Oxbrow	Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm Mark's home, 13 Annesley Road (just behind the Rose Hill Coop). Enquiries to Mark at 01865 461953
Rosanne Butler	Alternate Thursday mornings at 10.00am St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room

The Parish Office in St James Church Centre is staffed by volunteers and is not covered continually. Please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

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