

**PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER
MAGAZINE OF THE
CHURCH OF ST LEONARD**



APRIL 2021

The Lord Almighty is with us.

Psalm 46:7

The “Footprints” picture reminds us that even when we feel that God is not present, He really is!

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Articles for the
May magazine by
Sunday April 11th
please, to Kath Dunstan.
New contributors will be
welcome.*

The Church cleaning group
“Henry Club” are not meeting
regularly at present, although the
church building is being kept in
order of course.

Similarly, the wonderful flower
arrangers are not being as active
as usual.

BUT we all keep praying for our
families, friends and neighbours.

Reflection

The Lord Almighty is with us. Psalm 46:7

Last month we had in the magazine a testimony from Jenifer Sims, a cousin of Fiona. My real hope is that it will inspire others to write their testimony of how they came to Jesus, and maybe to tell us in church what God has been doing. As we ease our way out of lockdown and into a 'new type of normal' we are reminded that God has been with us through the passage of time and as we look back over the past year we may see where God has guided. Some of our journeys may not have been easy, yet God is still with us and we are here to tell others what He has done. Maybe you could write a few lines for the next magazine?

God is still journeying with us, despite how we feel or what our circumstance is; His promise is to never leave us, and He will be with us until the end of the age. We may not feel His presence nor discern where he is in a situation, but God *is still with us*, and as we recount the past days we will see glimpses of how God has guided our path, or we've known Him to really draw alongside us.

Some of the delights of being part of a church and Christian community is hearing the stories of how God has given comfort to others throughout their lives; how other people know that they belong to God and nothing can separate them from His love. In the big decisions of life, God has been there - although sometimes we would like to have a message board sign that tells us so! But, this is not how God operates. He gives us inner peace to tell us what the right path may be; the decisions we make prayerfully in the quiet of our hearts and minds are answered prayerfully – also into our hearts and minds. God will sometimes use outside agencies to give us a message i.e. a friend may say something that resonates with our spirit, God has used someone outside of our situation – a speaker on a radio show on Premier Christian Radio, or UCB [United Christian Broadcasters], or a TV programme on the God channel, for example, or a book we are reading over the Lent period; He may have used

these opportunities to speak into our prayer situation to gain our attention. Or, you may have sensed an ‘underlining’ of one of your bible readings. However it is that you became aware of it, the answer is in the peace we know in our hearts and minds, that God hears us and responds to us, and we are able to continue our faith journey. We know God’s peace when we take faith steps forward, maybe out of our comfort zone, but in the will of God.

There may be decisions that you are needing to make, big decisions but, God will be with you throughout, holding you and reassuring you. Perhaps you want to take a more active role in church to serve God and His community; I really encourage you to step out in faith and you *will* see how God will bless you. One thing I have discovered for myself about stepping out in faith is that God will never leave us. What God has called us to He *will* equip us for it, *and* resource us for it.

For those reading this as we come to Easter who have never taken a step of faith, try now, try trusting the God who came to give us life, to forgive us and to be with us. Try now taking a step towards the One who gave everything for you and wants to be part of your life now and into the future. It is a step that you will never regret, but it is a step of faith; faith in our knowable God. The very One Who wants to share His kingdom with us all.

I really love the blessing at the end of Sunday services that comes from Philippians 4 which says:

“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of God
and of His son Jesus Christ.”

A peace that reaches deep into our inner being because we have decided to think and dwell on God, and to believe and trust Him. May we all know the peace of God as we journey on with Him, the God who is always with us. Amen.

Peter

PARISH REGISTERS An update for 2020

Location of Services listed; Burial at St Leonard's is marked B

A Crematorium service is marked C (for whichever location)

We gave thanks for the lives of all these people

and we pray for those who have been bereaved.

3 Feb	John Leslie Allington (Steeple)	Ch'fd C	C
25 Mar.	Patricia Eileen Burcombe	St Leonard's	B
30 Mar.	Jeanette Irene Cox	Chelmsford Crem	C
6 Apr .	Dawn Sylvia Simpson	Chelmsford Crem.	C
27 May.	Jean Selina Dowsett	Chelmsford Crem	C
26 June	Brian Edward Critcher	Chelmsford Crem	C
11 Aug	Walter John Barker	Chelmsford Crem	C
8 Oct	George Reuben William Denham	St Leonard's	C
26 Oct	Vanessa Pauline Eagle	Chelmsford Crem	C
9 Nov	Gizelle Anne Kelly	St Leonard's	B
10 Nov	Gary Spearman	St Leonard's	B
26 Nov	Barbara Barker	St Leonard's	B
10 Dec	Michael David Passey	St Leonard's	B(BoC)

We rejoiced with these people who began married life together

19 Sept.	Ian George Smith & Kim Louise (Dunn)	St Leonard's
26 Sept:	David Edward Spooner & Barbara Anne	Steeple

**We welcomed into the Church family these
young people who were baptised at St Leonard's.**

1 Jan	Carmel Laura Ada Bray, Jamie Ray Reginald Bray and Jace Reginald Samuel Bray
9 Feb.	Evie Beatrice Russ
1 Nov	Olivia Mae Carrigher & Jack Gerald Steve Carrigher

The Bride of Christ

What a lovely image it is when Scripture describes God's people as "The Bride of Christ". St. Paul says on speaking to the people of Corinth in 2 Corinthians 11 v2 "I am anxious that your love should be for Christ alone, just as a pure maiden saves her love for one man only, for the one who will be her husband".

This led me on to reading about Jewish marriage customs in Biblical times, the first step of betrothal involving the establishment of a marriage covenant. The prospective bridegroom negotiated with the father of his prospective bride a price to purchase her. Once this was done the marriage covenant was established and the young man and woman were regarded as husband and wife. From that time the bride was declared consecrated or sanctified, set apart exclusively for her bridegroom. It would then be a period of 12 months before the marriage was consummated, this would be a time of separation when the bridegroom prepared living accommodation for his bride in his father's house and the bride prepared herself and her trousseau. Although the bride was expecting her husband to come for her after the 12 months, she didn't know the exact day or time but she needed to be ready.

As previously mentioned, Scripture regards the Church to be the Bride of Christ. Over 2000 years ago Jesus left his Father's house in heaven and came to earth, to live among us, to teach us to be His disciples, to woo his Bride the Church and then He paid the ultimate price with His own life blood to redeem her or buy her back, (1 Corinthians 6 v 20). We are now in a long period of separation from Jesus, but we know He will come again to take His Bride home, where He has been preparing living accommodation in his Father's house in heaven (John 14 v 1-2) Just as a bride and bridegroom form a physical union, Christ and the Church will experience a spiritual union when He takes us home. Also, as the Jewish bride was set apart exclusively for her groom



once the marriage covenant was established, the Church has been declared to be sanctified or set apart exclusively for Christ (1 Cor 1v2) and needs to be ready and prepared as we do not know the exact time of Jesus coming again to claim His Bride (John 14v3).

In the Old Testament many marriages were arranged by the parents and this may still happen today in some cultures. In the marriage of the Lamb (Jesus) it is the Father (God) who chooses the Bride for His Son. John 6:44 - 45 tells us that Jesus said “No -one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him”. We also read in Scripture that God’s will is that everyone who looks to Jesus as His Son and believes in Him has eternal life in heaven as part of His Bride.

About 25 years ago I went to stay in a silent convent in London. I had always wondered how nuns could, to my mind, give up a life in the outside world and dedicate their lives to prayer and closeted living, although the closeted, silent, living isn’t the case for all nuns. I learned that Nuns wear wedding rings to symbolize marriage or fidelity to the church. Often worn on the right hand. This wearing is also symbolic of their mystical and spiritual marriage to God.

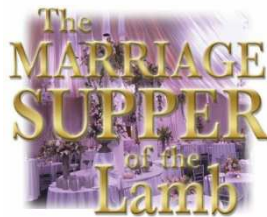


During my stay I had a very small room with shared bathroom and all meals were silent with no communication allowed on meeting anyone at any time. I joined in the frequent services held in the chapel and found them hard to follow but on the other hand found the atmosphere so overwhelmingly peaceful and I felt a real closeness to God. I only stayed a few days and was glad to get back to my outside world but learned to appreciate a different way of dedicating our life to the Lord.

I understand that once the bride and groom in Biblical times had consummated their marriage there was a prolonged celebratory feast for 7 days. And in Revelation 19 v 7-9 it tells us to “Rejoice and be glad for the wedding of the Lamb (Jesus) has come and his bride (the



Church) has made herself ready, blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb". The imagery of a wedding to express the intimate relationship between God and His people.



Don't let us be like the people (guests) in the parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14 v 15-24 who were invited to the feast but made excuses not to go, let us accept Jesus' invitation to invite Him into our lives to be our Saviour, our friend, our brother and our 'husband'. Although we all need human relationships, we are still imperfect and some relationships unfortunately do break down. So where do we go for that perfect, constant relationship? Do we take Jesus' proposal seriously? He longs for us to be His faithful bride, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and sorrow, for time and for eternity. (2 Corinthians 11 v 2). He is our perfect fulfilment in every aspect of our lives.

Brenda Sheppard

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021



This year the World Day of Prayer was prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu and was based on the theme of 'Build on a Strong Foundation'. Because of the Covid situation we were not allowed to meet together so we did our own services in our homes. We have certainly needed a strong foundation for our faith over the past year and into the future. The parable of the houses built on different foundations highlights that a wobbly foundation has disastrous consequences. With a firm foundation in Jesus Christ our Saviour, we can weather these troublesome times we are going through. Build firm foundations.

Jenny Pratt



As we said last month, there will be no house-to-house collection this year but

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

will still happen.

It will be 10th - 16th May.

You can contribute financially on line by going to **caweek.org**

Locally there will be posters displaying what will happen.

Three public places have agreed to have gift envelopes available for people to pick up so that they can insert their donation and return the envelope to either of the two churches during the Week. Posters will make this clear, but meanwhile, the three places - in addition to the churches - which will offer new envelopes are Chapman's Store, Southminster Pharmacy and Southminster Butchers.

We are grateful for this assistance. Let's be generous!!

God is good - all the time.

I recently had a frustrating time when I couldn't find my trainers. I had searched everywhere, more than once or twice. AND I had prayed again and again that God would help me find them. Fortunately I had other footwear.



Finally my prayers were answered.

No, God did not help me find them, but He did remind me that I had thrown them away. I'm now wearing my new trainers I had already bought.

All the time - God is good.

Love, Jenny

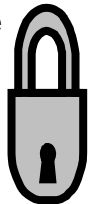
FLOWER ARRANGING THANK YOU TO THE TEAM!

Despite all the difficulties of the pandemic we have been blessed by some lovely floral arrangements in church.

The Memorial Scroll has been updated ready for Easter and it should be possible to enjoy seeing the arrangements and sharing in some of the memories. This is particularly relevant in a year when we have lost so many Church Family members.

Our most recent Church Family losses have been Jacky Griffiths, Tom Fogg, Allan Pye and Audrey Jackson. Please pray for all who are mourning today.

We are still learning to cope with all the regulations because of the coronavirus pandemic - involving limited gatherings in our church buildings - even no gatherings at all because of the Tier 4 regulations. Just remember: God is with us!



To keep aware of what is happening, and to participate on line with services, log into the website <https://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stleonardstogetherapart/>

Also, we have a WhatsApp group entitled “Together Apart Our Church”. Lots of people are involved in that.

These links have been greatly appreciated by regular Church family members and also by people who have not, to date, attended our church services. In difficult times, like this, we need to ‘allow’ God to point us in possible new directions and then to respond. **God has a plan with hope for future.**

If you would like specific prayer, please contact the vicar. preferably by email but otherwise on 01621 772300

POSSIBLE ROTA DETAILS: YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR 2 MONTHS

We don't know when we shall be able to start worshipping in church again, but, in order to be well-prepared, please let Paul Lucas know if you cannot be available on any of the following dates.

July 2021	4	11	18	25	
August 2021	1	8	15	22	29

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FULFIL YOUR DUTY YOU SHOULD CHANGE WITH SOMEONE AND INFORM THE WARDENS OF THE ARRANGEMENT.



PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	4 April	Central - West
w/b	11 April	North - East
w/b	18 April	Central - North - West
w/b	25 April	Central - East

A notice about our offerings to God.

Many of us use the facility of the offering plate to give our gifts to God. As the church is closed for the moment it may be a good time to think about a standing order to the church so that we are still bringing our gift. Many of us are doing this already – Thank you, but those who may be wondering how they can continue their giving through Standing Order the details of the church bank are here:

St. Leonard's church: Barclays Bank Sort code: **20.54.30**
A/c No. **80825107** Made payable to: Southminster
Parochial Church Council.

St. Lawrence & All Saints church: Barclays Bank
Sort code: **20.54.30** A/c No. **60842494**
Made payable to Steeple Parochial Church Council.

May God bless our gifts to Him.

APRIL WORSHIP

Details of the April services, which will happen on-line and hopefully in our Southminster and Steeple church buildings, are listed here - so please use them so that we can all be involved in worship together, in church or at home, at this on-going difficult time. Any changes will be on the outside church notice-board.

Thursday 1st April St Leonard's MAUNDY THURSDAY

8pm Service 1 Corinthians 11: 23 - 26

John 13: 1 - 17, 31b - 35

God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him: may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful.

Friday 2nd April

GOOD FRIDAY

There will be no Walk of Witness because of regulations

10.30 am Contemplative Service in St Leonard's

Hebrews 10 : 16 - 25

John 18 : 1 - ch. 19 end

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus we see the cost of sin and the depth of your love: in humble hope and fear may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday 4th April

EASTER SUNDAY

Holy Communion 8am BCP & 10.45 Family HC

Acts 10 : 34 - 43

Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion

John 20 : 1 - 18

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sunday 11th April

Second Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion 8am BCP & 10.45 Morning Worship

Acts 4 : 32 - 35

Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion

John 20 : 19 - end

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. Amen.

Sunday 18th April

Third Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 10.45 am CW

Acts 3 : 12 - 19

Steeple 9.15 Morning Worship

Luke 24 : 36b - 48

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Sunday 25th April

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion 8am BCP & 10.45 Morning Worship

Acts 4 : 5 - 12

Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion

John 10 : 11 - 18

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Our APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) will be on **Zoom today**

Special Note If you want to become a new member of the Church Electoral Roll application forms (available in church or from the Electoral Roll Officer) will need to be filled in and returned to the church (or the Vicarage) by 6 April.

My memories of Jacky by Linda Payne

Brenda and Lynda have written about their memories of Jacky and the way she touched us all in and out of church. She was Churchwarden with Harry during and after interregnum when Rev'd Jim Bateman left.

There are some areas where, perhaps, others don't remember or don't know what she was involved in. In the early 2000's Jacky asked me to help with a Mums and Toddlers group. We met each Thursday morning in the Lady Chapel where we had toys, games, books and read to the children, followed by tea and drinks. Jacky brought her grandson Euan and other children came with Mums or carers. We ran for several years. We were also involved as governors at the Junior School in the village and we spent time together on training courses at the school and other places.

The idea of Messy Church was mooted and Jenny, Jacky and I went to see what was involved by visiting a church where it was already up and running. So we started it up in St. Leonard's. We carried on going to Church District Messy Church meetings to share ideas and encouragement. Jacky was a stalwart from the beginning, always there first setting up the tea trolley and one of the last to leave after vacuuming all the carpets. We had monthly meetings with Jenny to help her with the planning of each session.

Another area where Jacky was fully involved was Holiday Club. She took on the years 5 and 6. Again throwing herself one-hundred percent. In the early days of Holiday Club we were involved in the entertainment and she enjoyed giving me a custard pie in my face, we were quite nervous but we did have a laugh about it. Mike was also involved in setting up and organising the games area outside.

Jacky was involved in the Church Community Committee and we met at Kath's to discuss how the church could be involved in community projects. One of the community projects was a group called Harbour and Jacky was involved from the beginning. We set up tables where people could play games, do puzzles and crafts, or just chat. Jacky liked to help with the puzzles and chat to the ladies. Tea and biscuits were provided all morning. At the end of the session out would come the rubber gloves and she would be washing up. The group changed its name to Chatterbox and we were still running up to the first Covid shutdown. Hopefully we can start again some time in the future, but without Jacky, of course.

Another area where Jacky and I were involved was holding a service at Squeaks Home each month. Jenny and Norman led the service, Jacky provided the music, and I did the reading and sang. We were also joined by Margaret Curtis and Viv Perry. Although some of the residents were not quite with it, you could see their mouths moving when we said the Lord's Prayer.

She also ran the Church Facebook page.

She organised the collection of toys and toiletries for the Women's Refuge every year. Also she was in charge of our church's involvement in the Women's World Day of Prayer - which has become "World Day of Prayer".

So you can see Jacky wore many hats, apart from her sun hat, and it will take more than one person to fill all the holes she has left behind.

I can't believe Jacky has gone, but I will always remember her in church praising our Heavenly Father with all her heart and soul. I believe she is doing the same in His Heavenly Home.

Au revoir Jacky, I for one will never forget you.

“Four and Twenty Talents baked in a Pye”

Ken Dunstan

I can't remember when I first met Allan Pye. It didn't take long for me to begin forming an opinion or two. He was never afraid of getting involved! Very early on, he wrote an article for the church magazine, ending with the words “the Lord our God.” One New Year's Eve, surprisingly, Kath and I stayed up until midnight. Allan came first-footing complete with kilt.

I discovered that he was an electronics engineer who worked with the military in designing for their needs on behalf of Marconi. He never gave away any secrets, but he could be quite pungent in his comments on some of the effects of personal ambition in the development of new systems. One of Allan's passions was classical music – his radio was constantly on, tuned to Classic FM. He and Christine organised regular visits for Marconi employees to the Royal Festival Hall. The coach was always full.

Allan brought his skills to church. He designed and installed our floodlights. He installed the loop for people using hearing aids. He and Simon Duggan were our first sound engineers for Sunday worship. He organised a Teddy-bears' parachute drop for a church fête with a line from the top of the tower and a cunning release mechanism for the bears' descent. He repaired the tower-top flagpole and hoisted the flag of St George. Allan also offered hospitality at Three Willows. In addition to the twinning of Burnham with L'Aiguillon-sur-Mer, North Fambridge decided to twin with the Brittany town of Lorient. Somehow, Southminster became part of the package and in time a party of Bretons came to visit. Allan and Christine hosted a huge garden party complete with Breton country dancing. I don't know how many Britons went *chez les Bretons*, but Allan and Christine certainly did. For a few years they also hosted an annual barbecue for church members. Allan continued to offer hospitality right until he became too ill to do so

(hearing loss in addition to his having become registered blind), hosting the Monday Home Group for several years. Beyond the parish, Allan served for several years as a member of Deanery Synod. For a while he helped with the Summer Holiday Club.

As I indicated, Allan was keen to get involved in all sorts of things. The church bells had ceased ringing in the mid 1970s. Once it had been established that the bells were safe to ring, Allan decided to see that they were. He joined the ringers in Burnham so he could know what to do, and went on courses to ensure that he could do it properly. Then he recruited some ringers – all of them younger than twenty. Allan became and remained Tower Captain. The team became depleted when ringers went off into Higher Education and ringers are thin on the ground in many parishes. However, Southminster's eight bells are still used whenever a team can be formed in the Dengie Peninsula, particularly for weddings and festivals.

Over the course of decades, the interior of the church had become, frankly, shabby. Despite welcome improvements to the chapel, the decoration needed complete restoration. The estimates were for colossal sums and Allan was one of those who thought we could do better. Allan's team saved the church many thousands of pounds and much of the time the work was done by Allan and by Simon Duggan. Bradwell Power Station lent all their scaffolding and three riggers to move it from the sanctuary to the crossing and then down the nave. Allan made sure by contacting specialist advisors we got the right paint for the job . One elderly parishioner marvelled that he hadn't seen the central boss painted gold since childhood in the 1930s. At week-ends - and at some other times - there was a real spirit of fellowship as the pair of painters became a party of painters. Sunday services never wavered! A photographic record of this project remains in church.

Kath and I regularly attended the Greenbelt Christian Festival for two decades. Early on we invited Allan and Christine. They came

every year until Christine became too ill. In year two, Allan went a week early and helped to put up the marquees. Right at the start, they participated in the “Wild Goose Worship” offered by the Iona Community. Inevitably, this led to regular visits to Iona and to greater understanding of the Celtic Christianity of St. Cedd, the founder of St Peter’s Chapel in Bradwell (and also one of the influences on Gordon Anderson, who took short retreats at Holy Island, where Cedd had trained.) Allan also spent some time with the Othona Community in Bradwell as a volunteer contributing to maintenance and daily administration.

After a few early years living in Crown Way, Allan and Christine had bought Three Willows, in Old Heath Road, an unprepossessing bungalow but with a good deal of land and a stable attached. He rode regularly. He wasn’t always able to be at home when the horses needed exercising. He found some young ladies who could do the job. The first of these was my daughter-in-law Claire. Her experience with Allan’s horses stood her in good stead when she needed a job; she became groom and trainer for a string of dressage horses in the Blackmore area. Meanwhile, Allan worked on the house, building an extension that almost doubled its size and doing pretty well all of the work himself.

Allan had been involved in the Scout movement as a boy. He worked for a while with Southminster Scouts. He continued his service to young people when the Southminster Station House became vacant and converted into a centre for the Crouch Valley Line community. The ground floor became a café. Although part of the service was coffee for commuters, the café also became a haunt for teenagers who weren’t always popular with older people in the village. In Allan they found a pair of listening ears, a refusal to prejudge and the benefit of his experience where appropriate.

Christine has only been mentioned so far. She was born with a neurological illness very similar to myasthenia gravis. She was one of only a handful of people with this particular ailment. Allan stood by her, solidly and sometimes fiercely, particularly when the Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group refused to pay for a particular medicine. An American company had bought the rights to it, tweaked it (unnecessarily) and raised the price. The experimental original hadn't been approved for general use and the CCG thought her condition didn't warrant the extra expense or the use of a technically unlicensed drug provided by the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, for whom Christine was a valued partner for research into her condition. Allan worked tremendously hard at finding and inspiring allies, of whom I was privileged to be one. Christine got the drug she needed after a tremendous local effort by many people.

Allan was a good carer for Christine, a compulsive gap-filler, creative and a hard worker. He could also be difficult, especially when he perceived well-meant practical help as an infringement of his independence. Sometimes he could be aggressively dismissive of organisations he thought were badly managed. Sometimes in his last years he would fail to recognise personal hurt. All that said, he is already missed. I think that the Great Judge might well say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Gordon & Joan Baker
have added some memories of Allan below.

We came to live in Southminster in 1999. That is when we first met Allan, who told us that he was the first chairman to start the first South Essex branch for Myasthenia Gravis (a condition that his wife Christine had). He asked if I (Joan) would help them by being Treasurer so I did this for about 4 years. To help raise funds Allan helped to pull a plane along the runway at Southend Airport. This group often got together for lunch or walks. This was Allan - always ready to help. We will miss him but never forget how he cared.

OUT IN THE WILDERNESS

Chris Martin

Listening to an early morning religious programme on radio during Lent, I began to think about being “out in the wilderness” and Lent being 40 days to match Jesus’ 40 days of contemplation before his ultimate fate, a day for each year Moses spent taking his people to spend 40 years in search of a “promised land”.

At the end of both events something important happened, according to the Bible stories, and now I am wondering whether when we are feeling lost and alone we might dare to hope that whatever happens in the future, it will mean a new start. I refer, of course, to when we emerge, hopefully in June, from the restrictions necessitated by “The Virus”.

During this pandemic we have all felt “out in the wilderness”, even those who don’t live alone and have a partner or family for company. Many of us try to keep a full calendar in “normal times” (whatever they were!!!!) but now there has been a forced period of time for thinking about what is to come and how we will cope with it. Will we be the same people as we emerge from this period of time?

There has been death and illness in many families and the abnormal conditions we have to live under have made dealing with such events doubly difficult to cope with. My condolences and best wishes to anybody who has had to suffer anything like this.

Relationships have changed, either weakened or strengthened, and the fall-out from this trying time is something that will be interesting to deal with but not necessarily easy.

I know it's been said before but the best thing about this whole year is that people have found time for one another. I've been very touched by people's concern for me, and in turn hope I have tried to keep in touch with as many of my friends as possible.

Now that things are beginning to ease and we older people at least are feeling safer thanks to the vaccination against Covid19, let's hope that we can keep up our concern for each other as we get busy again in our own little worlds.

Keep smiling, everyone....not long to go now!

Return to hospital

Angela Parker

On 26th February I returned to my work as a ward chaplain at Broomfield Hospital. In March 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, I and my colleagues had to step down and wait until such time as it was deemed safe to return. The four MSE trust chaplains remained in post and continued ministering throughout the days that followed. Over the past year I have kept in constant contact with the chaplains as they tirelessly worked with the dying and bereaved, bravely being a comforting presence on the Covid wards, always putting the patients and staff first. The chapel in the Faith Centre has remained open for private prayer throughout the lockdown and has been a safe haven for those seeking a place of retreat from the daily horrors they faced.

The corridors were eerily quiet on my first day back, as in full PPE, I visited a 'Green ward' which was virus free, and carefully avoided the 'Red Zones' where the Covid patients

were being cared for. The staff on the ward were so welcoming and the patients all happy to chat and some accepted prayer. As I write, visitors are not allowed in the hospital so the long, uncertain days drag for the patients, many very ill and anxious about the future. As I left the ward I was very tearful and overwhelmed to be back to the work God has called me to.

The plans for the future include restarting the daily services in the chapel, for more colleagues to return to work and for counselling to be made available for staff who are suffering PTSD.

I carry this prayer during my work and it puts into words all I feel about the amazing privilege I have to be doing God's work in the hospital.

*I come in to these walls, unknown of what the day will hold,
uncertain of where God will guide my path. I have no idea where I
will go or what I will do, when I walk these halls. I know I am called
here for those in despair, for those in celebration and for those in
grief. I am called to be here for You and I am humbled.*

*I am humbled by these moments. When I enter a room I am a
presence, a healing touch, a comforting word or a moment of grace.
I am humbled by these moments when I celebrate life, mourn death,
standing in awe of resurrection and I wonder, how is this even
possible.*

*I am humbled by these moments as I enter these walls, for You have
asked me to. I come to You this day and ask for Your healing touch,
Your comforting words and Your moments of grace, to reassure me,
to hold me, and provide whatever I need, so that I may be that
presence for You.*

*I am humbled and ask of You now, hold me, guide me and carry me
as I enter this day with You. Amen.*

The St. Leonard's Together Apart Facebook Group

began on 20th March 2020, just a few days before we went into lockdown. The group was created as a way to keep in touch, encourage and support each other during this difficult time. Since then we have shared songs, daily devotions, prayers, church services, Bible studies, Alpha courses etc.

At the present time each weekday looks like this;

6am Daily Devotion including a worship song



11.30am Family Time (Tuesday and Thursday) including Little Lions' singing time, Veggie Tales movies, virtual Sunday School etc.

3pm Bible Study / Reflection

8pm Prayer

Saturday is a quiet day and on Sunday we post the church service and weekly bulletin.

We welcome others to share encouraging posts on the page too.

It has been a real privilege and blessing to run this group, and the bonus has been that I have got to know some wonderful people through the group too.

Karen Flack

**Wycliffe
Bible
Translators**

**Keep praying for
Steve and Johanna Pillinger**

And at this time let's respond to a request to pray for the translators working in areas where Christians are being persecuted. They are trusting God's care to lead them on in their valuable work - even when their own families turn against them. Details about how to contribute for their support are on wycliffe.org.uk/atrisk



WHO ARE WE?

Mission Statement

“To be a people offering praise and worship to God and serving him by being the Good News by our words and actions”

Web Site www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

Contact: vicar@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

If you wish to contact the Church regarding a Safeguarding issue please contact the Church Office at 772300
or safeguarding@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

NORMAL PUBLIC WORSHIP IS STILL A BIT DIFFERENT.

See pages 10-13 for details during this Easter season.

Weekly notices, covering any changes, will be available to read on the outside church notice-board

8:00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

10:45 am Holy Communion or Morning Worship

Steeple Services similarly continue at **9.15am**

(Our Prayer ministry for any needs will continue even though it happens ‘at a distance’.)

Children and Young people are always welcomed especially for the **Family Celebration Services**

MESSY CHURCH is normally monthly on Mondays

at 3.45 pm in church. The next one will be publicised as soon as it is allowed to happen.



‘LITTLE LIONS’ usually meet on Wednesday mornings in the Memorial Hall during term-time only. It is for babies/toddlers & their carers.



Home Groups are obviously not gathering at the moment.