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**April 2020**

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## Contacts at St Mary's

### **Priest in charge:**

*Reverend Tom Birch*

Tel: **01661 853254**

**Reader:** Georgina Harper

**Churchwardens:** *Peter Pescod,  
Bill Jordon CBE*

### **PCC--**

*Neil Halford Vice Chair*

*Treasurer Barbara Pescod*

*Deanery Reps: Martin Davenport, Jackie*

*Scrowther, Anne Codd*

*Neil Ramsey,*

*Christine Fulton, Georgina Harper.*

*Robbie Kalbraier, Nathanael Lewis*

**Organist:** *Margaret Turnbull*

Tel: 832149

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

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### **Magazine ads and Editor:**

*Martin Davenport*

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**Publication Date:** Last Sunday of the month

- All contributions for the magazine to the

Editor by the **second Sunday** of the month.

## A word from the Vicar



On Tuesday 17th March the Archbishops suspended public worship for a season. And so has begun the most bizarre period my ministry thus far. So many of the things I have previously done to exercise a ministry in this benefice are now no longer open to me. COVID-19 prevents us from being community and from being church in the ways that we had got used to. And yet unsettling though this is we will still be church and still be community. I am astounded and humbled by the number of people offering themselves in the service of others. There is a determination that none in this community can be forgotten which is being wonderfully expressed by so many people.

This unusual time is only just beginning; we are likely to have to live differently from before for months to come. As time progresses the needs of people, especially the vulnerable, will change. We need to be aware of where people are at so that we can minister effectively to each other.

To this end:

- We will be setting up 'telephone visiting' so that isolated folk receive a daily phonecall checking in on them. If you would like to be visited please be in touch.

- We will still be a praying and worshipping community. Church

will be open for people to go and be in. If you encounter other people whilst you are in church please do keep your distance from one another.

•Our Facebook output is being ramped up hopefully will include the livestreaming of services (many people are on a fairly steep technical learning curve at the minute but we'll get there!) If you know an older person with a computer who might need help in setting up a Facebook account, likely with very tight privacy settings, you might like to offer to help.

Keep praying, keep smiling, keep being community in the wonderful ways you already are. Remember that God is with us through this and God is good.

Prayers and Blessings,

**Tom**



## Smile Lines

**Don't break'em-** There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. The lady paused for a moment. "Only the Ten Commandments," she said politely.

**What God looks like** - An infants teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. One little girl was working away furiously, and so she asked her what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what

God looks like." Without missing a beat, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."



## Dorothy Likes Easter

Dorothy settled down with a contented sigh. Spring was well and truly sprung, and with the better weather the aches and pains in her poor old joints didn't feel quite so bad. Even her fat little legs had something of a spring about them. Besides which, the church would be filled with flowers again for Easter, after the austerity of those long, dark days of Lent, and that would be gorgeous. 'Easter has always puzzled me a bit,' she remarked to Marcus, who was swinging upside down on his silken thread from the rafters. 'I can't help wondering why Jesus had to die? He had so much to teach people. Wouldn't it have been better to live on into old age?'

Marcus frowned. 'He was betrayed and the trial was a stitch-up. The powers that be wanted him dead. That's all there was to it. Anyway, if he hadn't died, he wouldn't have had a resurrection and there'd be no Easter. Think of that. No hot cross buns or Easter eggs or chocolate bunnies.'

'Hmm.' It was a sobering thought. Easter meant lots of delicious crumbs for an elderly hungry mouse who had felt half-starved all winter. But Dorothy was still puzzled. 'What does it all mean though, Marcus? Is it just to reassure us that after we die we come alive again in some different dimension?'

Marcus scratched his head, a difficult manoeuvre for an upside-down spider with eight legs, but he needed to buy himself time. This was one of Dorothy's

more awkward questions. Eventually he said, 'Well, I think it is about that of course. Jesus was seen again fit and well even though he'd had such a terrible death, so that tells us something about a new sort of life after death. But maybe it's a bit about this life too. You know what it's like when awful things happen in this life? Like it's so terrible you die a little inside?'

Dorothy nodded. She knew exactly what he meant.

'Well, think it tells us that no matter how awful things are in this life, they will get better. Resurrection can happen for us too, here and now and in this life. We just have to hang on in there and trust God.'

'Oh!' Dorothy hadn't thought of that before, but it sounded so good. As she prepared to curl up in her little patch of sunlight on the church floor she said sleepily, 'I've always liked Easter. Now I know why. And it's not just those delicious crumbs!'

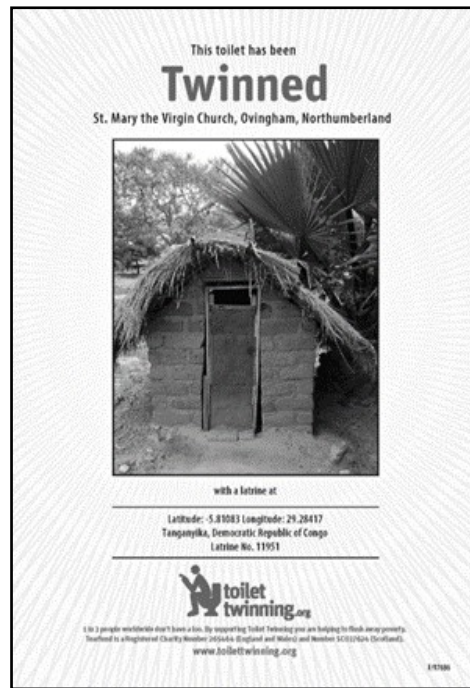
**Janice Scott**

### Chat Club

No Chat Club until September probably. The volunteers have members phone numbers and we are keeping in touch to see if there is anything we can do to help

### Who said that?

Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime. Martin Luther



By now, most of you will know that we have a toilet in St. Mary's Church. We give sincere thanks to all those people who have helped us to raise the money for this facility. The toilet will not only make life easier for those of us who attend the church regularly, but the church can now be used for a greater variety of events.

Over 4.5 billion people across the world do not have access to a safe toilet. Bad sanitation is one of the world's biggest killers and women and girls suffer most. We take our toilets for granted but in third world and developing countries, millions of people must still defecate in the open. Worldwide, more than 800 children die every day from preventable diseases linked to dirty water and unsafe toilets – that is one child every two minutes. Toilet Twinning was established in 2010 by Tearfund. This charity raises money to enable poor communities to

have clean water, a basic toilet and to learn about basic hygiene. When toilets are provided in schools, more children are able to attend in safety. Girls in particular are able to attend school without fear of being sexually assaulted or bitten by snakes.

You too could twin your home toilet. For £60 you will receive the exact location of your donated toilet together with a photograph which you can hang in your toilet. Go to [www.toilettwinning.org](http://www.toilettwinning.org). We are proudly displaying our photograph in St. Mary's toilet. It is latrine number 11951 in the Democratic Republic of Congo and we have the exact coordinates should anyone want to visit it!

There is an additional benefit of twinning our toilet: it earns us extra points on our Eco Church rating – we are hoping for a Silver Award.

**Jackie**



"The organist isn't too sure about it, she says she cannot play that fast"

## Wild Flower planting

First of all, thank you to those who have offered to be on a list of helpers - we are such a good village!

We are going to be planting some wild flower plug plants on Joiners Nature Park Saturday 4 April 10 am - please bring a trowel - all welcome, I think the children will enjoy this.

The plants have been chosen in the hope to encourage wildlife and insects especially pollinators.

Refreshments will be provided.

Because this is an open air event and people will be well spaced out it is hoped the event will still take place.

**Elaine**

## Reasons to be cheerful

In these dark times for people around the world, as many are being forced into isolation. there have also been reasons to find hope.

As countries go into lockdown over the virus, there have been significant drops in pollution levels. Both China and northern Italy have recorded major falls in nitrogen dioxide - a serious air pollutant and powerful warming chemical - amid reduced industrial activity and car journeys. Researchers in New York also told the BBC that early results showed carbon monoxide, mainly from cars, had been reduced by nearly 50% compared with last year. And with airlines cancelling flights en masse and millions working from home, other countries around the world are expected to follow this downward path.

On a similar note, residents of Venice have noticed a vast improvement in the water quality of the famous canals running through the city. The streets of the

popular tourist destination in northern Italy have emptied amid the outbreak leading to a drastic drop in water traffic, which has allowed sediment to settle. The usually murky water has gone so clear that fish can even be seen.

There are plenty of stories of panic buying and fights over toilet roll and tins, but the virus has also spurred acts of kindness around the world. Two New Yorkers amassed 1,300 volunteers in 72 hours to deliver groceries and medicine to elderly and vulnerable people in the city. Facebook said hundreds of thousands of people in the UK had joined local support groups set up for the virus, while similar groups have been formed in Canada, sparking a trend there known as "caremongering". Supermarkets in Australia are among those to create a special "elderly hour" so older shoppers and those with disabilities have a chance to shop in peace. People have also donated money, shared recipe and exercise ideas, sent uplifting messages to self-



isolating elderly people and transformed businesses into food

distribution centres.

Between a hectic work and home life it is often easy to feel disconnected from those around you. As the virus affects us all, it has brought many communities around the world closer together.

In Italy, where a countrywide lockdown is in place, people have joined together on their balconies for morale-boosting songs. The virus has also highlighted the importance of health workers and other people working in key services. Thousands of Europeans have taken to their balconies and windows to applaud the doctors and nurses fighting the virus,

while medical students in London have volunteered to help healthcare professionals with childcare and household chores.

With millions of people now stuck in isolation, many are using the opportunity to get creative. Social media users have shared details of their new hobbies, including reading, baking, knitting and painting. The DC Public Library in Washington is among those hosting a virtual book club, while Italian Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura has launched an Instagram series called Kitchen Quarantine, teaching basic recipes to aspiring foodies who are stuck at home. An art teacher in the US state of Tennessee has been live-streaming classes for children who are out of school, inspiring them to get creative at home. Pop stars including Coldplay frontman Chris Martin and country singer Keith Urban have also been live-streaming gigs to combat the boredom of self-isolation.

And while many public spaces have been shut, art fans have been making the most of virtual tours offered by the world's biggest galleries, observing the famous paintings of the Louvre in Paris and the classic sculptures of the Vatican museum from their living rooms.

Australia's Sydney Observatory offered a tour of the night sky for people stuck at home.

(Based on an article in the independent)

## Parish Council News

By now everyone in Ovingham will have received a note through their door informing them of their named contact to help during this current

crisis. Whether it is to do shopping, collect prescriptions or just a friendly voice on the telephone, the Parish Council are hugely grateful for those who have offered to help. Like many of you, some of the Councillors will also be in isolation. If you have not received any note, please contact either myself (835771) or Doreen Jordon (832341).

Meetings have been cancelled until further notice—further advice is needed regarding the Annual meeting of the Parish and the auditing of the accounts which will shortly be due—the financial year for the Parish Councils being 1st April to 31st March.

Many issues can be dealt with via email and other items such as grass cutting of Parish Council land and the playing fields should also continue for the time being.

Updates will be put on Ovingham Parish Councils face book page regarding local management of Covid-19.

There is a vacancy on the Parish Council for Ovingham. Although anyone interested cannot be considered at the moment, perhaps some of you will think about this later.

Margaret Davenport  
Clerk to Ovingham Parish Council

## Winships Little Med Ovington

Although closed to the public. Ken hopes to continue a take away service for as long as possible. This will include pizzas or pasta and wine or beer if available. Please phone 830291 for more information.

## A tribute to Ian Heslop

Ian's early life was spent in Felling. Following junior school, he was educated at Washington Grammar School, and then worked in County Hall in Newcastle.

He continued his education at Newcastle University, during which time he met Sylvia at a church in Felling. After they married, he began his teaching career at Walbottle School.

They moved into Ovingham in 1972, and Ian's career progressed when he became Head of English at Slatyford School in the west end of Newcastle and after a few years he moved back to Walbottle School (they had a daughter and three sons by then).

His health deteriorated and he had to have a triple heart by-pass in 2001.

After he retired, and his health started to improve, Ian vowed to get involved in some of the village activities. He joined the village choir and the drama group, (becoming secretary for a number of years in both) and became a Councillor, playing a full part in each of these activities.

He also had a season ticket at St. James' Park, where he regularly went to see his beloved Newcastle United.

Over the years the family often went on camping holidays in the summer, and there are many stories about his determination to follow his instincts, rather than the sat-nav or the family member who was map-reading resulting in journeys taking much longer than intended!

All who knew Ian will miss him greatly, not only for his dedication and commitment to his many 'societies' but also for his humour and his gentleness.

**Jim Miller**



## God is still with us

We are aware that due to the ongoing situation, churches are closing. This is a difficult time as we will not be able to meet together and there will be much concern about those who are at risk. We should not forget that God is with us through this situation and Jesus reminds us of this in the following passage of scripture from Luke.

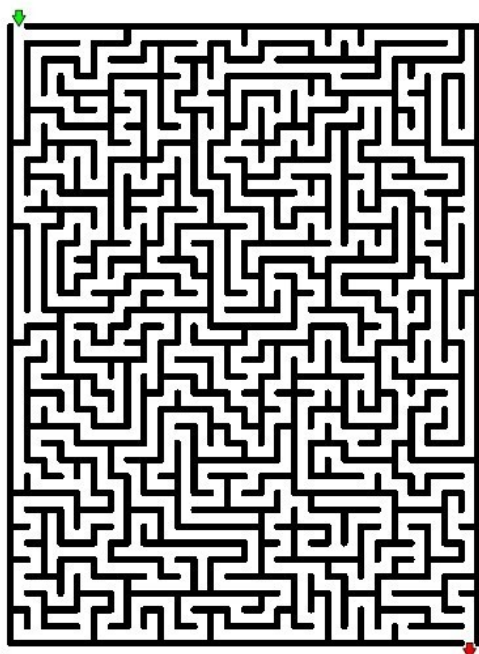
"Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

"Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

**Its safe to assume that all the regular events and events scheduled during April have been cancelled. But if in doubt please check with the organiser. Above all stay safe Martin**

## Puzzlers Column

### Maze



### Sudoku (Medium) (Answers on the back page)

			1		4			
7								
		9			3	1	2	
8				9	1			3
	2	5				7	1	
4			2	7				8
	3	6	8			9		
								2
			5		6			

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Unfortunately there will be no further services during the current restrictions. However following the success of the service posted live on Facebook it is hoped it will be the first of many. To keep in touch with on line events search & follow St Oswin's & St Marys (Facebook page).

## Readings for April

5th April

Palm Sunday

Readings: Isaiah 50.4-9a

Philippians 2.5-11

Gospel: Matthew 26.14- end of 27

9th April

Maundy Thursday

2nd Sunday of Lent

Readings: Exodus 12.1-10, 11-14

1 Corinthians 11.23-26

Gospel: John 13.1-17, 31b-35

12th April - Easter Day

Readings: Acts 10.34-43

Colossians 3.1-4

Gospel: Matthew 28.1-10

19th April

2nd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Exodus 14.10-end; 15.20-21

Acts 2.14a, 22-32

Gospel: John 20.19-end

26th April

3rd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Zephaniah 3.14-end

Acts 2.14a, 36-41

Gospel: Luke 24.13-35

## Sudoku Solutions

3	5	2	1	6	4	8	7	9
7	8	1	9	5	2	4	3	6
6	4	9	7	8	3	1	2	5
8	6	7	4	9	1	2	5	3
9	2	5	6	3	8	7	1	4
4	1	3	2	7	5	6	9	8
5	3	6	8	2	7	9	4	1
1	7	8	3	4	9	5	6	2
2	9	4	5	1	6	3	8	7



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