

Dear all,

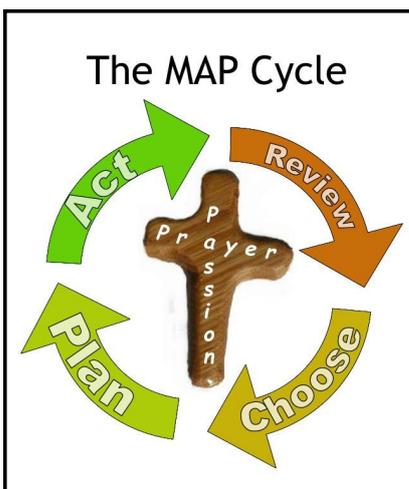
Oulton Broad Team Ministry
The Parishes of St. Mark with
St. Luke and St. Michael.

I know that, for some of us, things are getting harder as this time goes on. The continued lockdown restrictions, and the associated implications, are exacting a toll upon our emotional health and wellbeing. We'll all need a bit of time to recover, and to heal. And, if you're feeling the need to talk to someone at greater length than the weekly 'catch-up calls', do please let us know and we'll do all that we can to support you. Also, please remember that we have a prayer chain which maintains confidentiality, and immediately activates around 20 people in prayer. Prayer always makes a difference.

As the lockdown restrictions are slowly beginning to be lifted, and further to Jo's reflections in last week's newsletter, it's time to turn our attention to the future and, in particular, to ask ourselves some searching questions: *Was my 'old normal' sustainable and desirable? What have I discovered/rediscovered when I have not been so occupied with my usual programme of activity? What are the things that I'd like to take forward into the future? What are the things that I'd like to leave behind?* Questions such as these can help us to reflect upon what has been, as well as our hopes for what is to come. As a Staff Team, we will be actively involved in asking questions such as these in relation to our shared life of worship, mission and ministry across our Parishes. We will then take the discussion a little further, to our PCCs and APCMs. And so, whether you're a PCC member or not, your prayerful thoughts and comments would be welcome as, together, we discern God's way forward for our Parishes.

I've been studying the letter to the Hebrews over this past fortnight and I was struck again by this verse: *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.* (Hebrews 10:24) One of my main concerns as we look to the future of our Team Ministry, is to further develop our strategy for Mission. We have good news to share with our community, in both word and deed. We're already sharing in so many different ways—which is fantastic!—but I'd like for us, as a newly constituted Team Ministry, to rethink our approach towards '*love and good deeds*' in our community.

Within our Parishes of Oulton and Oulton Broad we have.... a number of schools and care homes; people who are struggling financially; people who feel lost and lonely; people who feel guilty and don't know the freedom of forgiveness that can be found in Jesus; people of all ages struggling with health issues of body, mind and spirit; an environment which needs greater care and attention; people asking big questions; new disciples to be made and supported to grow; ...and the list goes on! Where should we focus? We cannot attend to every need. Which of our current activities should we continue? What might we need to stop in order to make room for new avenues of mission? These are the questions that I'm continually thinking and praying about.



In order to move things forward, I'd like to gather a **Mission Action Planning Group**, who will work together to develop a proposal for a renewed strategy for mission. Ideally, I'd like that group to be made up of people from across our congregations and including representatives from both of our Parishes. I'd like that group to include people who have a heart for mission, and so I ask: do you feel passionate about finding new ways to reach out, and seeing God at work in our community? If that's you, I'd be really pleased to hear from you!

A word about Sunday Worship: we are very aware of the challenges for those of you who aren't able to access Zoom, via Video or Phone, and are keeping you in our thoughts and prayers. We will continue to distribute bible reading resources and other literature, CDs, Bible Reading notes etc. to those that find them helpful. If there are further ways that we can offer support to you, do please get in touch.

Zoom Sunday Worship is taking place at 10.30am each week, followed by Holy

Communion at Midday. You can join us by landline, or mobile phone, if you call the following number: **0203 481 5240**. When prompted, you'll then need to enter this meeting ID: **588 877 574** and press the # key on your phone keypad. This call will cost you the same as any UK national call, which is often free. For others, joining the Sunday online gathering with video, the meeting ID is also **588 877 574**. The songs/hymns this week will be: *King of my Heart*, *More Love, More Power* (Mission Praise 892) and *Purify my Heart* (Mission Praise 921 / Complete Anglican Hymns 47).

Midweek Communion on Wednesday 3rd June will be at 10.30am and live on **St. Mark's Facebook page**.



Zoomers! This Sunday we are starting something new, especially for the children. Zoomers! is a **Zoom gathering aimed at 5s-11s**, although any children of any age are welcome to join in. There'll be action songs, crafts, stories and more. It'll be fast moving and fun, 9.45am to 10.15am each Sunday morning, with the same meeting ID as the regular Sunday Worship. For the craft activity this week, you'll need to gather the following items: a paper plate; coloured felt tips or pencils; a piece of string and a pair of scissors. Parents, you'll need to supervise, and we hope that you'll join in! Thanks to Gemma and members of the Children's Team who are organising this for us.

The Distanced Church is a free to download e-book. It is a collection of 30 short essays (about 5 mins read each), collected together by Heidi Campbell. It includes contributions from ministers from ten different countries, written since the lockdown, and drawn together within three weeks, so it is very current.

<https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/187891>

Virtual 'Open' Gardens I know that many of you have had a lot more time in the garden in recent weeks. It seems a shame that less people are seeing the results of your efforts. Therefore, I wondered whether we could have 'virtual open gardens'. If you'd be willing to take a photo or two of your garden, and email them to me (revhelenjary@gmail.com), or post them to St. Mark's Parish Office, I can put them in the newsletter or we can display them on Church Facebook pages.

If you're happy for us to do so, we will say the names of the gardeners, but not any other details, such as addresses. If you send in photos, please let me know that you're willing for them to be shared, in either the newsletter, on Facebook, or both.



A Prayer in Lockdown

The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked. (John 20.19)

Ever present God,
 be with us in our isolation,
 be close to us in our distancing,
 be healing in our sickness,
 be joy in our sadness,
 be light in our darkness,
 be wisdom in our confusion,
 be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
 that when the doors reopen
 we may with the zeal of Pentecost
 inhabit our communities
 and speak of your goodness
 to an emerging world.
 For Jesus' sake, Amen.

Send your Holy Spirit that I may share with my friends [here, name your friends] the life of your Son and your love for all. Strengthen me as a witness to that love as I pledge to pray for them, for your name's sake. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

For the health workers tending the seriously ill
 for the researchers analysing data, identifying trends
 for the media outlets communicating news
 for the supermarket workers, providing for us
 for the good news stories of recoveries
 for the clap for Carers and Keyworkers
 for the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness
 for the notes through letterboxes offering help and support
 for the internet, telephones and all that connects
 for the awakened appreciation of what is truly important

Thanks be to God.

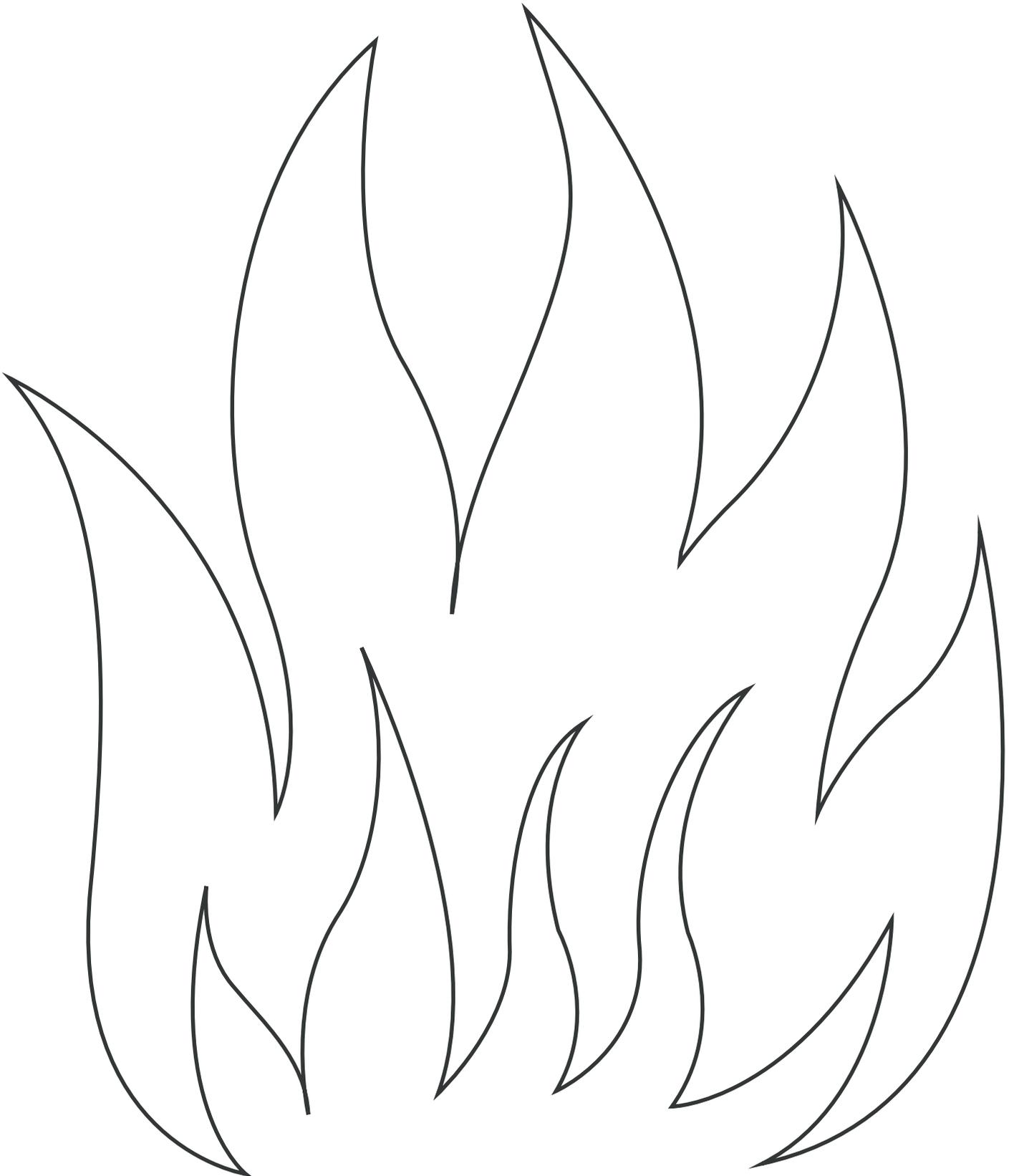
***'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.'* (Romans 8:28)**

With love and prayer, Helen

Name

Colouring time

How realistically can you colour these flames?



An awesome ally

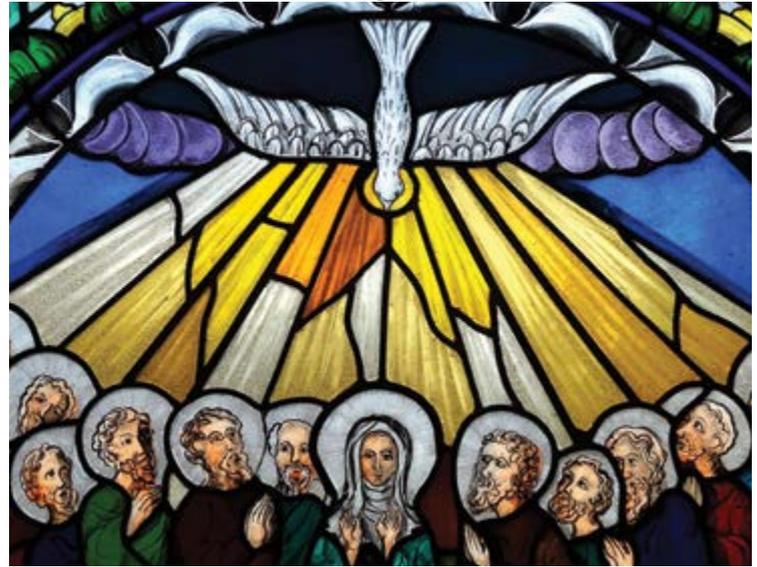
Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23 and John 7:37-39

Many people live with low-level anxiety about the state of the world. Indeed, there is so much need, so much injustice, that it is easy to be overwhelmed. In today's readings from John, Jesus promises us that he has not left us to manage on our own – we will be sent the advocate to work alongside us. In today's reading from Acts we see this promise fulfilled, as God pours out the Holy Spirit on men and women: "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind... Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them".

The Holy Spirit coming to the Church is a story of transformation, a watershed moment for the disciples. Before Pentecost they

were afraid, full of doubt, cowering and attacked. Afterwards, they rise up, defend Christ and preach with confidence. The salvation and spiritual gifts they were given on that day, for the common good, continue to be dispersed among God's people. God gives gifts to each of us according to our individual character, and we are urged to receive the Holy Spirit and live joyous, abundant lives promised by Christ. As we take action for others in any way we can – for someone disadvantaged, excluded or who is in material, spiritual or emotional need – the Spirit moves through us and into the world. This is far more powerful than anything we do on our own. The Spirit comes with such power that everyone understands one another. It is with this Spirit that we are able to act. 🙏

Holy Spirit, breathe through me, live and move in me, empower, encourage and transform me and all Christians to rise up today and do God's will in the world. Amen.



Inner Journey, Outer Journey

by James Roose-Evans

Continuing our serialisation of extracts from James Roose-Evans' enduring classic.

In 1980 I was given a slim volume of letters, entitled *84 Charing Cross Road*, by Helene Hanff. I acquired the stage rights, adapted it, and in 1981 directed it at the Salisbury Playhouse. It was so successful that it transferred to the West End, starring Rosemary Leach and David Swift. I went to New York to direct it on Broadway where, with Ellen Burstyn and Joseph Maher in the leading roles, it ran for three

months. It won various awards: Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Play and Best Director. In 1986 it was made into a film starring Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins.

While this outward journey was unfolding, another inner journey was nearing its completion, resulting in my being ordained deacon on St David's Day at Glasshampton Monastery, surrounded only by the brethren. Then, four months later, I was ordained priest in Hereford Cathedral. 🙏

James' blog can be found at: www.jamesrooseevans.co.uk.



His book is available from Redemptorist Publications: 01420 88222
Product code: 1852
ISBN: 9780852315569
Price: £9.95

World Bicycle Day

by Christine Clark

June 3 has been designated World Bicycle Day by the UN, which sees prioritising the needs of walkers and cyclists as a critical part of improving air quality and road safety in cities. According to the World Health Organization, safe infrastructure for walking and cycling is key to achieving greater health equity: "improved active transport is not only healthy; it is also equitable and cost-effective." Intrepid cyclist Christine Clark shares her personal story.

As a student I cycled everywhere, often carrying – probably unsafely – books, files and bags of shopping slung over my handlebars. I once had a nasty

fall when I somersaulted over the handlebars, but I wasn't put off. Years later, cash-strapped in our early married life and without a car, I continued to cycle with my small son happily riding on the child seat behind me, taking him to midweek activities at church, playgroup and on outings into the country.

This was challenged, however, when my twin daughters arrived. We heard that in Holland children are carried in front rather than behind, so we bought such a seat. My bike was now ready – one seat fore, the other aft, with me amidsthips. The girls loved it and used to argue for their turn in the front, where the view was better. I loved it too as it gave me freedom and independence. And I thanked God for the loving generosity that enabled us to continue our activities. 🙏

“Faith expects from God what is beyond all expectation.

Andrew Murray (1828-1917), South African writer, teacher and pastor

MONDAY

1 JUNE

Visit of the Blessed
Virgin Mary to
Elizabeth

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Psalm 113

Romans 12:9-16

Luke 1:39-49 [50-56]

TUESDAY

2 JUNE

2 Peter 3:11-15a.

17-end

Psalm 90:1-4. 10.

14. 16

Mark 12:13-17

WEDNESDAY

3 JUNE

2 Timothy 1:1-3. 6-12

Psalm 123

Mark 12:18-27

THURSDAY

4 JUNE

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Psalm 25:4-12

Mark 12:28-34

FRIDAY

5 JUNE

2 Timothy 3:10-end

Psalm 119:161-168

Mark 12:35-37

SATURDAY

6 JUNE

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Psalm 71:7-16

Mark 12:38-end

REFLECTION

A week which begins with the visitation is a good time to consider how the kingdom of God challenges or supports the status quo. Empowered by the Spirit, Elizabeth recognises just who Mary carries in her womb, while Mary glimpses for a moment the great reversal of the kingdom and celebrates a world turned upside down, the mighty fallen, the lowly exalted.

Mark 12 might be subtitled “the status quo fights back,” as representatives of the established order engage with Jesus, trying to determine exactly where he stands. Is he advocating revolution? No – he wants people to pay their taxes. Is he, then, an ally of the Sadducees? On the contrary, he tells them that they are quite wrong in their core assumptions. Surprisingly, they find common ground as a scribe asks Jesus’ view on the commandments. Both agree that love of God and neighbour outweighs all else and, in the face of that, silence falls. As Jesus celebrates the donation from the widow who, outstripping the ostentatious generosity of those who are wealthy, “out of her poverty... put in everything she had”, we are once again in the world of the Magnificat, where less can be more.

PRAYER

Challenging God,
the ways of your kingdom run counter to so much
that we take for granted in our world.
Give us the courage to choose your values,
and help us to love you with all our hearts
and our neighbours as ourselves,
reshaping our lives in accordance with
your commandments.



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CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART II – PREPARATIONS

John Witcombe continues his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

You are not permitted simply to turn up at the foot of Kilimanjaro and set off on your own. The regular routes all start in Tanzania, and the government guards this, one of its key assets, zealously, requiring all trekkers to register, join a licensed guiding company and pay a substantial tax. So the first hurdle to overcome is the sheer cost – this is not an expedition for the faint-hearted, on many fronts.

My next decision was how to choose a trekking company. The internet offers many options – but one criterion was that it should be a company that pays its porters a proper living wage. There are many stories of inadequately dressed porters carrying huge loads for wealthy tourists who don’t treat them – their hosts in a foreign country – with respect. Trekking companies affiliated to the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project contract to pay and treat porters appropriately, so this was a good place to start.

Through all of this I was seeking a sense of the Spirit’s confirmation that I was doing the right thing. It wasn’t just what I did, but the way I did it, that was important. If I was to ask God’s blessing on this crazy activity I had to be doing it in the way God would choose. It all added to the expense, but making ethical decisions mattered.

With the deposit paid, my next task was to choose and buy suitable equipment. Conditions on Kilimanjaro vary from the heat and damp of tropical rainforest, to sub-zero alpine temperatures on the summit. I was heading to Tanzania via Burundi and Rwanda and I needed to take clerical robes and gifts for my hosts alongside my trekking gear – all within the twenty-three-kilogramme weight limit! In the end I could only manage by walking into the airport with my pockets bulging with all the things that wouldn’t fit into the bag...

Travelling light on this pilgrimage? Not really, I’m afraid. I was going to need to shed some baggage.

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Pentecost

Monday 1 June to
Saturday 6 June
2020

WEEK