

Dear all,

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

I hope that this newsletter finds you well. This is the tenth letter that we have sent out, which means that it's now ten weeks since worship was suspended. That's a long time and I do hope that the supports that we have put in place—online worship, newsletter, mailings, CDs, weekly phone calls etc—have been helpful for you. This week, Jo Fowler has written some words for us to reflect upon:

"I've stuff in the cupboards that's been in there years!"

"There's three compost heaps in the garden I never knew were there!"

"I've cleaned and polished everywhere, we've never been so clean!"

And finally – *"Went round the block for the first time in nine weeks and my legs are wobbly!"*



These are just a few of the pastoral conversations of the last few weeks when I've been phoning and I guess readers can identify with these. You may have variations but lockdown has provided time for cleaning, clearing and has given us all time to think about our priorities. Those priorities can be on personal material issues but I hope this time is also giving us the space for reflection and as a Benefice. I can't help thinking that if Jesus was here now, He would find lots of parable illustrations from our current life with which to challenge us to be thinking of the future life and mission of the churches. I sense it would be about looking at what is good but also whether the time has come for seeking

God's will for new ways and activities in our future life together. We all cling to things we hold dear but perhaps some things need to change or be reassessed as to their value in the changed times in which we are going to live. We all love our ruts and routines, but what of the future?

I always find Paul's words in **Philippians 3:13** challenging – *"forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

For Paul, and for us, our Christians lives should not be static. I know many of us sense that when we return to physical congregational worship and think of future mission there will be new opportunities for making Jesus known to many who will emerge shattered and changed by the events of this pandemic.

So, I pray that we will continue to be thinking and praying over our future lives together and how The Lord will want His church to be. May the Holy Spirit stir us and re-energise where we need it. Let us not allow this Lockdown period to be wasted because for us as Christians it has real spiritual challenges. —*Jo Fowler*

'Thy Kingdom Come' Resources are available for us as we continue to respond to this global call for focussed prayer between Ascension Day (May 21st) and Pentecost Sunday (May 31st). Individual prayer resources can be found at <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/> or, if you don't have access to the internet, please contact St. Mark's Office, on 514774, and we can send some to you. **Thank you** to those who were able to take part in our **TKC day of prayer** on Ascension Day; many people signed up to ensure that we had a continuous stream of prayer from 5am to midnight on that day. Prayer is always significant because it changes situations and it changes us as we pray. Thank you for joining in.

Diocesan Resources during TKC There are Daily Reflection Sheets for each day between Ascension and Pentecost. They are available at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/resource/ascension-to-pentecost-reflections/> or you can ask for printouts from St. Mark's Office. In addition, **Bishop Graham is leading Compline each day**. This short, reflective Service for the end of the day, is taking place via Zoom and you can join in by using the Meeting ID: 955 0124 5043 and Password: 955067. You can also join in by phoning 0203 481 5237 and enter the meeting ID and password when prompted.

Supporting Schools and Care Homes As well as baked goods, where they are happy to be received, it has been suggested that non-home baked goods, bought items and flowers could also be a way in which we can bless schools and care homes, share God's love and let them know we're praying for them. We'll take the lead from them in terms of what they'd be happy with. Thanks for those who have offered to bake, deliver, make financial

donations etc. If others of you are also able to help, please do get in touch.

Sunday Worship is taking place via Zoom 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: *As we are gathered* (Mission Praise 38 / Complete Anglican Hymns 47), *God forgave my sin* (MP 181 / CAH 212) and *Father, we love you* (MP 142 / CAH 167). **For children** that will be joining us, this week's challenge is to make a treasure chest out of any thing that you can find around the house, and then fill it with some shiny objects. There's also a colouring sheet for you to be working on. We look forward to seeing what you have to share with us.

Midweek Communion on Wednesday 27th May will be at 10.30am and live on **Zoom**. The Meeting ID will be: 838 0435 8791 and no password is required. The number to call if you will be phoning in will be: 0203 051 2874.

Zoomers! From Pentecost Sunday we'll be starting something new especially for the children. Zoomers is a Zoom gathering aimed at 5s-11s, although any children 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.

Leprosy Mission If you are saving used or unused stamps (with paper surrounding them if they are used to protect the perforations) and/or used or unused postcards for the Leprosy Mission there is now a box in the porch of St Mark's where you can leave them if you wish to. The porch is being kept open so you can drop them off at any time. Thank you for continuing to support the work of the Leprosy Mission.

PCC Meetings This month the PCCs of St. Michael's and St. Mark's/ St. Luke's have met via video conference. Here are some of the issues from the agenda: St. Michael's—resurfacing the car park, trees needing attention in the Churchyard and Church Music Licensing / St. Mark's & St. Luke's—the faculty process for removing the pews at St. Mark's (enacting a PCC decision that was made over 3 years ago) and a new Safeguarding action plan. In addition, both PCCs reviewed our ongoing response to the Covid-19 crisis and received financial updates. Thanks to all who continue to serve on our PCCs and sub committees.

Parish Income The PCCs were made aware that, since the lockdown began, the income of our Parishes has declined by as much as 60%, which is a loss that we cannot sustain long-term. To that end, if your practice is to give via envelope, or the weekly cash collection, and you have been setting monies aside, it would be helpful if you could get the money to us, or arrange for it to be collected. This can be done in any of the following ways: 1) post envelopes into the locked letterbox at St. Mark's (which is emptied regularly) marking clearly whether your donations are for St. Mark's, St. Michael's or St. Luke's; 2) pass your envelopes to Lesley, St. Luke's Churchwarden; or 3) contact St. Mark's Parish Office, whichever of the Churches you worship at, to let us know you have money which can be collected. Thanks, in advance, for your kind assistance—**2 Corinthians 9:7**

Lockdown Stories Remember to send any contributions to our project to collect together our lockdown experiences/reflections/drawings/colouring/photos etc. **Please send contributions to Jill Hunting** (126 Higher Drive, Lowestoft NR32 3DE or jillhunting13@gmail.com).

Praying for 5 Friends—Thy Kingdom Come

Praying for others to know Jesus is one of the most powerful things we can do. Persistent prayer for others brings transformation to their lives. Consistently praying for others takes discipline, and there are many ways that we can build up habits that will help us to pray for our friends and family.

Choose five people you would regularly like to pray for and write their names down onto a list. If you're not sure who to pray for, ask God to guide you as you choose. Once you have settled on 5 names, commit to praying for them regularly by praying the following:

Loving Father, in the face of Jesus Christ your light and glory have blazed forth.

*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.*



'The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.' (Psalm 9:9)

With love and prayer, Helen

Name

Colouring time

Can you fill in the rest of the speech bubbles with words that glorify Jesus?





Worth the wait

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Ezekiel 36:24-28

This time every year I find myself wondering why the lectionary propels us back to the events leading up to the crucifixion. We've been through Lent and Holy Week; we witnessed the horrors of Good Friday and we experienced the dank darkness of the tomb. Then we said and sang "Alleluia" gratefully and gladly as we celebrated the resurrection. So why must we now go backwards? Can't we move forward into light and life? It seems particularly appropriate that we should do so as the signs of summer start to appear all around. The seedlings peeping out of the soil and the green shoots in the hedgerows have waited the winter. Yet still they wait. Bud waits to blossom into flower, and shoots wait to clothe the trees in lush leafy green.

There is a quality about this time between Ascension and Pentecost – a moment suspended in time – when, yet again, our breath is baited. Jesus has ascended to be with his Father but the Holy Spirit has not yet been sent. God has even more to give.

And so we wait, and in the waiting time we have today's words from Ezekiel, bringing the promise of Pentecost: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

And the most wonderful thing about it? God's promise of the Spirit has already been fulfilled, and is renewed in us with every beat of our heart, and every time we draw breath. 🌱

Holy Spirit, you complete and fulfil us. Teach us how to live in these holy, in-between moments. Teach us to relax and be real for one another in the waiting time, to live out the promise of Pentecost, until your Spirit bursts into the world. Amen.

Inner Journey, Outer Journey

by James Roose-Evans

Inner Journey, Outer Journey was first published over thirty years ago and has remained an enduring classic, described by Rowan Williams as "A very precious and very practical book which deserves to be loved and revisited often."

Some people claim that God is solely immanent – that is, hidden away in the psyche. But God is also transcendent, outside and beyond the present dimension of time and space. To be truly *homo religiosus* (a religious person), one must bring together the outside and the inside, finding God both "out there" and "in here". It is here that

the creative process comes into its own, assisting the spiritual process. From childhood onwards my ability, at certain moments, to act or visualise – through dance, gesture, movement, sound, drawing, painting or words, these inner states of worship and conflict, yearning, lust, love, anger and jealousy – has enabled me to shed skins and go on growing. By visualisations and by acting out it is possible to bring together the outer and the inner in our daily living. 🌱

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

Walking with Poppy

"Wait!"

by Gillian Cooper

One of the most useful commands Poppy learned during her puppy training was "wait". Some of her training has lapsed a bit over the years, but "wait" still gets her attention. It stops her in her tracks if she's running towards danger, and makes sure she stays where she is put. She is good at waiting;

if I go out and leave her with a friend, she lies facing the door, waiting for me to come back.

Between Ascension and Pentecost the disciples had to wait. After all the excitement of Easter, for the moment there was nothing to do but wait for what would come next. And we are still waiting, to see what God will do next with us and in the world. It is harder for us than for Poppy. We are impatient for results. The Church's calendar helpfully gives us this pause, to remind us that good things can come to those who wait. 🌱

“ Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), writer and theologian

MONDAY
25 MAY
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:1-6
John 16:29-end

TUESDAY
26 MAY
Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:9-10.
18-19
John 17:1-11

WEDNESDAY
27 MAY
Acts 20:28-end
Psalm 68:27-28.
32-end
John 17:11-19

THURSDAY
28 MAY
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1. 5-end
John 17:20-end

FRIDAY
29 MAY
Acts 25:13-21
Psalm 103:1-2. 11-12. 19-20
John 21:15-19

SATURDAY
30 MAY
Acts 28:16-20.
30-end
Psalm 11:4-end
John 21:20-end

REFLECTION

Following the Gospel of John as it draws to a close this week gives us the sense that this is Jesus' "last will and testament". He has nothing to leave his disciples in physical terms – no house or possessions such as those we might want to give to our children or friends – but he bequeaths courage. Then he prays that they may be given God's protection; that they may be sanctified – that is, made holy – and that they may be made one, just as Jesus and the Father are one.

These "gifts" are strange. They are not magic spells for protection, but powerful blessings to inspire and encourage. Finally the two disciples closest to Jesus – Simon Peter and John the Beloved – are mentioned. This ties up the loose ends in the Gospel of John and also opens it up to us who come after.

This last will and testament hands the compelling story of Jesus, his Father and the disciples over to us to live its peace and love, to enact its abiding and including mandate, to share its hope and promise and to find in it the words of life for this age. That's a very big task indeed.

PRAYER

God of our future,
 when it looks as though we will destroy ourselves
 and our planetary home,
 hold us as you held that fragile community of John's Gospel.
 Grant us grace and courage not to give in to despair
 or infighting,
 but give us open eyes, hearts, minds and hands,
 to do the work of your kingdom of justice and joy.



CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART I – THE DECISION TO GO

Kilimanjaro is 5,895 metres high – a huge mass of volcanic rock thrusting out of the plains of Tanzania and Kenya to form the "roof of Africa" – and the world's highest freestanding mountain.

I first thought of climbing Kili when I was turning fifty – it was one of those things to do, a bit of an adventure, something of a dream. I remember wandering into a trekking company's office in Keswick while we were on a rainy holiday in the Lake District and opening conversation with the staff. In the end it was another ten years before I stood on Uhuru Peak.

My day job is as Dean of Coventry – a demanding role which takes me around the UK and further afield, sharing stories of peace and reconciliation, especially with partners in places like Dresden and Berlin, but also in South Africa, New Zealand and the USA. In 2019 I was granted a three-month sabbatical, which happened to coincide with my sixtieth birthday. Some of it was to be spent in libraries, exploring how God invites us into the universal work of reconciliation achieved through Christ. But it was also about physical refreshment. I love to walk – so what better way of marking a transition into a new decade than taking on a long-held dream?

Planning to climb Kilimanjaro was a spiritual as well as a practical challenge. How was I going to negotiate the inward journey, the spiritual discipline of maintaining my own personal life of prayer while I was on the mountain? What journey might God lead me on as I was walking and spending eight nights on my own in my tent? This was a real journey into the unknown. But, like jumping off a diving board, once I'd committed there was no turning back.

John is responsible for Coventry Cathedral, with its international ministry of reconciliation. He leads a large and varied team of staff and volunteers, each playing their part in the life and work of the cathedral. He is married to Ricarda, a hospital chaplain in Nuneaton.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



The Very Revd John Witcombe – image used courtesy of Coventry Cathedral

Seventh week of Easter

Monday 25 May to
 Saturday 30 May
 2020

WEEK

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