

# St Helen's Magazine

July 2020



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

# Parish Directory

(The dialling code for these numbers is 01530 except where stated)

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Cover photo—Estelle Iselin

## Editor Writes ...

I stood next to (at 2 metres distance) a stranger in a queue this week, and she hailed me. It was someone I knew and I hadn't realised. Although prior to lockdown I used to see her weekly at choir practice, I hadn't seen her since February and, what with her mask and her long hair I had no idea who she was. Covid-19 has changed us all, and it's not just the hair. It's not even about the weight gain either. I joked a few weeks in to the lockdown that by the time it ended I'd have a form of agoraphobia and wouldn't want to leave the house any more anyway. I'm no longer sure I'm joking! But the UK lockdown is easing, and we have had access to our church building again. On page 27 there are photos of some of the preparations that were made to allow people back in.



A big change in the last month of our lockdown was brought about by a news item which wasn't COVID-19 related - the death of George Floyd. It has led to worldwide protests, and to many vowing to change their attitudes and actions on racism. George Floyd's personal story is one of great Christian faith, of trying to escape the lifestyle of drugs and crime that surrounded him, and working to improve his community. In his neighbourhood he was known as the 'Gentle Giant', and described as a 'person of peace.' Friends from his church have spoken of his deep spirituality and his concern for the people around him who were involved in violence. I've included just one of the many wise things he had to say in the Quotes for the Month on page 30. The Church of England's statement is on page 22.

How ironic that at this time of focus on Black Lives Matter, the Nestlé company has chosen to discontinue its use of Fairtrade ingredients in KitKats. I hope that with all the heightened awareness of racial injustice such a very bad move will come under pressure. Read the story on page 14.

Now so many people have so much more hair it can feel a little like we've time-travelled to the 1970s. Some of you may have noticed I time-travelled last month all on my own, when I included in the magazine an article from Revd Stewart which was 12 months old. I can only think all this hair must have sapped my mental capacities! We're back on track this month with his up to date article on page 8. Sue Brown updates us on the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on the charity we support as a church on page 28, there is new news of Ashby Youth for Christ on page 33, the latest on what St Helen's Heritage is up to on page 7, and a new book of old stories on page 16,

*Jill Chapman*



## Revd Mary Writes ...

Dear Friends

I am writing this sitting in, not 'Speakers' Corner' but, 'Chaplain's Corner' during the first of our open church sessions. It is so good to be in this beautiful place again.

I don't know whether this is to do with the 'volume' of the building or whether its because this is a place which, for generations, has been set aside for contemplation, but there is a quality of stillness, of silence, that strikes me far more even than anything I can see, however lovely.

This stillness, this silence, envelopes me, stills *me*. I feel myself slowing, pressing pause on my brain's default 'Plan! Plan! Plan!' mode and allowing myself to dream, to wonder, to wander again.

I haven't been able to do this, much, over recent months - not because of busyness, exactly, but because of the overload of information; of the shock of suddenly having to live in a completely new way; of the need to think more intentionally than ever before about my Mum's well-being; of there always being another directive to analyse and then apply to our family of churches.

Has your mind been the same? - on over-drive - in a high state of alert in these days when even a routine supermarket shop has felt like an incursion behind enemy lines?

Our current order for Night Prayer has a beautiful stilling prayer which ends with the words, 'patiently or impatiently, we will wait for Jesus'. This prayer is followed by silence during which I have imagined - felt? - myself meet Jesus. What do I say? - well, brain still in command-and-control mode, I start to tell him everything I've tried to do; how I've done my best; tried to love his people faithfully and preach his word with imagination.

What does Jesus say in response? Not, 'Well done good and faithful servant' but 'Stop it!' And I think he means, 'Stop trying to justify yourself. You don't need to. And stop trying to explain. I already know. And stop trying to solve everything. I've already done what is needed; it is finished. And stop seeking to prove your faithfulness. I want, only, to be with you.'

Night Prayer ends with a request that we might spend our nights and days 'in the kindness of God's company.' I think this is what I experience in the Jesus I encounter: one who is kind, who wants nothing from me but my company. 'Be still,' he says. 'Be still and know that I am God - not you.' (Not that I *think* that I am God, you understand - rather that, too often, I act as if it all depends on me.)

Whether or not you feel able to come into church at the moment, I do pray that you can find places of stillness that envelope you and still you; that become oases of calm in these de-stabilising times. I hope that, in the stillness, you encounter God who asks nothing of you but *you*; who, in return, gives you the kindness of his company.



Such resting in God's presence is important all of the time. It is especially important at this time when we have gone through - are going through - such deep collective trauma; when we are functioning at limited capacity because of everything whirring away in the back of our minds. Given all that has happened, and all the uncertainty over what will happen next, you are not to be expected to be doing well, and God expects that least of all.

Instead, he wants you to offer your tiredness, your confusion, your frustration, your fear to him and then to rest in the kindness of his company. (And he doesn't need your rescue plans - he's got that covered!) 'Be still' he says 'and know that I am God.'

Be still.  
With love

**Mary**

## Departing in Peace

### A prayer from the Iona service of compline

God of the watching ones,  
the waiting ones,  
the prayerful and positive ones,  
the angels in heaven,  
the child in the womb,  
give us your benediction,  
your good word for our souls  
that we may rest and rise  
in the kindness of your company.  
Amen.

# Patiently or impatiently, we will wait for Jesus

## A Prayer for stillness and attentiveness

**I**n the mystery of your presence,  
no words are needed.

In the depth of your silence,  
no sound is necessary.

In the face of your Word,  
no voice need respond.

'Be still,' you say,  
'and know that I am God.'

~

So, we will be still and listen....  
to the beating of our hearts,  
to the racing of our minds,  
to the pondering of our souls,  
knowing that your Spirit, your Holy Spirit,  
is beating, moving, provoking  
within us and amongst us.

~

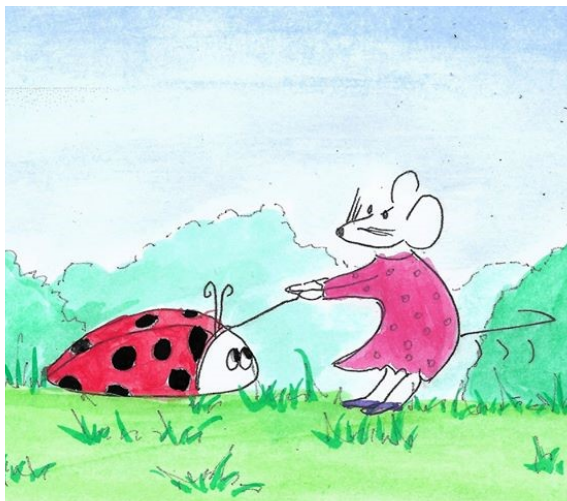
And we will be still and listen...  
for the cry of the voiceless,  
for the groaning of the weary,  
for the pain of the wounded,  
for the sigh of the victim,  
for the laughter of children,  
for the song of gladness,  
knowing that your Spirit, your Holy Spirit,  
enables crying, groaning, sighing,  
and also brings song and laughter.

~

We will be still,  
and if we do not take off our shoes,  
we will yet remember that this is Holy Ground  
because you have promised to be  
where your people meet in Jesus' name.  
And so we will wait;  
patiently or impatiently  
we will wait for Jesus.

# Heritage

I hope everyone is remembering to check in to find out what's happening on the Heritage Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/sthelensheritage/](https://www.facebook.com/sthelensheritage/) and on the Heritage page of the St Helen's website. Follow the adventures of Maude and Kevin the church mice - Kevin is making films!



Enjoy the historical insights which are being added all the time, including the latest research into the 16th century, local businessman, Robert Nundi, who commissioned this striking monument to himself ... and his two wives.



You particularly need to look out for the Heritage posts from 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July, when St Helen's will be taking part in the Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology, an event held in July every year. This year it will be in two parts, a digital event taking place in July, and the more usual 'on the ground' events postponed to October. Find out more at <https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/>

**Jill Chapman**

## **The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation**

**T**he Litany of Reconciliation was written by Canon Joseph Poole in 1958, and is prayed, in a short ceremony at noon each weekday in Coventry Cathedral and in the Cathedral ruins on Fridays . While framed around the seven deadly sins, it serves as a reminder that when we pray about the problems of the world around us, we need to begin by acknowledging the roots of those problems in our own hearts.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

**FATHER FORGIVE**

Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

## **With You Then, With You Now, With You Again**

**I**n these strange times we live in so much has been altered. The way we shop for example is more of an ordeal than ever, ensuring you follow the arrows. Now even that can be disorientating but then there is the world of sport.

The brakes have yet to be released on the Formula 1 season and where's Wimbledon?



We should be in the post season football vacuum, yet the games have resumed, but it is not the same.

The empty stadiums give an unnatural and almost



eerie sense of quiet which replaces the expectant atmosphere of the fan's chants, songs and cheers. The game itself has changed a team can make 5 substitutions and each half is punctuated by water breaks where the players have their own bottles. Things may have returned but it is far from being 'normal.' A radio commentator kept saying during a match recently it's football without the fans. This is interesting as the pitch, ball, players, referees and bad decisions are all the same... but what are the 'nuts and bolts' of football?

Churches too have had difficult decisions over opening for various reasons, solitary prayer, funerals, weddings and of course worship. The way we do these things, like with football will have a completely different feel, we may not be able to do things we call normal. Which leads me to reflect: what do we have as the 'nuts and bolts' of our faith?

Well there is prayer, we don't need to be in a certain building to pray to God. God is not contained in bricks and mortar, the church is the living stones, the people. We don't even need words to pray, because when we come before God we can't tell him anything that will come as a surprise.

We also have the word of God, the bible, the living word. We have the promise of relationship within that word that again, serves to remind us that God is present with us.

Let us not become distracted from these fundamentals of our faith, but take the opportunity to pray and read the bible and continue to encourage one-another, as we look forward to a day when we can all be together again soon.

**Revd Stewart**

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## Pleased to Meet You

Last month it was our pleasure to meet, via this magazine, Russett Grieg. In one of her Prayers for the Day during June Judith Lewis suggested we could come up with little biographies of ourselves so that the names that appear on the screen during our on-line worship have a person behind.

Here is Judith's to start us off:

I'm married to Chris, we have 2 adult daughters and I work as a psychiatrist. Retirement has been postponed due to staff shortages with Covid-19. Our younger daughter has moved home during the lockdown and is working from home, our elder one is in London with her fiancé and wondering how likely her October wedding is to go ahead. I share my home with a young, boisterous and intractable Dalmatian who makes life stressful for the older and increasingly irritable Dalmatian, so a fair bit of barking goes on. The 4 cats are much less trouble ...



## Flags of Joy

Resplendent on our Facebook page during June has been the Flags of Joy bunting, designed at the prompting of Andy Smith. So far, as well as Andy's triangular pennant, flags have been produced by Alan, Mo, Richard, Suzanne, Andrew and Jill. It's not too late to send in yours!



## Morning Prayer ... with Actions

In one of her Prayer For the Day slots in June, Judith Lewis explained the value of using our bodies in worship and prayer, how using our bodies to enact or reflect what we are saying can bring an extra depth and meaning to the words, slowing down what's going on and helping the meaning to really take root in us. She shared with us the actions of her own devising which accompany a version of the St Patrick's Breastplate prayer as used by the Northumbria Community.

Christ, as a light  
illumine and guide me.

Christ, as a shield  
overshadow me.

Christ under me;

Christ over me;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.

This day be within and without me,

lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;

in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.

This day be within and without me,

lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Christ as a light;

Christ as a shield;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.







## Choc Shock

**H**ave you heard that Nestlé have announced they are going to discontinue using Fairtrade sugar and cocoa in KitKats, replacing it with a watered down Rain Forest Alliance deal? I hope that such a very bad move will come under pressure with all the recent heightened awareness of racial injustice.

After a decade of sourcing Fairtrade cocoa and sugar for KitKat in the UK and Ireland, Nestlé have informed Fairtrade they no longer plan to buy their cocoa and sugar from some of the world's most vulnerable small scale farmers. The move will mean a loss of almost £2 million in Fairtrade Premium each year for co-operatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji and Malawi, representing 27,000 small scale producers. This income is a real lifeline for some of the world's poorest farmers.



For those cocoa and sugar farmers affected, the timing is terrible. With the global health and economic crisis already threatening their future, they have now lost the security and power Fairtrade has meant to them. The farmers themselves, not surprisingly, want to remain with Fairtrade, releasing a statement saying, 'As Fairtrade producers, our voice is heard and taken into account. We are treated with the respect and dignity we deserve.'

The Fairtrade Premium is unique in guaranteeing farmers full control over how they choose to invest it in their communities and farms. This is particularly advantageous at this difficult time, allowing farmers and their co-operatives to act quickly during the Covid-19 crisis to protect their health, support their communities and compensate for disruption to income. They have been able to buy protective equipment, distribute hand-sanitisers, raise awareness and support families struggling due to illness.

Nestlé's decision will mean all future purchases of sugar will be from European sugar beet producers, meaning cane sugar farmers will not only lose the Fairtrade Premium, but could lose access to the market to sell their sugar. Future purchases of cocoa may be from the same co-operatives, but only as part of Nestlé's own Cocoa Plan initiative, meaning no Fairtrade Premium. When a typical cocoa farmer in West Africa lives below the extreme poverty line and earns on average 74p per day - less than half of a living income, but only a few pence more than the price of a KitKat - it is not

surprising cocoa farmers are so anxious about losing further income through this move.

Before the Covid-19 global health pandemic, farmers were already affected by long-term endemic poverty, lack of services, low and unpredictable income and climate change. Fairtrade means access to children's education, access to health centres, and the provision of electricity to enable children to learn, as well as improved living and working conditions for farmers in the most remote areas where cocoa is grown.

One thing is certain, if Nestlé don't reverse this decision farmers will lose out hugely. So now more than ever, each and every one of us needs to keep choosing Fairtrade and speaking up for farmers.

One way of speaking up is the petition on Change.org - <https://www.change.org/p/ulf-mark-schneider-Nestlé-global-ceo-keep-kitkat-fairtrade>. It was started by Joanna Pollard who lives near York, where KitKat was invented and is still made. During Fairtrade Fortnight, she welcomed an Ivorian cocoa farmer to the city. Joanna heard how Fairtrade meant that this farmer had a stronger voice, empowering her and her community to build a better future, and was appalled to learn a company based in her community planned to take all this away from vulnerable communities during the global Coronavirus crisis. Her petition immediately received backing from the National Union for Students, CAFOD, Fair Trade Wales, the Scottish Fair Trade Forum and the Fairtrade National Campaigner Committee, among others.

In addition, hundreds of people, including MPs, charities and campaign groups, are asking Nestlé questions on social media, and writing to Nestlé's CEO, Mr Ulf Mark Schneider whose email address is [mark.schneider@Nestlé.com](mailto:mark.schneider@Nestlé.com)

Another action is to boycott Nestlé products. Our family have been avoiding Nescafé coffee for years, from when we first heard of its hard selling of infant milk formulas as a better alternative to human breastmilk in 'two-thirds world' countries. (Persuading our offspring when they were children that they didn't want Cheerios for breakfast was a tougher call!)

### **Let us pray:**

- Lord we thank you for this world which you created, and which you love.
- In a world where unjust global trade laws and unrighteous western consumerism darken the plight of those without influence and without a voice, make us aware of the effects of our spending habits.
- Help us to honour you when we do our shopping, and forgive us for the part we play in exploiting the distant poor by the way that we shop.

Be with me when I shop, and help me see my purchases and choices the way that you see them.

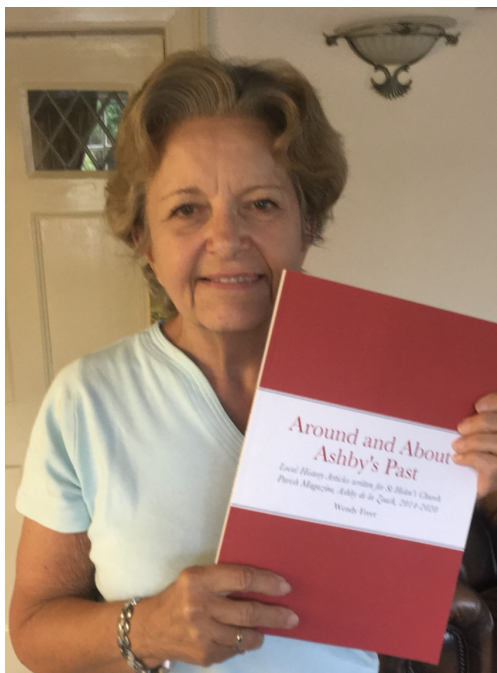
- Help us remember those that farm the land, and remember that all people are made in your image - Forgive us when we fail to question the systems that are life-denying to others.
- In particular, bring the light of justice and economic fairness to those who produce the raw ingredients of our chocolate.
- Help us to honour your word by letting it inspire us to protest at greed, and to work for justice.

Amen

Thank you to Mandy McIntosh for pointing me in the direction of the information behind this news headline so I could write this summary. Mandy is busy preparing Fair2All to reopen, and will update us in August's magazine

**Jill Chapman**

## Wendy Freer's New Book



**W**e have some exciting news from Wendy Freer, a regular contributor to this magazine for several years: A collection of 62 of her articles has been published as a book. Once it is possible to do so, Wendy plans to present two complimentary copies to the church, which we look forward to with great anticipation. Also she will be presenting two copies to the museum and one to the library. Copies of the book will be available to purchase at the museum, and Wendy has very kindly offered us the opportunity to sell some copies too for just £5.50. Something else to look forward to when the new normal comes along!

This month's article is on page 24.





# Thank God for 'Doubting' Thomas!

July the 3<sup>rd</sup> is the Feast of St. Thomas the apostle. Sometimes known as 'doubting' Thomas, but maybe honest Thomas, courageous Thomas, even Tenacious Thomas would be nearer the mark!

I thank God for St. Thomas, the one disciple who had the courage to say what everyone else was thinking but didn't dare say, the courage to ask the awkward questions that drew from Jesus some of the most beautiful and profoundly comforting of all his sayings. "We don't know where you're going, how can we know the way"? asked Thomas, and because he had the courage to confess his ignorance, we were given that beautiful saying "I am the way the Truth and the Life" Here is the poem I have written for St. Thomas, which is drawn from my collection *Sounding the Seasons* published by Canterbury Press.



"We do not know... how can we know the way?"  
Courageous master of the awkward question,  
You spoke the words the others dared not say  
And cut through their evasion and abstraction.  
Oh doubting Thomas, father of my faith,  
You put your finger on the nub of things  
We cannot love some disembodied wraith,  
But flesh and blood must be our king of kings.  
Your teaching is to touch, embrace, anoint,  
Feel after Him and find Him in the flesh.  
Because He loved your awkward counter-point  
The Word has heard and granted you your wish.  
Oh place my hands with yours, help me divine  
The wounded God whose wounds are healing mine.

**Malcolm Guite**

## Service Pattern

**W**e are worshipping together, on-line, and this is our pattern of worship:

### **Every morning except Wednesday & Sunday**

- Prayer for the Day posted on Facebook at around 8.00 am.

### **Every weekday evening**

- Night Prayer streamed live on Facebook, Monday to Friday, at 9.00 pm.

### **Every Wednesday**

- a simple service streamed live on Facebook at 10.00 am

### **Every Sunday**

- a simple service streamed live on Facebook at 10.30 am

A film of every service is uploaded onto the website, and can be viewed by clicking on the relevant date.

Orders of service for these acts of worship, and a hymn sheet for Sunday's service, are available by clicking on the relevant link.

### **Weekend Night Prayer/Compline -**

On Saturday and Sunday evenings, the invitation is for each

of us to pray compline at home, at 9pm, mindful of others who are doing the same.

The three orders of service we have prayed during lockdown are available on the website (or contact the Parish Office and Jill Chapman can email or print and post one to you.) The lectionary readings are on the website

[https://www.sthensashby.net/Groups/338385/Online\\_Services\\_and.aspx](https://www.sthensashby.net/Groups/338385/Online_Services_and.aspx) and also on each week's 'Notices Sheet' sent out from the Parish Office.

### **The Church is Open ...**

for private individual prayer, every Saturday between 10 am and 12 noon.

Rev'd Mary has made a video explaining the arrangements that have been put in place to enable this to happen, which is on the website [https://www.sthensashby.net/Groups/335533/Whats\\_coming\\_up.aspx](https://www.sthensashby.net/Groups/335533/Whats_coming_up.aspx) and on the St Helen's Church Facebook page.

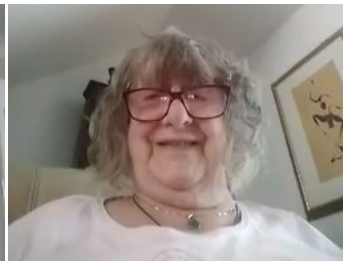


# On-line church in June

There were new faces for Prayer For The Day - Welcome into our homes and our morning routines to Peter, Lucy and Vernon.



We also enjoyed the contributions of Emily, John, Steph, Lynda & Caroline to Sunday morning Communion for all the right reasons ...



... and Jill and Andrew's



for other reasons ...

# The Power of Us

**M**y father was a single child. He made up for it by having six children. He grew up to be a solitary adult, my mother being the one who had a lot of friends. Other people irritated him somewhat, and if you saw him in company you might call him a mis-fit. However he was ok when with other financial people who talked money or insurance.

And I am very much the same. I shy away from interacting in groups because a group of people makes me feel uneasy. They can have such weird views, or such placid views. Both annoy me intensely.

In my late teens I dreamed of becoming a missionary.

I knocked on the door but it did not open, meaning, no-one opened it for me. For a reason. To be in any form of ministry, or leadership for that matter, you need to be partly an 'us' person. That is, you need to respect others and be able to damp down the disagreements that always crop up. But to know all that does not mean you can do all that.

Yet I am what I am.

I enjoy long walks, which I do on my own; I enjoy chess, that needs no conversation, just an innate desire to rip your opponent apart (metaphorically speaking); and the art that I do is entirely on my own, and is as far from anyone else's style as possible.

Van Gogh, like many artists, musicians, and poets, struggled to get along with others. Yet we sort of like him.

And what is the point of saying all that?

Well, at St Helen's we are the body of Christ. Although I do not fit into any group, I have to accept that we can only live in faith if we live together (metaphorically speaking). So we support each other and encourage each other. Though I find that awkward, I know it's important.

The Christians who first taught me did not help. I had to admit my sins, I had to give my life to Christ, I had to be sanctified.

The problem with all that is there is no 'us.' It's too self-conscious. It's too me-me-me.

We think of Jesus as fighting alone against all his enemies and we thus turn him into a super-hero. In fact, he was known as 'Jesus and the twelve disciples.' The disciples seem to have always been with him.

In Acts we read that the Holy Spirit came down on all the believers as they met together. They were a group. And when Peter went to the Cornelius, a gentile, his whole household was baptised with the Spirit. It could be our faith is more about being 'us' than about being a 'me.'



Is that hard to take on board?

Maybe the virus has unwittingly taught us that our own local community is more important than the profit motive that had driven the world economy for as long as I can remember.

There is a blackbird singing in my garden now. When I go for a long walk, nearly always there's a blackbird singing. I joke that for every blackbird song I will pay it a pound. But it wants no money. A pound coin is useless to a blackbird. But its song is everything to me. The virus has made me realise that.

So the natural world is also part of the 'us.'

Let's hope, as we come very, very slowly out of lockdown, we can work in harmony with nature, and our community, and our church of believers.

However difficult.

The colossal difficulty of being Us.

**Richard Vann**



## Joint statement

### by the Archbishop of York and Archbishop of Canterbury

02/06/2020

Recent events in the United States of America have once again drawn public attention to the ongoing evil of white supremacy. Systemic racism continues to cause incalculable harm across the world. Our hearts weep for the suffering caused – for those who have lost their lives, those who have experienced persecution, those who live in fear. God’s justice and love for all creation demands that this evil is properly confronted and tackled. Let us be clear: racism is an affront to God. It is born out of ignorance, and must be eradicated. We all bear the responsibility and must play our part to eliminate this scourge on humanity.

As Dr Martin Luther King Jr said, “In a real sense, we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Therefore, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

We pray that God’s abounding wisdom, compassion and love will guide leaders across the world to forge a better society.



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# Mothers' UNION

## Christian care for families

### Wave of Prayer

Hopefully, most members received a copy of the service for the Wave of Prayer, enabling them to participate at home between June 29<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>, as we were unable to meet as normal. Prayers were said for the dioceses of Eastern Zambia, Mombasa in Kenya, Gwagwalada and Ekiti -West in Nigeria, Temotu in the Solomon Islands and Leicester, their MU Diocesan Presidents and members.

In addition to these diocesan links, St Helen's branch has a new link with the church of St Margaret of Antioch in Wapiwapi in the diocese of Masasi, Tanzania. Eileen Coombs and Julie Ann Heath keep in regular touch via WhatsApp. In the current pandemic, the good news is that there have been only 2 positive cases of COVID-19 in Masasi District, and that Wapiwapi has been spared thus far, and Mothers' Union activities and services have been able to continue. Please continue to hold them in your prayers.

Last month, I mentioned our Worldwide President's fund-raising appeal, and I am happy to report that over £700,000 has already been raised towards the £1 million target, with contributions being received from branches, members and supporters all over the world.

While some of us still cannot go out and about very much, another way to support MU projects is to shop online at [www.mueshop.org](http://www.mueshop.org), where there is a good selection of craft and activity kits for children and adults, cards, books, gifts, etc. I sent for some items recently and I was very pleased with the prompt delivery – my items arrived within 3 working days!



Beryl Stephens

## Reverend Francis Merewether

On Wednesday 21st May 1862, in Ashby de la Zouch Police Court, three men appeared before the magistrate. They were Joseph Stockley, James Matthews and Thomas Foxhall. The charge used a wonderful word that I don't think I've come across before. It was said that they had "burglariously entered the rectory house at Coleorton". This was the home of Reverend Francis Merewether, a very interesting character.

He was born in Calne in Wiltshire in 1784 to a wealthy family who were able to send him to boarding school in Reading and then to Eton College. He obtained his BA from Christ's College, Oxford and his MA from St John's College, Cambridge. He was ordained as a priest in 1808 and began his career as Vicar of St Mary's Church, Haverhill. He was there for just over seven years during which time he married Frances Elizabeth Way. He is also said to have established a National School there, apparently the first in Suffolk.

Whilst living in Haverhill, Merewether became acquainted with Sir George Howland Beaumont of Coleorton Hall, who owned property there including the vicarage. It was this connection which led to him being appointed Rector of Coleorton in October 1815, a position which he held for 49 years. In June 1818 he was also appointed Vicar of Whitwick and he held both of these posts until his death in 1864.

During his time in Coleorton, he lived with his wife and family at the Rectory, a substantial residence where he was looked after by a butler, a footman, a cook and a housemaid. But Rev. Merewether wasn't one to sit back and be waited on hand and foot. He was a man of great energy, and through his friendship with the Beaumont family, was able to be very influential in the area.

Together with the Beaumont family, he began the restoration of St Mary's Church in Coleorton, had a new rectory built and was mainly responsible for establishing a new burial ground in association with St John's Chapel, Coleorton. Lady Beaumont and Frances Merewether started a Penny Clothing Club to help local families save for clothing.

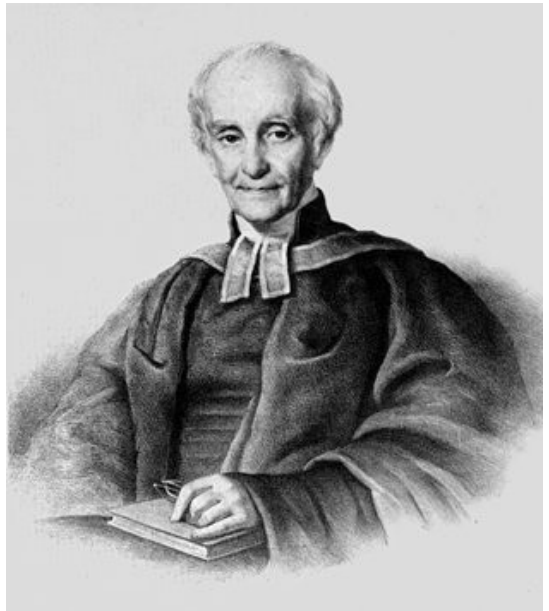
Through the church's National Schools scheme, Rev. Merewether was mainly or wholly responsible for the establishment of National Schools in Whitwick, Swannington and Thringstone. In Coalville he established a National School, a new parish church (Christ Church) and parsonage. With the help of the Beaumont family and others he established the District of St George's, Whitwick, and provided it with a new church, St George's, built in 1825.

The school in Thringstone was built in 1844. As well as educating local children, it was also used for religious services until St Andrew's Church was



built in 1862, also thanks to Rev. Merewether. Although no longer a school, the building still stands in Main Street.

Rev. Merewether preached his last sermon on Sunday 17th July, 1864 and died the following Wednesday at the age of 80. A stained glass window in St John's Chapel is dedicated to his memory. On the west wall in St Mary's Church is a tablet to his memory placed by his widow, Frances, who died nearly six years later in 1870 and is buried in the town of her birth, Great Yeldham, Essex.



But what of our three burglars?

The stolen items included money, three rings, a nutmeg grater, a corkscrew set in silver and a pair of silver spectacles. Stockley and Foxhall were further charged with an attempted burglary at Heather Manor House, the premises of Rev.P. Belcher. All three were committed for trial at the next assizes. There, on the 21st July, Stockley was sentenced to seven years in prison. Foxhall and Matthews, who both had previous convictions were given ten years each.

I am grateful to John Macdonald of Coleorton for much of the information about Francis Merewether.

**Wendy Freer**

## **Prayer For a time of any common Plague of Sickness**

**from The Book of Common Prayer (1662)**

**O** Almighty God, who in thy wrath didst send a plague upon thine own people in the wilderness, for their obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron; and also, in the time of king David, didst slay with the plague of pestilence threescore and ten thousand, and yet remembering thy mercy didst save the rest: Have pity upon us miserable sinners, who now are visited with great sickness and mortality; that like as thou didst then accept of an atonement, and didst command the destroying Angel to cease from punishing, so it may now please thee to withdraw from us this plague and grievous sickness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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# Getting the Church Ready for Private Individual Prayer

Our first church opening after lockdown was on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June. Thank you to the team of cleaners, the measurers and roper-offers, the pew-movers and creators of a one-way system, the producers of Mary's explanatory film, the welcomers and stewards on the day, and those supporting in prayer, who between them made the whole thing possible.





# Is Mission on Your Map?

**Jonglei Institute of Health Sciences:  
our Mission Giving 2019-20**

**R**eaders will recall that we as a church family decided last year to support the Jonglei Institute of Health Sciences in Bor, S Sudan. Since then, both we and they have been affected by Covid-19, but given the difficult circumstances facing South Sudan in particular this seems a good time to inform about – and seek prayer for – this vital ministry...

If you could pay for a patient's treatment or train a healthcare worker, which do you think would be a better use of funds? A Chinese proverb says: 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; train a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.'

It is the idea of helping people so that they can help themselves that lies behind the aim both of the charity, Anglican International Development (AID), and the Jonglei Institute for Health Sciences in Bor, South Sudan, which the charity – and we – support.

It makes perfect sense.

South Sudan is the newest country in the world, with some of the worst poverty and health-related statistics. Almost 1 in 27 women die in childbirth (in the UK it is 1 in 6,900) and 1 in 7 children will die before the age of five. The nation came into being in 2011 after 50 years of intermittent civil war. Since 2013 over 400,000 people have died as a result of conflict and many more than that – over four million - are refugees, mainly women and children. Climate change is also having a big impact on the country: extreme weather has led to both drought and floods and has affected food production. On top of that an infestation of locusts in East Africa has had a huge impact on crops. According to Tearfund, half the population of South Sudan is hungry.

As far as healthcare is concerned, there are reportedly fewer than 200 doctors (this in a country which is larger than France) and health workers have only the most basic training, hence AID's determination to invest in healthcare training, alongside the government, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, and the International Christian Medical and Dental Association. In 2019 the Jonglei Health Sciences Institute (JHSI) was set up to address this need, offering programmes in nursing, midwifery and clinical healthcare to 35 students initially. (An earlier plan was thwarted when fighting broke out in Bor, so from 2014, the Institute temporarily relocated to the premises of the Mengo Hospital in Kampala, Uganda.) At time of writing, the Jonglei Institute is closed because of the Coronavirus, and its students are acting as health ambassadors, trying to spread the

message of social distancing and good hygiene.

The leaders of the JHSI are a missionary couple from India, Drs Anil and Shalini Cherian. Since 2018 they have also been health advisors to the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and are seeking to unite Christian-led health initiatives across the country with the intention of addressing its huge health needs. Dr Anil is a consultant paediatrician and Dr Shalini a consultant obstetrician. They are assisted by other able teaching and administrative staff in the delivery of mid-level medical courses: nursing, midwifery and clinical officer training. Each course lasts three years and sends out its graduates to work in clinics and hospitals.



In addition to their medical training, there are daily prayer meetings and a weekly Bible study so that students may be growing in faith and discipleship as well as in medical expertise. This is in line with the stated aim, written in the original 2014 constitution: “The founding members, compelled by their faith in Jesus Christ and their desire to serve HIM will seek to serve the poor and marginalized people of the nation of South Sudan and its neighbouring countries in Africa.”

Latest news is hard to come by as the Institute is closed, but according to the last report from the Cherians there were 1,693 confirmed cases of Covid -19 in the country and 27 deaths. Imagine what an increase might mean for already over-stretched health services.

We can play our part by praying:

- for our brothers and sisters to grow in faith and dependence on God;
- for the protection of the Cherians and other doctors and nurses, especially those caring for Covid patients, with limited medical resources;
- for the JHSI students serving currently as health ambassadors, thanking God for their initiative and praying for their success in spreading both the message of good hygiene and the love of God;
- for the nation as a whole, and for its leaders as they seek to mitigate the impact of drought, floods, locusts and widespread malnutrition;

- for other agencies working to relieve physical and spiritual need in the country, including care of refugees: Barnabas Aid; Christian Aid; CMS; Africa Inland Mission; Wycliffe Bible Translators; Anglican International Development. Look up their websites for more information for prayer.
- for a great response to Tearfund's recently launch Lifeline Emergency Appeal for South Sudan. Tearfund describes the situation as 'catastrophic'.

The number of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition has risen to 1.3 million.

As we pray for own country in the present crisis, let's pray for South Sudan!

**Sue Brown**

## Quotes for the Month

'As Donald Trump poses on the steps of a church holding a Bible, Christians everywhere try to recall the bit where it advocates using tear gas on peaceful protestors for a photo op.'  
*Have I Got News for You Facebook page, June 2<sup>nd</sup>*

'I. Am. Outraged.'  
*Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, June 2<sup>nd</sup>*

'Black Lives Matter organisers for the Protest Match to Hyde Park was FANTABULOUS!'  
*John Sentamu (@JohnSentamu), Twitter, June 3<sup>rd</sup>*

'We have to Love Harder Than The Hatred'  
*Venerable Karen Lund, Archdeacon of Manchester, June 5<sup>th</sup>*

'The father was waiting with a big sign; #ProdigalSonsMatter  
When the older brother saw it, he was angry, wouldn't attend the party, and moped around with his own sign: #AllSonsMatter  
Father: "Dude, it's not about you right now."  
*Revd Mark Sandlin, Facebook, June 5<sup>th</sup>*

'Please note our "Zoomity Sunday" service is cancelled. Likewise the traditional "Spot the Heresy" session. This is so we can spend more time today trying to work out what a Liberal Evangelical Cabal looks like and arguing about the new cleaning rota.'  
*The Beaker Folk of Husborne Crawley, Facebook, June 7<sup>th</sup>*

'The body ought to pray as well as the soul.'  
*C S Lewis quoted by Judith Lewis, St Helen's Church's on-line Prayer for the Day, June 8<sup>th</sup>*

'One day it's going to be you and God...You going up, or you going down?'  
*George Floyd, The Christian faith of George Floyd, www.premierchristianity.com, June 11<sup>th</sup>*

'The tranquillity we look for is the tranquillity of the mountaineer sitting contemplating the view after the climb. There is some work involved in reaching the place where we can sit with God and feel His peace.'  
*Gary Cadge, Christian Misfit Community, Facebook, June 13<sup>th</sup>*

'Christian faith kicks at the darkness until it bleeds daylight.'  
*Rev Nadia Bolz-Weber, nadiabolzweber.substack.com, June 14<sup>th</sup>*

'For most of us it takes a lifetime to realise we're like kids walking through the precinct

holding our daddy's hand. We can only see his knees. When I was converted at 16 I knew everything. Now I know nothing. Except that I think there probably is a God and I think he's quite nice.'

*Adrian Plass quoted on the Adrian Plass Appreciation Society page, Facebook, June 18<sup>th</sup>*

'You can't stop the crows flying over your head, but you can stop them nesting in your hair.'  
*Martin Vaughan quoting Martin Luther, St Helen's Church Facebook page, June 18<sup>th</sup>*

'On a Thursday, people clap and whoop me on our street. It's nice, but it's for a season. Everything is unsettled, and you can feel very shaky, but I'm so glad that the Bible is solid ground to stand on in these tumultuous times.'

*Dr Chris, locum doctor on palliative care ward, www.biblesociety.org.uk/mybible, June 20<sup>th</sup>*

'We pray today for dads:

+ New dads, granddads, stepdads, adoptive dads & solo dads.

+ Baldy ones, beardy ones, skinny ones & cuddly ones.

+ Dads who tell bad jokes & dads who dance to YMCA.

+ Dads who know how to fix things, & dads who just pretend.'

*Pastor Peter Grieg, Twitter, June 21<sup>st</sup>*

'My Christian faith has given me a sense of self. You know, politics is a rough and tough game, to be honest ... If I was being glib, I would say that I think I would have struggled if I just located my sense of self in the *Guardian*.'

*David Lammy MP, Greenbelt Festival interview, June 22<sup>nd</sup>*

'Don't forget tonight is St John's Eve. So if you feel the need to go to your local church porch to see who's going to die in the next 12 months, please observe social distancing. Please also note that, due to BST, the ghosts won't turn up till 1am.'

*The Beaker Folk of Husborne Crawley, Facebook, June 23<sup>rd</sup>*

'Break my fingers, Lord, so that I may not respond to that Facebook post. Amen.'

*Unvirtuous Abbey, Facebook, June 24<sup>th</sup>*

'Jesus was Middle Eastern, not white. It's important we remember this. But the God we worship in Christ is universal, and the hope he offers is good news for us all.'

*Archbishop of Canterbury Facebook page, June 26<sup>th</sup>*

'My new hobby is clicking 'refresh' on the Church of England coronavirus information page to see whether any detailed guidance on worship has been released yet. Unnervingly compulsive.'

*Revd Canon Richard Frith, Twitter, June 26<sup>th</sup>*

'Although there is no football God, I believe that there is a God who loves us humans, just as we are, with all our quirks, and that's why I think he also loves football! But we have to score our own goals.'

*Liverpool FC manager Jurgen Klopp quoted by Christianity Magazine, June 26<sup>th</sup>*

'During bouts of childhood theism, I always supposed that if God had a voice it would be that of Oliver Postgate, the same matchless blend of authority, kindness and humour.'

*Stephen Fry quoted by the Pogles Wood Appreciation Society, Facebook, June 26<sup>th</sup>*

If you are looking for meaning in life but, not finding one, you throw yourself away with "imitations of love", such as wealth, career, pleasure, or an addiction, let Jesus look at you, and you will discover you have always been loved.'

*Pope Francis, Twitter, June 27<sup>th</sup>*

'A "Christian Leader" choosing to remain silent about racism is an oxymoron.'

*Pastor Bruce Barnard, Facebook, June 29<sup>th</sup>*

'Many wise people have come to know that less stuff invariably leaves room for more soul. In fact, possessions and soul seem to operate in inverse proportion to one another.'

*Fr. Richard Rohr, Embracing Enoughness, Centre For Action & Contemplation.org, June 30<sup>th</sup>*

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### Locked down?

**T**he Ashby Youth For Christ team are currently furloughed. However, furlough comes in 3 week chunks and bravely (foolishly?) the Trustees have allowed Vernon a week out of his furlough enclosure hoping he won't do too much damage before they restrain him again at the start of next week.

Those who care about young people are naturally concerned that Covid-19 related restrictions are depriving some young people of the support and protection of important adults.

Some good news: Young people are receiving help from elsewhere. I chatted (whilst appropriately socially distanced) with a local young man. I had directed him towards a Bible app he was using. He talked about his desire to read this regularly and be changed by it. He told me he took part in a weekly (Zoom enabled) Bible study with a group from his local church. He spoke of his growth in freedom from addiction, his service of his isolated father, his support of other young men we both knew and his disciplined study towards the professional qualification he is taking. This is a young man who in far fairer times had been disengaged, demotivated and beset by significant mental health issues. I was greatly cheered. I pray you will be.

Thank you for your prayers. They are availing much. Please keep praying and watching on behalf of local young people. Thank Immanuel for his mighty arm and tender mercy. Trust him and adore him.

### Giving On-line

Our treasurer, John Backman has written about our church's approach to giving on the St Helen's Church website, and a function has been added whereby monetary giving is now possible.

To do this go to the website <https://www.sthelensashby.net/> where you'll find 'Giving' is one of the options on the drop down menu on the 'Church Life' tab.



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