



KINGS NORTON  
TEAM PARISH

THE MAGAZINE  
FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

October 2020

£1.50



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A Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton and Druids Heath through the Parish Church of St Nicolas and the District Churches of Hawkesley and Immanuel  
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Clare Dean was ordained a Deacon at Birmingham Cathedral on 19th September.



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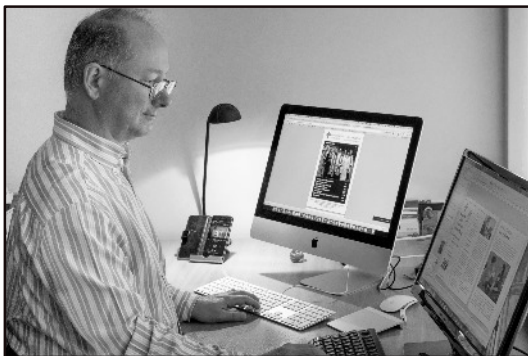
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## Submission Deadlines

Items for inclusion in the November  
2020 edition must reach the  
Editor by midnight on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup>  
October**.

Items for inclusion in the December  
2020 edition must reach the  
Editor by midnight on **Friday 13<sup>th</sup>  
November**.



‘The problem is,’ said Chris Whitty, The Chief Medical Officer, ‘if I increase my risk I increase the risk to everyone else. You cannot, in a pandemic, just take your own risk. You are taking a risk on behalf of everyone else.’

There are people who do not like to be reminded that we are all interconnected, not just with each other but with every other form of life on the planet. They find it inconvenient. It threatens their illusion of freedom. The crises of the early 21st century, from Covid via Brexit to climate change, are bringing into sharp focus one of the most dangerous myths of recent history, that of our independence. John Donne (1572-1631), that great English poet, scholar, and soldier, said it best. ‘No man is an island’. Like it or not, he reminded us, we are **interdependent**. ‘Every [person] is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.’

Your Parish Magazine is all about building community, fostering connections. As you read this month’s edition, celebrate with us the things which draw us together; but also keep asking, ‘What more could we do?’

*The Editor*

# From The Rector Of Memorials & Monuments

To visit St Nicolas' Churchyard, or any churchyard, for that matter, is an experience of salutary appreciation of our own mortality and a lesson in changing attitudes towards the dead.

As well as being the place where the mortal remains of the deceased are consigned to their final resting place, churchyards are also repositories of grief. As grief is one of the more powerful of human emotions, families wish to mark a chosen place with appropriate dignity and ceremony and eventually to erect a headstone or plaque.

Looking around the various memorials and monuments, one is struck by the size and design of the older ones and the modesty and simplicity of others. In previous generations, memorials were a status symbol as well as a grave. Grand designs were expensive and, though rich and poor are all united by death, memorials were an extension of their earthly station in life.



In recent years, the Church of England has developed a set of national churchyard regulations which ensure a degree of conformity regarding the size and style of headstones and plaques. However, people in grief are not always responsive to rules and regulations and hence breaches occur and have to be dealt with sensitively and pastorally. It's a common misconception for



families to assume, for example, that they have bought the grave or plot and that it is their property. In reality, the churchyard is always the property of the incumbent (the priest) and the Parochial Church Council and plots are leased to families, not sold to them.

A hundred years ago, death was a more common experience in families. Since then, mortality rates have steadily fallen as standards of living, hygiene and medical care have improved. It is noticeable that the majority of funerals which we currently conduct are of people dying in their 80s and older, whereas a look at the age of death on our older memorials shows people dying in a younger age range.

In 1920, most people were content to be Christian and their parish church was the natural place for marking the stages in life from birth to death: the old 'hatch, match and despatch' view of parish churches. With the death toll of two World Wars to

incorporate into churchyards and elsewhere, war memorials became a common feature in cities, towns and even villages. Commonwealth war graves are a recognised feature of churchyards. We have a number at St Nicolas'.

By the 1960s, attitudes towards organised religion had changed. New religions and spiritualities were being explored. Interest in

Eastern religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, brought to the West the concept of reincarnation or the transmigration of souls. According to this belief, how a person had lived determined what creature their soul would return as in their next life. A

human being this time but maybe a dog in the next? Older Christian images of heaven and hell, paradise and damnation, began to lose their grip on the popular imagination, so death and judgement became separated. Death was increasingly seen as the conclusion of life rather than as a time of reckoning according to how one had lived.

IT'S A COMMON MISCONCEPTION FOR FAMILIES TO ASSUME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THEY HAVE BOUGHT THE GRAVE OR PLOT AND THAT IT IS THEIR PROPERTY.

All of these changes of attitude, beliefs and memorial practices are evident in a churchyard. Older monuments and headstones will be inscribed with Biblical quotations, imagery and lines from popular hymns or simple inscriptions of faith such as, 'Resting in the arms of the Lord'. With the decline in belief and regular church going, secular poetry and prose are now more common inscriptions.

It is rare these days for a family to ask for a cross to be engraved on a headstone, though it is still a standard option offered by memorial masons. The regulations do allow a small image chosen by the family to be engraved on the stone, but it must relate to something significant in a person's life. It is instructive to look at the variety of images on headstones and what they imply.

More noticeable is the recent trend to 'decorate' a grave or plot with additional plantings, trinkets, miniature furniture, pictures, cards, framed photographs and, in some cases, cans of beer or bottles of wine. These tokens to the dead appear to be a means of domesticating the grave. Maybe they resonate with burial practices of ancient times or those of other

cultures. People used to be buried with their weapons, the tools of their trade, or household objects for reasons connected to beliefs about the afterlife.

The frequency with which graves are visited and by whom varies, as does what visitors do on arrival. While some graves remain unvisited and uncared for for months, even years, others are regularly attended with great care and devotion. It's not unusual to see several family members attending together, adults and children, the visited dead being still part of the family. It's possible to see echoes here of the customs associated with the Mexican Night of the Dead, when families visit graves *en masse* and spend the night lighting candles, singing songs and having parties at the graves.

This curious mixture of attitudes and behaviour around graves and what they mean is symptomatic of the diversity of beliefs regarding death and dying in our culture. Many still hold to Christian beliefs of death and resurrection, or at least to the idea that death is the gateway to God and eternity. For others, motivations are mixed and beliefs half-formed.

To visit a churchyard is a reminder of our own mortality. Maybe some visitors, with each visit, are subconsciously growing more accustomed to the idea of their own death and to seeing a churchyard as their eventual resting place. Each visit is an emotional down-payment towards death's ultimate claim upon their life.

Jean Sprackland, poet and author, has written a meditative book about her many visits to churchyards and graveyards (*These Silent Mansions*, 2020). She was due to visit us in June but, because

of the restrictions, her visit, like so many other events, was cancelled.

In the introduction to her book she writes: *'Graveyards are oases: places of escape, of peace of reflection. Each is a garden or nature reserve, but also a place of commemoration, where the past is close enough to touch: a liminal place, at the border of the living world.'*

*The Reverend Larry Wright*

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Kings Norton's

# GODFREY WINN

One of the first media personalities

If you were around in the late 50s and the 1960s, you could hardly escape the ubiquitous Godfrey Winn: author, journalist, radio and TV personality. For those of us from the provinces, he seemed part of the privileged London elite, with a gently spoken cut-glass accent to match.

So I was astonished to find out recently that he was one of us, born Godfrey Herbert Winn in Kings Norton on 15 October 1906. He did produce a three-part autobiography, though it's hard to locate these days, so I haven't been able to find out precise details of his parents or his early life. But he certainly attended King Edward's School, where he may well have been a contemporary of Enoch Powell, another famous name who spent much of his early life in these parts.

I became aware of him when he was one of those trail-blazing so-called 'show-biz personalities' who seemed to be everywhere on TV and radio. Ever though there were far fewer programmes of the sort that came to be known as chat shows, any programme which embraced the idea in those days seemed to have Godfrey Winn on it, as did most of the panel games. He was in or on *Call My Bluff*, *The Frost Programme*, *Dee Time*, *The Eamonn Andrews Show*, *Juke Box Jury* and numerous other magazine programmes. Almost inevitably, he was also a regular judge on *Miss World*. He also regularly presented *Housewives' Choice*, the radio musical request programme. Almost inevitably, he was the subject of *This Is Your Life* in 1961, when he was surprised by Eamonn Andrews



with the Big Red Book at the BBC's Broadcasting House while presenting *Housewives' Choice*.

At King Edward's, his ambition was to become an actor, and after leaving school he obtained several youthful roles on the London stage. Though also appeared in a number of films, his acting never took him to the heights: his screen roles were limited to 'bit parts'. He was in the celebrated *Billy Liar*, but only as a disc jockey, and other films saw him playing roles such as an announcer and a TV presenter. Though his final

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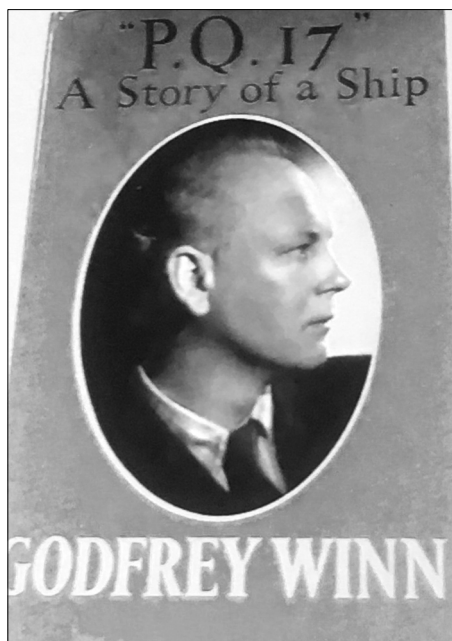
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screen role as 'The Archbishop of All England' sounded, on the face of it, to be very significant, it was only a small part in the film version of the TV comedy *Up The Chasity Belt*, starring the risqué comedian Frankie Howerd.

Godfrey came over as gentle and mild-mannered: he didn't seem to have a hard edge, but in fact by the time he developed as a media personality the 1950s he had already accomplished some very demanding work. During the 1930s, while still remarkably young, he became one of the highest paid journalists in the country, a star columnist for the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Express* newspapers, in which his column was called *Dear Abby* and primarily dispensed advice for lovelorn women. He was so successful that rival journalists parodied his name and called him 'Winifred God'!

To his great credit, as the Second World War approached, despite his relatively privileged position in the press, he was determined not to let his celebrity shield him for



the risks that others were taking. He wanted to serve in the forces like other ordinary civilians. He joined the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman, training on *HMS Ganges*, before suffering an injury and being invalided out of the service. Even then, he was determined to be involved: as a journalist, he volunteered to report on the perils of merchant shipping and was soon subjected to one of the most terrifying experiences that the war ever offered, in the notorious PQ17 arctic convoy carrying supplies between Iceland and the Russian port of Murmansk: 25 of



the 35 merchant ships were lost to German U-boats and the Luftwaffe. Godfrey's book about the experience was and is one of the most vivid personal reminiscences of a major theatre of war.

After the war, he resumed his popular newspaper columns, in effect becoming one of the early 'showbiz hacks'. Building on his pre-war body of work, he also wrote a wide range of novels, plays, film scripts and magazine articles. Pictures abound, including famous ones of him with the Beatles and other music stars such as Jimi Hendrix (in both of which he looked rather out of place). Copyright issues prevent us from using these, but they can easily be found on the internet.

He is probably less well remembered than he might have been because at the height of his media fame he died unexpectedly, from a heart attack on the tennis court at this home in Brighton in June 1971 at the age of just 64.

## Kings Norton Farmers' Market

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As much as any other single achievement, he gained fame as the author of two quotes that were widely acclaimed. 'No man succeeds without a good woman behind him. Wife or mother, if it is both, he is twice blessed indeed' and also 'The dull routine of our daily job takes on a new significance, assumes a beauty and importance undreamt of before, if we consider it from the angle of service to God.'

*Michael Kennedy*

# Gone But Not Forgotten

Heath House, the first tower block in Druids Heath to be demolished as a result of Council redevelopment plans for the estate, is no more.

The block had been empty and awaiting demolition for at least 18 months, its vacant edifice signifying the empty tomb in our Stations of the Cross pilgrimage around Druids Heath during Holy Week 2020.

Finally, the Council made the building safe for demolition in August and, within two weeks, it had been cleared. The ground on which it used to stand is now planted with hydroseed to enable grass to



grow until development plans have been agreed with local residents. Hydroseed is a form of grass seed mixed with manure & compost to enable it to grow quickly.

Meanwhile, the sign for Heath House is safely housed on the walls of Kath's Café (see photo opposite). Our amazing community hub is quite the local museum, containing relics from landmarks in Druids Heath and surrounding areas.

Kath wants to ensure that local people have visual ways

of remembering how the Estate used to look, before it changes forever.

Back in December, the Druids Heath and Monyhull Residents Forum challenged Birmingham City Council to improve engagement with residents in designing redevelopment plans for the Estate. Resident representatives, other stakeholders and I are working hard to cultivate positive dialogue with the Council as joint members of the newly-formed Partnership Board.

It is hoped that there can be more of a holistic regeneration of Druids Heath Estate, improving life for residents at social, economic and environmental levels rather than simply creating a new housing project.

Kath's Café is central to the redevelopment of Druids Heath, not only by providing refreshment and social interaction, but as a centre of connection and creativity. Last week I walked in to find prayer

group members gathering, community artists connecting with residents to tell the story of Druids Heath in photographs and consultation events, and council officers, all playing their part in building up this community.

So, if you want to know the latest news in Druids Heath, you know where to get your bacon and eggs!

*The Reverend Catherine Matlock*





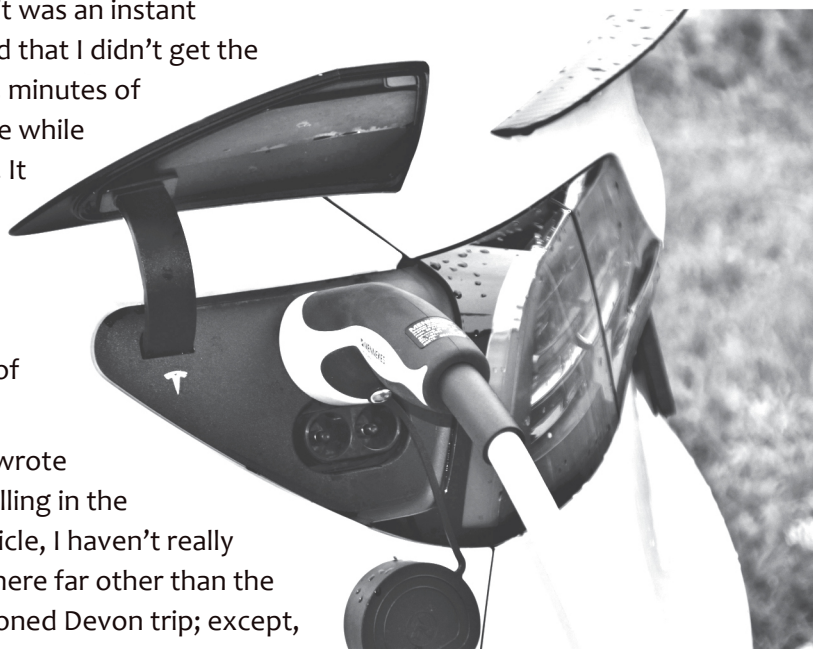
# Electric Vehicle Development

## ARE WE THERE YET?

I recently took my camper van on its first long trip of the year to visit my older cousin who lives in North Devon. Her location is sufficiently 'off grid' for me not to consider taking my electric vehicle. Not yet, anyway. Her mid-Exmoor farm would have been even more isolated. Having got used to my other, electric van, I was quite surprised when I filled up with petrol that it was an instant process, and that I didn't get the luxury of 45 minutes of reading time while I charged it. It is amazing how quickly we settle into a new way of working.

Since I last wrote about travelling in the electric vehicle, I haven't really gone anywhere far other than the aforementioned Devon trip; except,

that is, for two long journeys to and from Bromley in Kent. The reason for these was to take St Nicolas' Church's set of heritage handbells to and from the restorers, and the visit was planned as soon as lockdown restrictions had lifted sufficiently to make longer business journeys possible.



I went completely self-contained, so that the only thing I needed was access to charging points each way, having first checked with the main providers that the points on the M40 and M25 were all still functional. The return trip, at the very

beginning of September, was the first time I had experienced a queue for the charging points, and also the first time that I had been on the receiving end of what could only be called charging rage.

A young gentleman and his equally irate mother were not prepared to accept that, just because a charging point has two separate leads, you can only use it to charge one vehicle.



(The separate leads are there for different connection types, not to double the capacity). Fortunately, another EV driver came to my rescue and reinforced what I was saying. They drove off in a huff and we were left to charge in peace. All the other conversations I had with fellow chargers were polite and supportive of any 'newbies' who might have been struggling to get things to work.

I had been wishing that the queues might lengthen, as greater demand will increase the pressure for a more developed infrastructure. But I hope that charging rage remains

an isolated incident. The infrastructure has got to improve significantly if electric vehicles are going to be the wheels of the future. Since over half the population of England have no driveway parking, innovative ways of charging are going to be needed.

I think it must be a good time to be a scientist working in electric vehicle and battery development.

*Sylvia Fox*





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# National Role For Kings Norton's U3A Chairman

*The significant local contribution made by Allan Walmsley, Chairman of the Kings Norton & District U3A (University of the Third Age) since it was formed in early 2017, has been recognised by his elevation to The Third Age Trust.*

The Trust is the umbrella organization for the national U3A movement, and is run by a Board of 12 trustee directors (elected by each Region) as well as a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. They are supported by a small national office in London with 20 full time staff and a CEO, Sam Mauger. Allan has become the Trustee from the West Midlands, a region which has 85 U3As and around 30,000 members.

He and his fellow Trustees face a particularly challenging prospect with the impact of Covid 19. Face to face meetings are the lifeblood of the U3A concept: indeed one of its fundamental principles is to encourage retired people to meet socially, as well as to enhance their learning. But with virtually all members of an age that makes them particularly



vulnerable to the disease, and the continuing restrictions on face-to-face gatherings, the basic viability of the U3A concept is in jeopardy.

Despite numerous attempts and some examples of innovative

**IT'S**

**NEVER**

**TOO**

**LATE**



**YOU'RE**

**NEVER**

**TOO**

**OLD**

‘meetings’, the U3A movement is largely in a critical condition,” explains Allan: “Membership is likely to fall next year as face-to-face activities continue to be severely curtailed. I guess the principal role of the new Board, particularly in the Regions, will be to re-energize the local U3As and re-define their role in this ‘new normal’”

Allan continues: “The movement is there to provide opportunities for seniors to learn, laugh and live, basic needs that still need to be satisfied, and it will be a huge challenge to find ways of re-creating a social confidence amongst our members and

enabling them to enjoy the movement once again.”

As soon as his new appointment was announced at the beginning of September, Allan announced that he would be standing down as Chair of the Kings Norton and District U3A.

He will be extremely hard to replace. He has led the local group with unfailing enthusiasm, innovation and remarkable dynamism, seeing membership reach the 250 level and the creation of some 40 special interest groups.

# In A Fragrant Mood

*Seasonal tips from a green-fingered reader*



Lavender oil is a mainstay of the perfumery industry and is produced by steam distillation of the flower heads of the English Lavender from the fields of Provence, or it used to be. Due to the baleful presence of a bacterium in France more lavender is now grown in Bulgaria. Note that we will be looking at the English Lavender and not the French Lavender which smells less fragrant and has little wings above the small true flowers. French Lavender is nonetheless a fine plant and perhaps deserving of a closer look next month.



*French Lavender*

There are lavender farms in the UK and if you want to see the fields of purple visit Hill Barn Lavender, Snowhill, WR12 7JY, a couple of miles from Broadway, between mid-June and mid-July when the steam distillation may

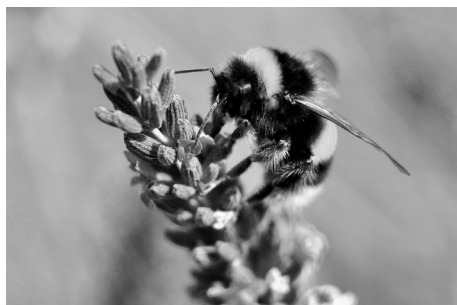
be in full swing. There is also a shop for all things lavender and a one-way system for access which is sign-posted.

Bees, day- and night-flying moths and butterflies will descend on your plants for energy in the form of high sugar nectar and then fly away to lay their eggs on a suitable food plant.

Lavender will thrive on poor soil but it will need pruning back to stop it getting leggy and if you want a long-lived plant. Here is one way to do it. Wait until the flower heads have turned brown and the bees have lost interest in them (about late July). Remove the long, thin flower stems and wait a couple of weeks. Now you can finish the job by cutting back the brown stems to just above where there are signs of leaf buds. You will have removed about half of their length. That's it for the year!

There are other recommended methods but the technique of removing dead flower heads and trimming flowering stems just after the last flowers will also suit the majority of our garden shrubs.

This month's tree is a bit of an



*English Lavender*



*A happy rhododendron tree*

odd choice because, in the often alkaline soil of B30, the Rhododendron looks rather yellow and forlorn. The scientists call this chlorosis but there are ways you can mitigate the effect. Firstly, put as much rotted leaf matter and compost in the planting hole as you can and your soil will be made more acid, thus encouraging the production of iron rich chlorophyll. Immediately after planting and once a year thereafter give a can full of Sequesterene solution. This proprietary iron product is not affected by alkaline soil. In addition, water it with a bucket of ferrous sulphate solution at recommended dilution about three times a year. As always, the patient gardener will be rewarded!

Some years ago I planted some fine pelargoniums in a container



of multipurpose compost and the result was, well, disappointing: very few flowers and leaves with yellow veins. I consulted the internet for a solution and was told that my compost could be short of available iron. I took a cheap approach and watered in a dilute solution of ferrous sulphate.

Within a week the result was magical. Big green leaves and lots of flowers! If you suspect a similar deficiency but are not sure what it is then water with a quarter strength solution of Maxicrop as this contains a range of micronutrients in addition to the three basics of potassium, nitrogen and phosphate. The manufacturers of Maxicrop claim that all plants will be twice the size with this magic mix and I must say that I have had success with vegetables and flowers so you might look on the net for discounted prices. Bear in mind that there are other similar brands of micronutrient-enriched fertiliser available. The last time I visited Notcutts of Shirley they had one of their own at about half the price of the well-known competitor.

A tip from the showing enthusiasts is to water with a well-diluted fertiliser for every watering if you want enormous onions etc. But what do you do with a metre-long carrot or an onion the size of a football?

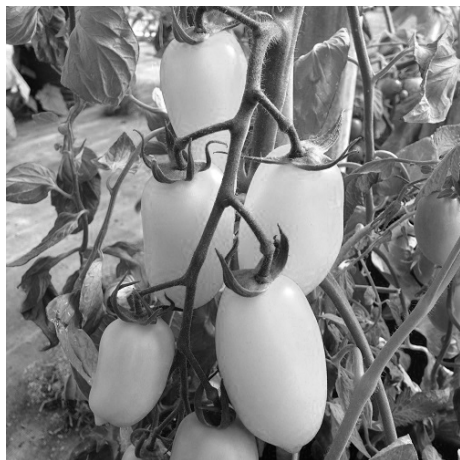
While we are on the subject of vegetables, outdoor tomatoes are doing very well this year and it may be time to scour the seed catalogues for next year on the look-out for the following short growing season varieties.

*Northern Exposure, Sub Arctic, Legend, Novia and Black Prince.*

This last one comes from Siberia so should be a sure-fire winner here! Two varieties I have seen succeeding this year are Tigerella (striped) and Cream Sausage (yes honestly!).

Lastly, this month's problem plot is that shady but dry area under a tree often in the far corner of your garden. Leave the grass as it is, take out divots and, in the hole thus created, plant the following in groups in a fairly random manner:

*Cyclamen coum* flowering winter



*Tomato Cream Sausage*

and early Spring; *Cyclamen hederifolium* flowering in late Summer and Autumn. Simple, small daffodils, sticking to one

variety, that way you will get a fine show followed by a once-only clearance of the browned leaves. Lastly *Colchicum autumnale* with its giant crocus-like flowers in lilac or white

Do not plant too deeply and frequently all these beauties will self-seed all over the place.

That's it for now, looking forward to a mild winter,

*Adam the Gardener*

In support of Tear Fund. Save the date! November 14th 2020. Online.

## The Church in the Parish

We are a Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, Hawkesley, in partnership with the Methodist Church, and Immanuel District Churches.

**We believe that the church in Kings Norton exists  
To be a worshipping transforming partnership in Christ  
To live out God's radical hospitality for all  
To be equipped for work in God's world**

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During the Covid-19 crisis, we have had to suspend all our usual activities including many church services. That does not mean, however, that church has ceased to be active. Some of our services have moved online.

There is a regular 10.00 am service on Sundays at St Nicolas' Church at which 30 places are available. These have to be booked before noon on Friday by calling the Parish Office on 0121 458 3289.

If you wish to watch a service at home, you can do so every Sunday on the Church of England's website:

**[www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online)**

Sunday morning worship from Immanuel Church is streamed live on Facebook or Zoom at 10.30 am ([facebook.com/Immanuel123Church](https://facebook.com/Immanuel123Church)).

A Family Service is broadcast live on Facebook at 9.30 am on Sunday morning ([bit.ly/2K8KzTS](https://bit.ly/2K8KzTS)). You can find stories and crafts for children on the same page.

Prayers for Druids Heath and other occasional recordings appear as podcasts on the parish website ([www.kingsnorton.org.uk/audio](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk/audio)).

You can join members of the Ministry Team for occasional morning and evening prayer on the parish Facebook page. ([www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam](https://www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam)).

**For more detail and any last-minute updates, see the weekly newsletter, which is available on the Parish Website.**

## The Parish Magazine on the Internet

Between April and August 2020 we made the Parish Magazine available for sale on the Parish Website for the same price as the printed version. £1.50 bought you a digital copy which could be downloaded and read on any device capable of opening files in the popular PDF format.

Unfortunately, only one or two readers took advantage of this facility. As it was costing us more to provide than we received in sales revenue, it has now been discontinued, as have any plans to provide online subscriptions.

Our back catalogue of magazine editions going back to February 2014 continues to be available on the Parish Website free of charge.



*Harry L Marks*



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# Church Services

## Autumn 2020

In addition to our current service at 10.00 am and our online worship we will be offering additional services as follows:

Outdoor Services in the Churchyard at St Nicolas' Church at **11.00 am**  
Booking **not** required.

**Sunday 27 September**

**Sunday 25 October**

**Sunday 22 November**

**Sunday 20 December**

### *Other Services*

**Sunday 11 October at 4.00 pm.** Baby Loss Awareness Week. A service indoors at St Nicolas' Church. **Booking required.**

**Sunday 8 November at 10.45.** The annual Remembrance service at the Lych Gate.

**Advent and Christmas.** We are planning what our services will look like over this period and considering what we can offer during what will be a very different Advent and Christmas.

Services are subject to change, often at short notice, as the official guidances evolves. Please keep an eye on our newsletter, magazine, website and social media for details.



# AUGUST 2020

## FUNERALS

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John ch.3 v.16)

6 <sup>th</sup> August	Carl Upton	73	Cr.LH
6 <sup>th</sup> August	Walter Joseph Brown	87	Cr.RH
7 <sup>th</sup> August	Paul David Taylor	70	In.CY
14 <sup>th</sup> August	Marlene Collyer	78	MS.SN
18 <sup>th</sup> August	James William Cutler	77	Cr.LH
20 <sup>th</sup> August	Bernard Stanley Hodson	95	SN.Bu.KN
24 <sup>th</sup> August	Anthony Smitheman	77	SN.Bu.KN
27 <sup>th</sup> August	Janet Wagstaff	66	Cr.RD

**SN** : Service at St Nicolas' Church, **Cr** : Cremation, **Bu** : Burial,  
**CY** : Churchyard, **LH** : Lodge Hill, **MS** : Memorial Service, **RD** : Redditch,  
**RH** : Robin Hood



*Tributes to Marlene Collyer at her Memorial Service on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

# BAR ROOM HUMOUR

*Non sequiturs, dangling participles, Oxford commas. Just three of the linguistic features which can come under an Editor's scrutiny as articles are prepared for publication. Some may be lucky and make it into print. Others may need some adjustment before they're ready to venture onto the page. Can **you** tell a misplaced modifier from a malapropism?*



A **dangling participle** walks into a bar. Enjoying a cocktail and chatting with the bartender, the evening passes pleasantly.

A bar was walked into by the **passive voice**.

An **oxymoron** walked into a bar. The silence was deafening.

Two redundant **quotation marks** walk into a “bar.”

A **malapropism** walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.

A **hyperbole** totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.

A **question mark** walks into a bar?

A **non sequitur** walks into a bar. In a strong wind, even turkeys can fly.

A **mixed metaphor** walks into a bar, seeing the handwriting on the wall but hoping to nip it in the bud.

A **comma splice** walks into a bar, it has a drink and then leaves.

Three **intransitive verbs** walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.

A **synonym** strolls into a tavern.

At the end of the day, a **cliché** walks into a bar, fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.

A **run-on sentence** walks into a bar it starts flirting. With a cute little sentence fragment.

Falling slowly, softly falling, the **chiasmus** collapses to the bar floor.

A **figure of speech** literally walks into a bar and ends up getting figuratively hammered.

An **allusion** walks into a bar, despite the fact that alcohol is its Achilles heel.

The **subjunctive** would have walked into a bar, had it only known.

A **misplaced modifier** walks into a bar owned by a man with a glass eye named Ralph.

The past, present, and future walked into a bar. It was **tense**.

A **dyslexic** walks into a bra.

A **verb** walks into a bar, sees a beautiful noun, and suggests they **conjugate**. The **noun declines**.

An **Oxford comma** walks into a bar, where it spends the evening watching the television getting drunk and smoking cigars.

A **simile** walks into a bar, as parched as a desert.

A **gerund** and an **infinitive** walk into a bar, drinking to forget.

A **hyphenated word** and a **non-hyphenated word** walk into a bar and the bartender nearly chokes on the irony.



# THE NEW STRANGE

Our younger grandson recently asked 'Do you remember before Covid?' In that moment it seemed that there never was a time before Covid! It was another world in another universe, another galaxy, another time. As we talked about the 'new normal' he said 'It's not the new normal, it's the new strange!' The new strange it is, then!

Apparently, in the past few months, the *Covid 'lipstick factor'* has kicked in. This is when we buy affordable items such as a lipstick to cheer ourselves up, maybe to cover up the effects of the *Corona stone*. I also give you more of this month's Covid new terms: *covidiot*, someone who flouts the Covid guidelines selfishly, and *the daily privilege stocktake*, otherwise known to Christians as counting our blessings or giving thanks.

A friend who is a prison chaplain says that every time he

despairs of the new strange he thinks about the prisoners, now locked up 23 hours a day in an often crowded cell, 7 days a week with no visitors. Many had mental health problems before they were incarcerated which have been severely exacerbated, and many are developing them. In his care, spiritual and temporal, for the welfare of the prisoners he says that not being able to have visitors is the cruellest of punishments.

Most of us are able to give thanks for some things amidst the hardships and sorrow. We're not imprisoned, living in an open war zone or floating in dangerous waters in an overcrowded flimsy vessel, fleeing atrocities or abject poverty. We're not stuck in high-rise accommodation with small children, day in day out. We're not in a care home, prevented from being together with our loved ones. Maybe home schooling and working



simultaneously brings some rewards but it has been tough.

Make no mistake, social distancing is a reality and is very hard. Sharing news and stories is a real challenge when we are unable to be close. We are missing hugs so much, with friends and even family. Much of what keeps us healthy is the quality of our relationships. Good health is so much more than medical. In the early weeks, I missed the family, especially my two grandsons, so much that it hurt. I still miss singing, especially in church.

It doesn't help that it has been a *pandemonic* *pandemic*: examination results chaos,

return to school regulations changing daily, even hourly, U-turns on guidelines until we are dizzy, overt and deadly racism, businesses closing, unemployment rising. Not a pretty picture.

There have been many accounts written over the centuries, factual and fictional, about times of plague and pandemic. My reflections since the Covid lockdown have referenced literature and other art forms which echo or anticipate times of pandemic. This month is no exception.

One of my favourite poems ever since I was introduced to it at school is *'The Lady of Shallot'* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. (I thought that Lord was his middle name for many years!) I loved his use of language, the imagery and, of course, as a teenager, the romance and the tragedy. He wrote it in 1842 and it tells the story of a mythical time in the land of Camelot. The cursed Lady of Shallot is imprisoned in her four grey walls, isolated and marooned in a tower on an isle. Her only way



of seeing the outside world, as she constantly weaves pictures of the reflected scenes, is in a looking glass, her 'screen';

*'And moving thro' a mirror clear that hangs before her all the year, shadows of the world appear.'*

Only on her 'screen' can she see the images of those who love and can be with one another. *'I am half sick of shadows'* says The Lady of Shallot. She sees the beautiful Lancelot riding out from Camelot in her 'screen', and falls instantly in love. He represents her freedom but is the unwitting cause of her death. As he alerts her with his singing;

*'She left the web, she left the loom, She made three paces thro' the room, she saw the water blossom bloom, she saw the helmet and the plume. She look'd down to Camelot. Out flew the web and floated wide; the mirror crack'd from side to side ...'*

Now her fate is sealed – *'Outside the isle a shallow boat, beneath a willow lay afloat ... She loosed the chain, and down she lay; the*

*broad stream bore her far away.'* Leaving her lockdown, turning from her life in a screen, she is doomed, at least in this life. Lancelot finds her and muses on her lovely face. He cradles her body and begs *'God in his mercy, lend her grace.'*

The Lady of Shallot represents all who are locked down and sheltering, parents stuck with small children in confined spaces and no garden, those on hospital wards and in care homes with no visitors, prisoners and asylum seekers.

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**The Answer's Yes!**

This is a wonderful narrative poem of a life in lockdown, well worth reading again if you have forgotten its powerful and beautiful use of language and the story it tells. A moral for us is not to be a covidiot!

Years ago, in Sunday school, we used to sing 'choruses'. It was many years before I worked out that this meant just singing the refrains of hymns. (I seem to make a habit of such misunderstandings). The wording of one such chorus sounds very old-fashioned to modern ears but its message is timeless. It was written nearly 200 years ago in 1836 by Edward Mote, a Baptist pastor, and reflects the parable of the wise and foolish builders: 'the wise man built his house upon the rock', a theme picked up in 1 Corinthians 10: 4. I have found this a great source of comfort and optimism when all around seems to be without hope.

*My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and  
righteousness;*

*I dare not trust the sweetest  
frame,*

*but wholly lean on Jesus' Name.*

*When darkness veils His lovely  
face,*

*I rest on His unchanging grace;*

*In every high and stormy gale,  
my anchor holds within the veil.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand;*

*All other ground is sinking sand,  
all other ground is sinking sand.*

During the new strange, which I fear will be here for a while to come, and beyond it, let's buy ourselves a Covid treat from time to time and try and count our blessings. Stay safe, stay well, stay praying, stay hopeful.

*Thelma Mitchell*

Edward Mote was born in Upper Thames Street, London, Jan. 21, 1797. Through the preaching of the Rev. J. Hyatt, of Tottenham Court Road Chapel, he underwent a great spiritual change and ultimately he became a Baptist minister. For the last 26 years of his life he was pastor at Horsham, Sussex, where he died Nov. 13, 1874. Mr. Mote published several small pamphlets and also 'Hymns of Praise. A New Selection of Gospel Hymns, combining all the Excellencies of our spiritual Poets, with many Originals'. By E. Mote. London. J. Nichols, 1836. The Originals number nearly 100.

# Who Inspires You?

## *The Thoughts of a Lay Minister*

Who inspires you? This is a question I posed to several groups of air cadets with whom I have been working, online of course. I gave them two examples of inspirational people to start their thinking. Since they were air cadets, I used the military examples of Douglas Bader and Dave Watson.

Douglas Bader (photo below) was a very topical choice when I spoke to the cadets in September as much of the focus was on the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain during which Bader, a double amputee, had flown as an RAF pilot. Later, he was to bail out after a crash over France and to become a prisoner of war. Despite his disability, he made several attempts to escape and was transferred to Colditz Castle, where he remained a prisoner for three years. Some of you will remember his story from the film *'Reach for the Sky'* starring Kenneth More.



Dave Watson you may not have heard of. They haven't made a movie about him yet! The cadets had met Dave during the lockdown as he joined us for a Virtual Parade Night to tell his story. Dave was a young soldier in the Scots Guards who stood on an Improvised Explosive Device in Helmand Province in Afghanistan and lost three limbs. His recovery was impressive and he went on to become a gold medalist in the Invictus Games in shot put and discus.

Having talked about these two inspirational

people, I wondered who the cadets would choose as their inspiration. I thought it might be Dave Watson or someone of celebrity status, but I was very wrong. The people who inspire them the most are people they know, often family members. One cadet told me that the person who inspired him the most was his mum, because she always believed in him and encouraged him to be the best he could be.

I found this incredibly humbling. That it was not famous people whom they found inspiring, no matter what their story, but ordinary people, people they knew. It made me think about who my own choices would be. Now that would be a very different list. I chose Douglas Bader and Dave Watson because their stories are inspirational, not necessarily

because they are people who impress me personally.

The more I reflected, the more I realised that the cadets are right. The people who inspire us are the people around us, those who motivate and encourage us, support and sustain us. Often, they won't even realise that they are inspirational and that makes it even more important to us. It also reminds us that we don't always realise the impact we have on the people around us. We are not often aware of the importance of friendship, support, a kind word, encouragement, a prayer offered and above all else a simple 'thank you'.

So I ask again. Who inspires **you**?

*Pauline Weaver*



**Mike Baker**



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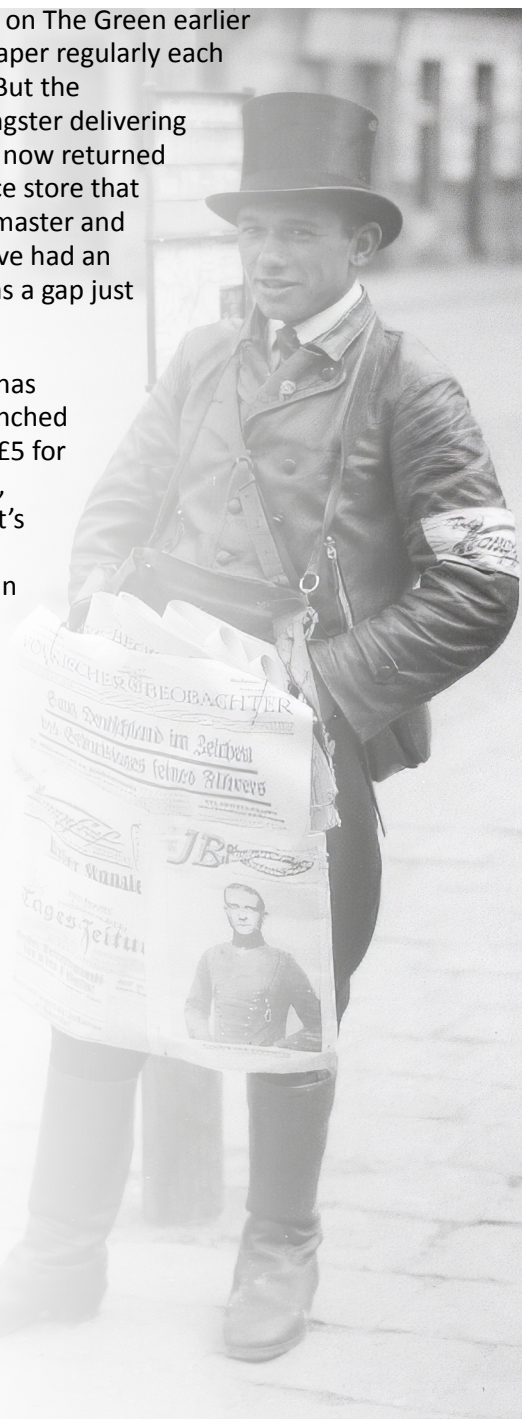


Since the closure of the newsagent's on The Green earlier this year, locals wanting their newspaper regularly each day have had to go out and fetch it. But the traditional sight of a bike-riding youngster delivering them before most of us were up has now returned to the local streets. It's the Post Office store that has brought back the tradition. Postmaster and store owner **Chan Singh** says 'We have had an excellent take-up; it's clear that it was a gap just waiting to be filled.'

It's not surprising that the response has been so good, because Chan has launched the service at a bargain price of just £5 for a full week's delivery, plus, of course, the cost of the newspaper itself. That's about 70 pence a day. If you don't want daily delivery, then the price can be negotiated down accordingly.

The option will become more appealing as the mornings become darker for longer. Any reader who is interested should contact the Post Office to discuss arranging a delivery. The service covers all daily and Sunday newspapers. You can visit the shop, email **[papersdelivered1@outlook.com](mailto:papersdelivered1@outlook.com)**, or text **07 539 053 923**.

With access to St Nicolas' Church and the Parish Office in St Nicolas' Place still very limited because of the epidemic, the most convenient place to buy copies of the Parish Magazine at the moment is the Post Office store. 'We have several customers who wait keenly for the arrival of the new monthly edition,' says Chan.







# FOODBANK NEWS

Vegetarians and vegans may need to tune out for a few moments, or focus on the sentiment of this article rather than the detail.

At the B30 Foodbank, we have recently been going through our meat supplies to check that what we are giving out has reasonably high meat content. Regular readers of this magazine may remember that I used Lent to explore the contents of our parcels from the inside by buying and eating similar tinned products to those which we distribute. Most were perfectly nutritious, but the tinned meatballs and canned spaghetti bolognese really had very little meat content at all.

The ingredients of one recently-donated tin sounded really inviting. The label conjured up starlit skies and campfire conversations. It called itself Organic Wild Campfire Stew and it promised to bring the eater at least 65% meat including venison, pheasant

and salmon. The meat was combined with organic vegetables and only needed heating in a dish to make a delicious hot meal to share as you chatted around the campfire and looked up at the stars. There was just one problem. It was dog food.

I have no objections to feeding our canine companions well, but the tin we had been given contained proportionately far more meat than almost all the canned meat products we give to our clients. It strikes me that there is something seriously wrong with a society when some of its members have the resources to buy their pet animals better food than others can afford for themselves. It certainly got our Foodbank volunteers talking about inequality and related topics.

And the sting in the tail? It was past its sell-by date.

*Sylvia Fox*

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Assistant Rector	The Revd Eliakim Ikechukwu
Parish Lay Minister	Pauline Weaver
Curate (Pioneer)	The Revd Catherine Matlock
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Methodist Minister	The Revd Nick Jones
Readers	David Ash, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki
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<b>Hawkesley Church</b>	Jim Clarke
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Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837)	Alison Blumer
Oasis (Sunday School) Tiny Tots & GPS	Pauline Weaver
Oasis (Sunday School) Immanuel	Nicky Moorcroft

Everything is topsy-turvy this year and Hallowe'en will be different too. So instead of trick or treating this year, why don't we all display a pumpkin during Half Term week (24-31 October)?

What you would need to do is to create a pumpkin to display in your window, in your front garden or on your doorstep. You can paint or draw, use *papier mâché*, upcycle some plastic, decorate a real pumpkin, whatever you want. The only limit is your imagination! It shouldn't be scary or spooky and you don't need any other decorations. Just a pumpkin.



During Half Term week you can walk around your area and see how many you can spot. Encourage your friends and neighbours to join in too. Don't forget to send us your pictures. Did you know that, in some remote areas of the world, pumpkins are used to transport vaccines, like mini fridges?

# Let's Go To The Movies

*The P&O passenger liner SS Canberra was berthed at the port of Los Angeles, USA, in the year 1967. Of course, this was just a few miles from Hollywood, and that thought brings me to my topic. The movies.*



A big event was to be held on board the ship. It was a film première followed by a reception. The film was called *'How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying'*, a comedy musical, and the main star was Robert Morse who, with Rudy Vallée, reprised his Broadway role for the film.

The cinema on board the *Canberra* could seat about 150 people, so the occasion was never going to be a big extravaganza, but it was still quite 'glitzy'. The press and television cameras were present, as were the cast of the film, which included a couple of performers from the movie *'West Side Story'* (1961).

There was one particular guest, I remember, who attracted attention, an actor who had been a star of both silent movies and talkies since 1917 and one of the top box office attractions of the twenties and thirties. He was promoted by MGM as a 'Latin lover', an actor who set the ladies' hearts throbbing. I wonder if any film buffs among our readers have heard of **Ramon Novarro** (photo opposite)? Mr Novarro, whose real name was José Ramón Gil Samaniego, looked quite old and frail on the evening in question. Tragically, he was to be

murdered in his home by burglars the following year.

Life wasn't all Hollywood glamour, though. Watching a weekly film was very popular with crew members on board the *Canberra*. We would screen them in the Crew Recreation Room and, as I was involved with the Crew Sports & Social Club, I would be informed of the title of the weekly movie in advance. I had the job of putting up a notice to announce the film and the date. It was the ship's projectionist who would operate the 35mm machines. He was Chinese and was quite happy to instruct me in how they worked. This included threading the reels. You also had to look for the 'red dots' in the top right corner which told you it was time to run the second projector. Eventually, the projectionist was quite happy to let me show the films unsupervised. He would head off either to eat or to play mahjong for a couple of hours!

I remember one particular film fondly. It was the ballet 'Coppélia', sometimes known as 'The Girl With The Enamel Eyes', featuring the Kiev troupe and orchestra. When I posted the information on the crew noticeboard I omitted to mention that it was a ballet. When the lads



questioned me as to what the film was all about, I just replied that it was a story 'about a doll that comes to life'. Some of our roughly-toughy sailors would not have liked the concept of ballet at all but, when I screened the film, we had a full house and everyone seemed quite enthralled, giving it their full attention. A big success!

It gives me great pleasure to reminisce about distant memories like these. I do hope they bring a smile to your face and provide a moment or two during which you can forget Covid-19 and the many complications with which we are having to cope at this time.

Eddie Matthews



# THE GOSPEL

## *Redemption & Shame*

An online conference for church leaders, pioneers and those engaged in mission to explore the issue of shame theologically and missionally. It will be both an introduction for those beginning to explore issues of shame in faith contexts, as well as an opportunity for deeper learning and sharing for those already aware of the impact of this issue.

The ticket price of £10 (£5 unwaged) includes all the video content, access to the live-streamed talks, an opportunity to participate in online discussion groups and to put your questions or comments to the contributors.

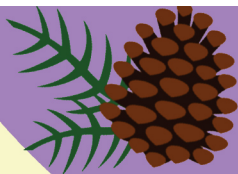
For more information and a registration form, visit [bit.ly/32KFDhN](https://bit.ly/32KFDhN)

**Your parish church is open** for public worship within certain limitations, all of which are explained on the parish website. Places must be booked with the Parish Office by noon on the previous Friday.

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