

The Parish Church of
St Mary the Virgin, Great Shelford



Charity No: 245456

Sunday 22nd March, 2020 - Mothering Sunday

From Simon:

By any measure, this has been an extraordinary week, as the nation has been coming to terms with what the Government has been asking us to do in response to the advancing Pandemic. For many vulnerable people, this now means living with self-isolation perhaps for a long period. For all of us, we are slowly getting used to what 'social isolation' means in terms of our day to day activities. This all feels quite surreal.

I began the week at Westminster Abbey for my Duty Chaplain's stint this year. Suddenly the whole round of life (visitors in large numbers) went into free-fall; visitor numbers on Monday were down by 70% and the staff and volunteers were really concerned about their health and the future, if the Abbey had to close. By Tuesday critical decisions had been made that the Abbey would indeed close and cease to offer public worship, possibly for several months. I was greatly privileged to celebrate the final public Holy Communion on Tuesday lunchtime; normally this service attracts 50-60 people, but about 20 gathered to receive Holy Communion. Later in the day the Choir sang Choral Evensong for the last time; the music was sublime and there was a real sense of holiness in a very special setting. The Abbey closed its doors at the end of the service and will remain closed until further notice. Worship will still be offered daily, on behalf of the nation.

In the coming weeks and months we are being challenged to become Church in a radically different way. Regrettably, our services will no longer be public occasions, in response to the Government's directions, but worship will still be offered daily and Holy Communion celebrated. We need to ensure that we still remain connected with all those who would normally attend, plus those who are now self-isolating at home. There will be many opportunities to volunteer and serve others and thanks for the many offers that I have already received. We will be part of the network of key contacts which has been established in Gt Shelford & Stapleford to help with urgent supplies, post, shopping, or just a phone call for those who are self-isolating. We hope everyone has received a leaflet through their door, please let us know if you have not.

Chiefly, we are challenged to be a praying people, who hold up the needs of individuals and families during testing times. Our church has stood in this community for just over 600 years and borne witness to plagues, wars and religious persecution. In all of these years of turmoil it has provided a place where prayer can be offered and comfort sought. That is still its role today and this is why the church will remain open every day from 9am - 5.30pm. Please do come in and spend a moment of quiet or leave a request for prayers. All these requests will be offered in our daily prayer.

Morning and Evening Prayer will be offered every day and Holy Communion celebrated. I am asked to emphasise that these are **not public services, nor is Holy Communion being distributed**, but in a sense we can make a 'spiritual communion' by associating ourselves with the worship going on in church. Every day you may well hear a single church bell ringing at 9am and 5pm and this is to signify that we are praying for everyone in the village.

The weeks ahead are going to call for huge reserves from us all and a real spirit of service to our neighbours; already this is starting to happen, which gives me real cause for hope. It is a well worn phrase, but truly we will need to 'keep calm and carry on', albeit in a different way from what has been 'normal.'

Every blessing for the coming week,

P.S.

Mothering Sunday posies: Posies will you to call in and collect, together with to friends and neighbours!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

be available in the church porch this Sunday for special Mothering Sunday cards. Please distribute

We are going to provide the Sunday readings and Collect for you to reflect on at home, together with a reflection on the Sunday readings.

Reflection on this Sunday's readings:-

Our Gospel reading for Mother's Day fast-forwards us to Good Friday, as Jesus hangs on the Cross, suffering and dying. Around the Cross, waiting with Jesus through the hours of anguish are his mother, her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. With them is John, the beloved disciple. Even in his agony, which must have been all-consuming, Jesus manages to look beyond his own suffering to see his mother and friend in their pain and loss. Jesus says to his mother, 'Here is your son'; to his friend, 'Here is your mother'. It's a command: and John takes Mary to live with him in his home.

This is a Mothering Sunday like no other we have known. Our lives have changed so quickly and completely in such a short time, and we do not know how long the changes will last or whether normality will ever return. It is a scary and anxious time. Will we see those we love again? Will they die? Will we be ill? Will we have enough to eat? Will we have enough money?

For those who followed and loved Jesus, his death felt like the end of all things, the end of the world that they knew. It was dangerous and bleak and frightening and sad. But they had Jesus's commandment: to be mothers and sons to each other. Maybe they remembered Jesus's words to them: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.' (John 15.12) Jesus taught them that those he loved would abide with him, and he would abide with them, and that by loving each other they would be sharing his love.

At the moment we can't take others into our homes, because that would be unsafe. But we can be mothers and children to one another. We can care for each other with phone calls and other ways of communicating. We can care for each other by acts of kindness and service. We can care for one another by sharing what we have with those who need it. By doing all those things we are loving one another. And when we love one another we abide in Jesus, and he abides in us.

On this Mothering Sunday that feels a bit like Good Friday, in the midst of all the things we are feeling, help us, Lord Jesus, to turn to each other and say, 'You are my child; I am your child.' Help us to love each other as you have loved us.

A prayer of Catherine of Siena

Eternal Goodness,
You want me to gaze into you and see that you love me.
You love me freely, and you want me to love and serve my neighbours with the same love,
offering my prayers and my possessions as far as in me lies.
O God, come to my assistance!

Collect:

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

First Reading: Exodus 2. 1 - 10

A man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 1. 3 - 7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

Gospel: John 19. 25b - 27

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.



Hello Children Mary Mouse has gone to ground until we can all meet together again, but she will be sending regular letters.

Sunday Club will not meet until further notice. We will be offering a regular Mary Mouse letter. For details contact Gillian, gillian.pett29@gmail.com

Toddler Group: The Toddler Group meetings are suspended.

INTERCESSIONS

Please refer any pastoral concerns for members of the congregation or members of the local community to any member of the Ministry team including our Co-ordinator for Pastoral Services, Mrs Frances Simms. Please pray for the sick, frail, housebound and those in care. Please let the Vicar know about all cases of sickness and others for whom we should pray. Intentions left in the blue Intercessions Book on the side altar will be offered each day at Morning and Evening Prayer. If you prefer, you can write your prayer intention on one of the tags provided, and hang it on the prayer tree by the side altar, or light a votive candle.

Gift Aid Donations: We welcome all donations from visitors and there are Gift Aid envelopes at the back of church. If you pay tax we can reclaim 25p for every pound you donate to the Church at no cost to yourself, if you have completed the declaration on the envelope. For further information, or to join the planned giving scheme, please contact Mrs. Ann Seaman, mobile no. 07710 452647; email juliet.a.seaman@outlook.com

ST. MARY'S GREAT SHELFORD - WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Archbishop Justin Welby will be leading a special Mothering Sunday Service on the radio at 8. 10 a.m. on Sunday, which will also be on Facebook.

Churches Together: There is a call for a national day of prayer on Sunday which we encourage everyone to support.

British Summer Time begins in the early hours of Sat. 29th Mar., so please remember to put your clocks and watches **forward** by one hour on Sat. night.

Lent Activities 2020: Some Lent activities continue – please see below.

Count Your Blessings this Lent with Christian Aid

Celebrate the good things in your life this Lent with a thought-provoking Count Your Blessings calendar.

This Lent, reflect each day on the blessings in your life and join in giving thanks. Be inspired by daily opportunities to give, act and pray for communities in need. Enjoy Count Your Blessings as a personal journey or share it with family or friends. Leaflets available for both adults and children at the back of church.

LiveLent: Care for God's Creation

The Church of England's Lent Campaign for 2020 focuses on the climate crisis this year. With weekly themes shaped around the first Genesis account of creation, it explores the urgent need for humans to value and protect the abundance God has created. This year's #LiveLent challenge offers 40 short reflections and suggested actions to help you, your family and to live in greater harmony with God, neighbour and nature. Both adult and children's booklets are available at the back of church. Please take one home with you.

Electoral Roll Revision: It is the time of year when we need to revise the church Electoral Roll. Please check that your details are correct on the list at the back of church and let me know if they need to be updated. If your name is not on the list, please take a form from the back of the church and return it to me when it is completed. The revision closes on Sun. 29th March. Thank you. Wendy (Seekings).

Kneelers: A group of ladies, and at least one gentleman, have started work on some new kneelers for the church. The cost per kneeler is £54; if you would like to make a contribution, maybe with a dedication, please contact Mrs Margaret Stamper, 845134. Please also contact Margaret if you would like to sew a kneeler yourself; apparently it is very therapeutic!

Alms Giving 2020: The alms for the remaining Sundays in March will be going to SSYI. Alms can be gift aided provided your giving is in an envelope marked 'Alms' and with your PIN. Alms can be left in the offertory box at the back of church, near the back pew.

Cancellations and postponements.....

Lent Breakfasts: The remaining Lent Breakfasts have regrettably had to be cancelled.

Lent Course 2020: Regrettably the remaining sessions of the Lent course had to be cancelled.

Lent Lunches: Regrettably the remaining Lent Lunches have had to be cancelled.

The Deanery Spring Fair has unfortunately had to be **postponed** until Sat. 10th Oct., when it will become an Autumn Fair!

CONNECT the monthly service at St Andrew's has had to be cancelled. Alternative ways for young people to engage with the church will be flagged shortly.

SSYI Big Breakfast: Regrettably this popular event has had to be cancelled. SSYI would welcome donations to support its valuable work - please see their website - <https://www.ssyi.club/contact-us>

Sunday 22nd March, 2020

**09:00 Morning Prayer
10:00 Holy Communion
17:00 Evening Prayer (BCP)
(Please note that these are not public services)**

Monday to Friday

**09:00 Morning Prayer
17:00 Evening Prayer
(Please note that these are not public services)**

Wednesday 25th March, 2020

**09:30 Holy Communion (BCP)
(Please note that this is not a public service)**

Sunday 29th March, 2020

**09:00 Morning Prayer
10:00 Holy Communion
17:00 Evening Prayer (BCP)
(Please note that these are not public services)**

**Vicar:
The Rev'd Simon Talbott**

simon@thetalbotts.co.uk
01223 847068

**Assistant curate:
The Rev'd Dr Nicola Bown**

curate@stmarysgreatshelford.org
07414 595160

Contact Churchwarden:
Mrs. Stella Nettleton

stella.nettleton@btinternet.com
07763 887953

Reader/Licensed Lay Minister:
Mrs. Maureen Dobson

d-mdobson@hotmail.co.uk
01223 840076

Parish Administrator:
Mrs. Katharin Page

pagekatharin@gmail.com
07710 518220

Pastoral Services Co-ordinator
Mrs. Frances Simms

francesisimms47@gmail.com
01223 845895

Children's work contact:
Gillian Pett

gillian.pett29@gmail.com

Applications for baptisms, marriages and the calling of Banns of marriage should be made please to the Parish Administrator. Arrangements for all these services are **strictly limited** at present, so we will get back to you to explain the current situation.
22/03/20

The Bishop of St Albans Coronavirus

Golden Rules

Not official advice,

but this is food-for-thought about our attitudes.....

Golden Rule One: Each one of us can think about how we can protect and support our neighbours. So much of the public rhetoric is sowing fear about the danger of other people. So, taking all the official precautions, offer help and reassurance to others – and don't demonise anyone, or any group.

Golden Rule Two: Think who may be suffering more than you. For those of us who are healthy there is much less to worry about, but the elderly, the housebound and those with chronic health conditions may be very anxious. How about each church undertaking an audit of all the vulnerable people they know and sharing out the responsibility to phone them each day. There's nothing like a friendly voice to offer solace when someone is worried. A smile can bring cheer, even on the phone. If you visit, follow all the official precautions or don't go.

Golden Rule Three: Don't give in to panic and start hoarding food. There is plenty to go around, so practise the Christian discipline of sharing. Ask your neighbours what they need and do your best to help them get it. If you are self-isolating you will of course need some supplies.

Golden Rule Four: Live today to the full. None of us ever know what the future holds. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6. 25 – 34), Jesus challenged his followers to live each day fully and not be afraid. Every time we are tempted to give in to fear we need to make a conscious choice to respond in trust and openness.

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SJT: 08.03.20