

Dear Friends,
 My goodness, how the world changes... I think all of us feel like we're living in alien, strange territory right now.

Just three months ago, Corona was only a Mexican beer, hand-sanitiser was something you only really used when visiting hospitals and some of us probably thought that Covid-19 was some distant, unknown planet!

In recent weeks, we've seen some unprecedented, unbelievable, significant changes in response to the threat and spread of the Coronavirus. Preventative measures are already in place, with more set to follow, which are seeking to minimise the spread of the virus and protect the vulnerable. These are serious times and due care must be given to good personal hygiene, social distancing, washing hands frequently, not touching faces with unwashed hands, and making sure we catch, bin and kill coughs and sneezes to limit the spread of germs and viruses. This is good, sound wisdom and common sense which we all must follow.

What's struck me as I've watched the way in which the media have reported and surveyed our nation's reaction, is that fear and anxiety is out there, everywhere. Fear affects how we think and how we react. Out of fear, decent men and women are now unashamedly stealing medicinal handwash. Out of fear, people are now grappling with each other for toilet roll, pasta, rice, meat, milk, eggs, paracetamol, and much, much more. Out of fear, men and women are avoiding acts of kindness. Fear distorts what we are, and what we are supposed to be.

In the Bible we read the phrase '*perfect love drives out fear.*' (1 John 4:18).

But how, what does this '*perfect love*' look like?

Beginning on the 5th April we remember the roller-coaster of Holy Week, as we travel from the

excitement of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, to the confusion and fear caused by Judas' betrayal of Jesus on Maundy Thursday. Then, on Good Friday, we call to mind Jesus' death on the cross, a cruel death,



designed to strip its victims of every shred of human dignity they possessed. The Romans crucified many hundreds of people and to some it must have seemed that Jesus was destined to become just another nameless victim of the Roman occupation.

The Church of England priest and poet Malcom Guite has written a series of poems that tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. You can find them on his blog: www.malcolmguite.wordpress.com

One of them reflects on the point when Jesus' dead body is taken down from the cross – a point when everything seems lost, when it looks like fear has won, and yet the seeds of life, light and hope have been sown and are waiting to burst forth:

XIII Jesus' body is taken down from the cross

*His spirit and his life he breathes in all
Now on this cross his body breathes no more
Here at the centre everything is still
Spent, and emptied, opened to the core.
A quiet taking down, a prising loose
A cross-beam lowered like a weighing scale
Unmaking of each thing that had its use
A long withdrawing of each bloodied nail,
This is ground zero, emptiness, space, fear
With nothing left to say or think or do
But look unflinching on the sacred face
That cannot move or change or look at you.
Yet in that prising loose and letting be
He has unfastened you and set you free.
Malcolm Guite*

Even in that moment of death, where fear was at its greatest, God's power is at work in ways that set us free. Christians believe that Jesus' death was not simply the end of the life of an ordinary man, but the beginning of a new relationship between God and his people.

We believe that on the morning of that first Easter Sunday, when Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb, she didn't just find that Jesus' body had gone, she came face to face with the risen Jesus, resurrected from the dead and revealed as the Son of God. 

We believe that through his death on the cross and his resurrection, Jesus has opened the gates of heaven to all who believe in him, that he has given eternal life to all who will receive it. From the cruelty of Jesus' execution on the cross has come God's overflowing generosity to all who will acknowledge and accept it. This is our faith, and this is why we celebrate Easter with joyful hearts, hands and voices.

This is '*perfect love*' in all its glory. This '*perfect love*' can set us free; freedom from our anxieties, freedom from all the stress, strain and struggles we face. This '*perfect love*' gives us a hope, a steadfast certainty, something worth holding on to and trusting in, amidst these unsettling, fearful times.

You see, fear has not won – Jesus Christ – the '*perfect love*' has the final say.

This year we will not be able to meet to celebrate Easter Sunday – but the truth and power of Easter – a risen Jesus Christ, '*perfect love*', remains true and firm.

The Bible tells us that only hours before Jesus was arrested and tried, he made a very special promise to his disciples: '*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*' (John 14:27). That was the peace of a Saviour's heart who was capable of resisting the pressure of fear. It's the peace that allows us to be stable, solid and caring whatever fears there may be. It is the peace, the very presence of Jesus himself, we need now and, in the days, weeks and months ahead of us. May you and I be granted it.

May God's blessing, peace and '*perfect love*' rest on you this Easter,

Emma

Rev'd Emma Racklyeft

Vicar at All Saints, Denmead

Welcome to this hastily amended issue of The Parish Chronicle.

As most, if not all, of the normal groups and activities have been suspended, much has been deleted at the last minute in order to be as up-to-date and relevant as possible. Please forgive any errors!

We hope to continue publishing the Chronicle over the next few months if at all possible, so please keep sending in your articles as appropriate. In fact if you have anything at all that you feel may interest our readers (particularly of a "Good News" nature, or helpful to our community at this time) please feel free to submit it.

Thank you

Steve Venn, editor

email: chronicle@allsaintsdenmead.org.uk

In this exceptional month, we have chosen to include this article from Reverend Canon J. John, taken from his blog, to be found at: www.canonjohn.com

Comfort in Covidia

I imagine I'm not alone in feeling that I have been mysteriously pushed through the doors of some magical wardrobe and now, in a state of severe bewilderment, find myself gazing around a strange, unwelcoming landscape. It is definitely not C.S. Lewis's Narnia; this hostile desert – which I take the opportunity of naming Covidia – is much more alien and daunting. Yet the door is closed behind us and, to use the old words of the King James Bible, you and I find ourselves 'strangers in a strange land' (Exodus 2:22). What we face is threatening and even frightening. Nevertheless, I'm comforted by the fact that many of the followers of Jesus have trod this path before. Although we find the present COVID-19 pandemic unusual, it's worth remembering that if you look back over history it was a rare generation that didn't have to grapple with such things as the Black Death, plague, cholera or the like. Other men and women of faith have crossed this discouraging landscape before us.

One man who did is the great reformer Martin Luther. In 1527, at a time when bubonic plague was rampaging across Germany with many fatalities, he was

asked the question as to whether it was right to run away from it. Never a man to give a short answer when a long one would do, he wrote an entire booklet in response. Originally given the less than cheering title *Whether to Flee From Death*, it was later published under the slightly more positive name *Whether One May Flee From A Deadly Plague*. The full text is found at [https://](https://davenantinstitute.org/whether-one-may-flee-from-a-deadly-plague/)

davenantinstitute.org/whether-one-may-flee-from-a-deadly-plague/ and has much of interest. In one paragraph Luther expresses his own position like this:

'I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbour needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor

foolhardy and does not tempt God.'

There's a lot to ponder here and let me offer you three wise principles from it that still hold true.

Principle 1: Learn wisely

In fact, for its time there is here a good example of what you might call 'sanitary sanity'. Luther intends adopting a strategy of what we would call self-isolation as much as possible and of avoiding going where he is not needed. His reasoning is, very reasonably, that he knows that he could become infected and therefore pass on the plague to others. His comment about that which might 'tempt God' refers to presumably the sort of situation where someone claims divine protection and then recklessly runs into a situation demanding God to protect them. Significantly, despite the passing of nearly 500 years, this remains good guidance: we should pay attention to the suggestions of medical experts and think of minimising the spread of the disease to us or to others. COVID-19 has claimed enough victims – try not to give it any more.

Principle 2: Live faithfully

We can no doubt identify with Luther praying for God's protection but his comments on his own death probably take us beyond our comfort zone. Luther has a deep, calm and commendable trust

that if his heavenly Father does decide to take him in death, then so be it; the key thing is that he has done his duty and not put anybody else at risk. Many of us have a faith that asks nothing more than 'Lord, keep me safe today'. Luther sees his whole life in the hands of God. Indeed, his perspective on death is helpful: he sees it not as an act of bitter tragedy or a demonic victory but simply as an event where God 'takes him'. Underlying all the actions Luther intends to take is his deep faith in Christ.

Principle 3: Love richly

The question that Luther was addressing is whether someone in a position of church responsibility should flee from peril. To summarise his answer: if you have no duties you can leave, but if your neighbour – and here, following Jesus, he means anybody we are in contact with – needs you, you should stay. Actually, in days of a global pandemic, fleeing disease makes little sense but the principle of being lovingly concerned for those around us remains completely valid. One of the problems with epidemics is that there is always a temptation to 'look after Number One' and self-isolation heightens it. We tend to make some sort of physical or psychological bunker and go and hide away inside. While this makes medical sense, it brings its own perils. Jesus asked, 'What do you benefit



if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?' (Matthew 16:26 NLT). In the same vein we might ask, 'What do I benefit if we survive this epidemic but, in the process, harm our eternal soul?' We are to love God with all that we have but also our neighbour.

The bleak landscape of Covidia through which we must travel is very much uncharted territory. Yet we are not the first to travel it; Luther and countless others have gone before us and, if it's any encouragement, the reformer himself outlived the plague and kept going for another 19 years before God finally 'took him'.

With that image of a sterile and ominous landscape before us I am reminded of the first few lines of what is

the best known of all Welsh hymns, 'Guide me, O thou great Redeemer, Pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but thou art mighty; Hold me with thy powerful hand.' Here we have the greatest of encouragements. As we travel through this difficult time, we, who have put our faith in Christ, know that he travels alongside us. Jesus is Emmanuel, the one who is 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23). And in our harsh new world, that is the greatest comfort of all.

J. John

Reverend Canon

www.canonjjohn.com

From the Registers

Baptisms

Sunday 22nd March Alice Rolfe

Weddings

Thursday 12th March Natasha Martin & Daniel Taplin

Funerals

Tuesday 17th March Mrs Mary Adams

Thursday 19th March Mrs Beryl Hambling

Friday 27th March Mrs Helen Tutt

SAVE THE DATE!

**Concert by The Band of HM
Royal Marines Portsmouth on
Wednesday 25th November at
7.30pm in All Saints Church.**

Due to the current uncertainty over coronavirus, tickets will be on sale later in the year at a cost of £14 including refreshments.

Please read the church website <https://allsaintsdenmead.org.uk/> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsdenmead> for updates.



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

The Church of the Sacred Heart and St Peter the Apostle
356 London Road, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7SR

Parish Priest: Rev Mgr Canon Jeremy Garratt (023) 9226 2289
shspa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk www.waterlooville-catholic.org.uk



Denmead Horticultural Society

denmeadhorticulturalsociety.btck.co.uk

Sadly we have cancelled our Spring Show on 4th April and our next talk on 7th April. We were looking forward to seeing the displays of Spring flowers to cheer us up after the long wet winter but on the bright side I can now eat the leeks and purple sprouting broccoli I was saving for the show.

Our last talk by Chris Bird was well attended with apparently lots of people wanting to grow their own potatoes. Chris started with a history of the potato which arrived in England from S America in 1590 and was appreciated for its flowers. It was first grown as animal fodder and it was only after Waterloo when there was a food shortage that it began to be used as food and new varieties were bred.

First early, second early and maincrop potatoes can all be planted on the same day, the difference between them being the time they take to produce a crop - from 90 to 125 days. Although Good Friday was the traditional planting day, soil conditions and temperature, ideally 10 – 15 deg C are more important – look out for fresh worm casts. If purchased before you are ready to plant, the tubers can be chitted in light and cool conditions to produce short green chits. Varieties

recommended were 1st early: Rocket & Lady Christl; 2nd early: Lady Balfour & Maxine; maincrop: Picasso & Dante; salad varieties: Anya & Ratte; slug resistant: Kestrel & Yukon Gold; blight resistant: Sarpo Mira & Sarpo Axona.

Chris explained that in this country we only have late blight which is caused by a fungus like organism and also affects tomatoes and petunias. It first shows as black spots on the leaves, cut off the leaves which can be safely composted and the tubers will continue to grow for a couple of weeks before you need to harvest them. Potatoes are heavy feeders and need watering in dry spells and ideally they should be earthed up three times. Even if you don't have a veg patch you can grow them on a patio in pots or bags.

As gardeners we won't be short of things to do during the weeks or possible months of isolation ahead – we can sow seeds, pot up plug plants and enjoy pottering in our gardens. I'll be planting potatoes at my allotment, spaced 2m apart - that's between people, not spuds!

*Liz Williams, 023 9226 9642,
liz@greensleeves.eclipse.co.uk*

Denmead Afternoon WI

In March we welcomed Bethan Thomas to talk about Organ Donation. Bethan explained that she is part of the Transplant Unit who arrange donations throughout the country. She talked about the various organs which can be donated. The upper age limit for organs is 85 but there is no upper age limit for tissues such as corneas. There is no age limit for recipients with patients in their 90s receiving corneas. Bethan explained about the new Donor Organ Register and that donations were only accepted if a patient died in Intensive Care and were on a ventilator.

The competition for a poem was won by Joan Elliott with Joan Downing second. Angela MacNee won the flower competition and Margaret Kennett was second.

For updates or details of future activities and events please call Joan Downing (023 9226 5458)

Hampshire County Council

Household Waste Recycling Centres

Did you remember to register your vehicles online, ahead of the launch by Hampshire County Council of a new permit system on 1st April 2020? The new system will be controlled by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and will ensure continued free access for Hampshire residents to any of Hampshire's 24 HWRCs to dispose of household waste, while access for non-Hampshire residents will be for a fee of £5 per visit.

Some neighbouring authorities have already implemented a ban on Hampshire residents using HWRCs in their areas. That is not our intention in Hampshire – instead, a charge of £5 per visit for non-Hampshire residents has been introduced

to offset the £500,000 annual cost of dealing with waste from non-Hampshire residents visiting our sites. This will contribute to our drive to manage costs across all services to help bridge the shortfall in our budget due to reductions in our funding from Government, rising costs and inflation, and growing demand for Council services.

Hampshire residents, including those who live in Southampton and Portsmouth, are able to register for free access to any Hampshire HWRC. Hampshire residents who already hold a van or trailer permit do not need to re-register that particular vehicle. You may still register online at <http://www.hants.gov.uk/vehicle-registration-hwrc>. Residents without internet access, please call 0300 555 1389 to register.



School Minibus Programme wins National Award

Hampshire County Council's innovative Spend to Save scheme, which provides schools with minibuses as part of ensuring that eligible children have a safe home to school transport service, has won a Bronze Award against stiff competition from across the UK. The scheme won the Bronze Award in the 'Working Together' category of the Public Sector Transformation Awards, organised by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE).

Judges were impressed with the Spend to Save programme, which provides schools with fully-funded new minibuses for their daily use in exchange for transporting pupils who are eligible for local authority funded home to school transport. The take up rate has increased as a result and a range of options has been developed to suit the needs of different schools and colleges.

With 35 minibuses in the fleet, children in education settings benefit from their school using the minibus for school organised activities, such as school trips and other extra-curricular activities. Having the minibus based on their premises available for use in this way provides much needed flexibility and reduces pressure on the school or college's budget.

Bus Passes

A reminder to all bus users that as from 1st April 2020 there will be no automatic renewing of older people's concessionary bus passes which have not been used in the 12 months prior to their renewal date. However, on request an eligible older person will be issued with a pass. This process will help to reduce unnecessary cost of issuing passes to people who have moved away from the area or distress to relatives where a pass-holder has died. It will also help to reduce the potential for fraud if a pass is delivered to an address where the pass-holder no longer lives. The overall budget for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme is £13.1 million. Visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/publictransport/buspasses> or apply and pay by phone on 0300 555 1376.

A Personal Word

I should like to end this report on a personal note and offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has been so helpful and supportive to me in recent weeks following the unexpected death of my husband. Your kind words, thoughts and prayers continue to help me through some difficult days. Thank you all so much for caring.

Patricia Stallard

*Councillor for Winchester Southern Parishes
Division*

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