

ST MARY'S GAMLINGAY, HATLEY ST GEORGE & ST MARY'S EVERTON



Weekly newsletter 15 January 2021



From Hilary:

For weeks now I have been planning towards a more personal communication to each person in our church family but, between managing things domestic and planning (and re-planning) as well as delivering what we can in the way of worship and ministry (while trying not to fret about what we can't!), I somehow can't quite make it happen.

I want to assure everyone of prayers and love, both retrospectively over Christmas and now in Epiphany, as we live with the pandemic situation and what must be done as good citizens. Do feel free to be in touch by phone or email if I can help in any way. Your prayers and support are greatly valued. After one or two (understandable) miscommunications, I am wondering if anyone reads this? I do hope so, as it is where I put my first energy to do my bit in sharing what is going on. I continue to be hugely grateful to Brenda and Ian for their help in making this happen including being patient with me when I can't make the Tuesday deadline - as this week! The two marathon PCC meetings have, however, provided a great deal of the material here. I hope you find this interesting and helpful. If you think the PCCs are doing a good job - tell them so! If you think they are not, then think how you can help us to do better - perhaps that thought is God's nudge to you to offer your services in this way?

Church Services January/February

Public worship is still permitted but, as said last week, that does not mean it is always advisable. As we watch rising rates of infection around us, we have received strong advice to suspend collective worship in churches. It has become increasingly uncertain that we can guarantee the safety of all involved, so until the current round of vaccinations and public lock-down is progressed the PCCs have concluded, with me and with much reluctance, that we need to return to worshipping on-line only.

The good news is that we are much better placed than on either of the first two occasions, as we have (so far, and eventually!) reliable broadband at Gamlingay meaning that services can be broadcast from inside the church. In addition, we have growing expertise in use of video and audio so, for those who can use it, the experience is improving all the time.

The sadness is that we miss those who can't share in this way and of course we know it's not the same as being present in church.

What we are doing:

Morning Prayer is being said at 8am each day on Zoom, often from one of the churches but also from homes, by those responsible for leading worship in the Benefice (i.e. Hilary, Chris and Sandra). The hope is that just knowing this is happening may feel like some sort of support, but in addition we have now established a pattern:

- * We are inviting anyone who wishes to join us in a passive role, with microphone off (and video if you wish), to listen to this daily office, if that is in any way helpful.
- * We would be pleased to have prayer requests for that service only - though of course we also invite requests for public prayer from anyone who might wish to share.

Please ensure you have permission from anyone you ask us to name.

Sunday 9.30am Eucharist on Zoom, with readers, singing and prayers from our congregations. We may also be managing some more adventurous use of the technology in sharing videos for prayer, worship, reflection, and even entertainment.

Tuesday 10am Bible Study looking back at the Sunday readings and offering an opportunity to explore, with the Sunday's preacher, what the readings mean for us.

Tuesday 4pm Families 'learning together' time. Some of our young people may be preparing for receiving Communion or Confirmation during this time.

Wednesday 9.30am Midweek Communion - a said and slightly shortened version of the communion service, again broadcast on Zoom.

These will all be from Gamlingay Church.

Thursday 8pm Adults 'learning together' time - a safe place to ask whatever questions seem relevant that week, however trivial or unorthodox they might seem, in the light of what the Bible says and who Jesus is.

Church Finances, Gamlingay and the Hatleys

THANK YOU SO MUCH to those who have responded to the 'bridge the gap' appeal for finance to meet the shortfall in this year's Gamlingay with Hatleys Parish Share. At time of writing, **we had paid all but £3,000** of our share for 2020. At our PCC meeting on Monday it was agreed to make up this deficit from reserves, since we wanted to start the next financial year with a clean slate (the deficit would have been carried over).

My fervent prayer is that we can make up this sum from donations before the end of the month, so we really are starting from scratch in accounting in 2021 (rather than behind scratch). To count towards the £3,000, £600 has been donated in total already, including one very generous single donation and several smaller ones. This will be paying back the reserve sum. I am planning to make a further donation myself and others on the PCC have offered to join me. Please think, if you have not already done so, whether you too can contribute in this way.

What is happening with Gamlingay Church Roof?

The big bid, putting roof and other urgent works together with plans to improve the usability of the church and engage with school and community, was rejected by Heritage Fund in November 2019. Since then, the project team has been at work but has been delayed and hampered by Covid and Lockdown rules. Progress to date includes:

- * Appointing a 'new' architect after the church architect moved practices.
- * Drawing up plans to take best advantage of changed funding landscape.
- * Organising a community-wide consultation on priorities for the phasing of the 'big project'.

IF YOU HAVE NOT RETURNED THIS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT, CIRCULATED BEFORE CHRISTMAS WITH THE DRAW TICKETS PLEASE DO SO –

Alec Hissett can supply an electronic copy.

- * Putting in hand urgent work to repair the parapets damaged in the roof theft, and doing remedial work to the temporary roof covering, both of which have been deteriorating. This element of the project is underway and was targeted for completion by Christmas.



To make best use of resources, work on the cracked buttress on the South side of the church was added to the current phase of work, together with some other smaller works such as repair to the hole in the floor of the cross aisle between the North and South doors. All this work was identified as needing urgent attention in the Quinquennial Inspection of 2019. When the buttress was opened, it was discovered that previous 'remedial' work had failed to cure, but had masked, a serious problem where the buttress was falling away from the church due to ground movement. This meant that the church was holding up the buttress, rather than the other way round. This has resulted in more extensive work to tie the two together using up all the contingency in the project budget with the work continuing through into this month.



As far as the lead replacement goes, the plan is to achieve this, together with some other works identified from the consultation and the QI, before the end of 2021. This will be funded by existing donations for the roof fund, including support from the Friends, plus a grant application which will be submitted as soon as the grant streams are announced.

If you would like to help in any way, please get in touch with Hilary, Alec (contacts at the end of this letter), or Chris Smith, all members of the project group.

APCMs

The church Annual Meeting season is about to be upon us. At this, Church Wardens are elected (by the parishioners) and PCCs are elected (by the church membership – i.e., those on the Church Electoral Roll). We are awaiting advice as our meetings had been scheduled as follows: Everton on February 28th and Gamlingay on March 7th. We are aware that these public meetings may not be permitted at the times intended. Further information will follow when we know more, but we do know that the work that goes into them, to prepare reports for 2020, still needs to take place so that we are aware of the tasks ahead of us this year. Please pray for our Treasurer(s) and Secretaries as well as the Wardens and Parish Priest as they work to enable the formal part of church life to function and endeavour to ensure that what we do and say fits with our mission.

Food Bank and Community Fridge

During these difficult times there have been many people offering time and donations to support those less fortunate than themselves. Collections have been going out of the village in order to be processed and returned. There is a huge THANK YOU to the people who have enabled and contributed to that work, from which local people have benefitted. This is a core part of the ministry of the Church. Indeed, Gerry Brunt, as ALM for Social Responsibility, was instrumental in connecting Gamlingay with the St Neots Food Bank run by the Trussell Trust and supported by a number of local churches. We say a huge THANK YOU to Gerry as she puts down the St Neots link. More recently the Baptist Church has been working with a Bedfordshire-based project called Need, which we (St Mary's Gamlingay and the wider village of Gamlingay) have also been supporting. The Need project, being Bedfordshire based, is relevant to Everton as well as other surrounding villages. Talks are underway to bring together provision locally, saving a great deal of wasteful travel and time, by establishing a Need Hub (where donations will be processed) and Community Fridge (where perishable items can be placed for collection and distribution), based in the Alms House Chapel in Gamlingay.

How can you help?

Continue to donate non-perishable items of food and other domestic provision via Hilary, Gerry, the Co-Op or GBC. There will be a few weeks before the full process is up and running but, in the meantime, all donations will go to projects supporting those in need, be that the Trussell Trust, Need or Cambridge-based homeless projects.

Offer to help collect, process and deliver donations - there will be recruitment and training put in place to ensure best matching of volunteer time and skills to the tasks required.

Make a financial contribution to support this work - there will be the ongoing cost of premises and some modest start-up costs to make the chapel a suitable base. Hilary or Adrian will be pleased to receive donations which will become the base of the funding for the local hub.

Hilary

A reminder about giving donations to the church especially needed at this time as detailed above by Hilary.

Our preferred method of receiving funds is directly into the PCC bank account. The details are:

Barclays Bank
Sort code: 20-74-81
Account no: 30122807
Account name: Gamlingay with Hatleys PCC

If you feel able, please put '2020 help' in the reference box of the payment. If you are unable to pay online, cash and cheques are still very welcome. Either put through Hilary's door or Ian's (16 Brockwood Close).

THANK YOU.

JIGSAWS ON-LINE

If you enjoyed completing the on-line jigsaw puzzles of the Hatley churches here is another – this time of Gamlingay church. It is fun to do and took me about half an hour.

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=3e219add6572>



If you haven't tried yet I can highly recommend it as an enjoyable way of occupying a bit of lockdown time! When you open up the link you will be presented with a screen showing a scattered pile of pieces. The picture you are aiming to complete can be viewed at any time by clicking on the symbol in the bottom left-hand corner. If you are using an iPad, pieces can be moved with your finger; on a desk-top computer (easier) you click and drag with the mouse. To begin with you think there are not enough pieces but as you move them around others are revealed underneath. There is a very satisfying click when you place a piece correctly!

Mervyn Lack has taken over the baton of puzzle production from Peter Mann and has kindly offered to keep sending links from time to time. Next week I am hoping we can give you one for a picture of Everton church.

It would be good to get some feedback on these so do let me know if you are enjoying them.

Brenda Elcome

2020 LOCKDOWN QUIZ ANSWERS

How many did you get without consulting Google?

1. What was the name of the powerful storm which battered the country in February? **Ciara**
2. Whose statue was torn down and thrown into Bristol Harbour? **Edward Colston**
3. What day and time were "Claps for the NHS"? **Thursday, 8 pm**
4. In December which anniversary was celebrated by Coronation Street? **60th**
5. Which comedian won 2020's Strictly Come Dancing? **Bill Bailey**
6. In April Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds had a baby. What did they call him? **Wilfred Lawrie Nicholas Johnson**
7. In February, a new £20 note was issued featuring whose face? **The artist J M W Turner**
8. What is the name of the latest James Bond film now to be released this year? **No Time to Die**
9. Where did Dominic Cummings drive to in order to test his eyesight? **Barnard Castle**
10. What is the name of Joe Biden's wife? **Dr. Jill Biden**
11. Which hospital treated Boris Johnson for Covid? **St. Thomas' Hospital**
12. What role has Dawn French re-visited for a series of Christmas specials? **The Vicar of Dibley/Geraldine Grainger**

A reminder of some key contact details:

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