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St Mary's Northchurch



February 2021 Church enquiries to: Revd Jonathan Gordon 01442 871547 revjagordon@googlemail.com



The gifts of the Holy Spirit Patience and perseverance

had another zoom meeting recently and was looking at the small squares with everyone's faces and switching between mute and unmute as required. At the end we all waved, pressed leave meeting, and then the screen went back to the homepage and I returned to the quiet of the study. This type of interaction has become the norm and I'm sure many of us have learnt new technological skills, spoken whilst muted and wondered who you might end up with in a breakout room. It has certainly been good for the carbon footprint, as a result of zoom, I have avoided quite a few hours in the car or train travelling to meetings. Alongside social media it has become the norm for how we worship in churches and just before Christmas the decision was taken, for the time being, to suspend Sunday services and go back to online worship.

Inevitably, the pandemic has meant that we have spent more time on our own or with those with whom we live. Everyone will have different experiences. If you like having people around you then being in semi -isolation is going to feel very arid and dry. It can also be hard when left with too much time on your own, to avoid rethinking the past, and possibly struggling with past memories or even mistakes. Fortunately, there has been a big focus on mental health in the pandemic, alongside support when you feel lonely. I think that most people would say the most frustrating thing is not being able to hug, call round for a coffee and a chat, and we long for the day when we can come together without fear of spreading infection.

I have been thinking in the midst of all this of spiritual advantages of spending time on your own. There was a time when a life of isolation was seen as a way of coming closer to God. The first Christian monk was St Antony who lived alone in the rocky caves close to the Nile in Egypt for over 30 years nearly 1800 years ago. Inspiration was provided by the stories of Jesus going out into the wilderness to be tempted. We are also told that Jesus tried periodically to escape the crowds and headed into the mountain regions to pray and be alone. The example of St Antony seems a bit extreme. Yet, the first benefit of staying at home and following the guidance is that we can fulfill one of Jesus teachings to "do something for others and treat others as you would like to be treated." The best thing we can do for others is to protect them. Loving our neighbour in a pandemic is best shown by social distance. The reports from the frontline in hospitals makes you realize that anything that can ease the burden on the individuals in the health service is worthwhile.

I think that more time on your own opens up more space. It can be filled with things that pass the time, or it may provide an opportunity to read something you have always wanted to read, and even start a journal. Quite a few people have said that the lockdown has allowed them to appreciate nature and also the importance and significance of people around them. Time and life are precious and it is good to give thanks for what is good.

I know there are many challenges of lockdown. Trying to juggle work and home schooling, separation from people we care about and longing for things to get back to normal. We most likely have days when we feel fed up and others when we take stock and push through to face whatever is coming. I was watching the news earlier and if dealing with flooding is added to the mix you wonder how people will get through. But, people do, though generosity, kindness and courage.

In a few minutes I have another zoom meeting and it will be good to see the different faces and catch up on how they are. Yet, I am praying for the time when we will be able to meet again together, shake hands and hug. In the meantime, we can pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that often can be neglected, namely patience and perseverance. We are going to need them over the coming weeks.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

Build a strong foundation

Thank you for all the generous donations given to St Mary's over the past few months, they have been very much appreciated by those who use it on a regular basis.

During the run up to Christmas, both NBC and St Mary's gave hampers to many families across Northchurch, helping them celebrate this festive time as we all like to. There were also volunteers who delivered a box of ingredients for Christmas dinner. It has shown how kind people have been, they are truly a light that shines in this darkness we have faced.

Now that we are one hour lighter in our day since the shortest day back in December, it gives us hope through these winter days. Even the bulbs have shown themselves in our gardens giving us new life once more as we look forward to the spring months and Easter time.

One of the events that happens on the first Friday in March [5th this year] is, World Day of Prayer. We are inspired to pray for a different country every year. This year we will be thinking of the south pacific island of Vanuatu. WDP in Vanuatu was introduced by Canadian missionaries and the first service is thought to have been held in 1946 in a Presbyterian church at Port Vila. Through writing the 2021 service, representatives from the islands have further developed this ecumenical relationship.

The Vanuatu people's prayer is that the voice of Vanuatu women will be heard across the world and that, in Vanuatu, health and educational opportunities will improve.

They thank God for triumphs in key moments in their history and proudly declare their nation is built on the Rock of Ages, Christ the King.



The Bible passage used within the service is about the house built on the sand and the rock. When we build on the rock which is Jesus Christ, we know that we are on a strong foundation that will stand the tests of life and remain solidly secure.

We need to build our homes, our nations and the world on the words of Jesus who reminded us about the golden rule – 'in everything do to others as you would have done to you'.



This fits so well with all we are doing here in Northchurch as well as these people of Vanuatu. As we encourage and help those in need, we become leaders, leading in life, and standing up for those who don't have a voice in society, but we can build them up to have a voice and a more peaceful world to live the way God intended for each one of us.

'With God all things are possible to them who believe'...Matthew 19:26

This year will be a little different as we can't go to a service in church, so we will be sending a link out for the service to be seen on the Facebook pages of every church in Berkhamsted and surrounding villages. Each church will have the service booklet available if you would like to follow it and join in.

God bless until next time, Peggy

PARISH PANTRY @ St Mary's



Food needs for February

The following items are in short supply as we meet the needs of our community through February. Can you help, please?

NON-FOOD

Bleach Surface Cleaner Antibacterial cleaner/wipes Washing up liquid Disinfectant Toilet Rolls Soap powder/pods Toothpaste Shampoo Toothbrushes

FOOD

UHT Milk Tuna fish Cereals Tinned meats/pies Tinned vegetables Tinned fruit Tinned/packet soup Tinned custard Stock pots Tinned Rice Pudding Coffee Pasta sauces

The donation box can be found on the table just inside the side door of the church.

The Coronavirus has changed our country and our church in ways we could have never anticipated.

The Church of England, being present in every community, is well placed to lead and co-ordinate efforts to help those who find themselves in need.

2021 will be a time of adaptation and innovation for the church and we all need to be part of it.

Who Would Live in a House Like This? Woodcock Hill – Part 1

Located close to the top of Durrants Lane on the southern side of the Bulborne valley, the estate where the house known as 'Woodcock Hill' now stands was first mentioned in a survey of 1607. At that time, the area was called Woodcroft Hill, but by 1702 its name had changed to the one it is known by today. In 1840, the estate was purchased by a Mr J Field for £2,775 (circa £137,500 in today's terms). The main house on the site comprised an entrance hall, drawing room, library and dining room, servant's hall, kitchen and scullery, three large bedrooms and a dressing room and accommodation for male and female servants. Separate to the house stood a coach house, stabling, farm buildings and an orchard, all set in twenty-five acres of land. Finally, the estate came with the added bonus of a reserved pew in St Mary's church.

Mr Field was not to live at Woodcock Hill for long as by 1848 he had sold the estate to 44-year-old Frank John Moore, a wealthy local magistrate. Frank Moore (or 'Franky Moore', otherwise known as 'The Squire', as Bert Hosier records the local people calling him in his excellent book, *Hedgehog's Northchurch*), totally rebuilt the house and extended the existing kitchen garden and grounds. Over the course of the next few years the estate was expanded to some 245 acres and now ran down the entire side of the valley from Shootersway to the High Street between Durrants Lane and Bell Lane, and included the watercress beds on the river Bulborne, and Box Cottage (now known as Northchurch Place). The 1861 census records Frank Moore employing four servants at his home. In 1872 new lodges were built at either end of the what is now Durrants Lane, then a private road onto the estate.

During his time as the owner of Woodcock Hill, Frank Moore played a key part in the local community, being the Chairman of the Berkhamsted Board of Guardians, which oversaw the running of the local Workhouse, the Chairman and Treasurer of Berkhamsted School and a major benefactor to St Mary's church. In 1854 he presented the church with a new set of silverware for use during Holy Communion and later financed major repairs to the leaking church roof. One story recorded in Bert Hosier's book, is that of 'The Squire' sitting in a pew directly under a leaking part of the church roof during a rain storm with his umbrella up to deflect the water whilst listening to the sermon.

'The Squire' died in 1885, aged 82 and left an estate valued at £108,789, over £7 million in today's terms. Woodcock Hill was up for sale again.

To be continued ...

Richard North



It's a great time to learn

I am impressed by what our school has been doing to support home schooling. Well done them for all sorts of creative ideas! Spare a thought, too, for mums and dads. Watching children learn and encouraging them to keep trying is something that we are used to delegating to teachers. After all, they know so much more about it. And what about the pupils, who are missing their chums and having to cope with new learning environments.



Who is doing the learning in this home schooling business? It seems to me that everyone is. Not so many teachers followed courses on "Conducting on-line classes" at teaching college! The way they are learning so is not so different from the children. First, the situation demands it - they have no choice. Second, they are drawing on the know-how of others. Distance learning may be new to the classroom, but it is not new to the world. St Paul knew a thing or two about it, two thousand years ago! Third, they are learning by doing. "I can't do it – yet" applies to teachers as well as pupils.



Mums and dads are learning new skills, too. Creating learning time at home is challenging, but adults know that, if you are to get anything done, you have to set aside time to do it. Hard-pressed mums and dads, who are trying to manage the children while doing their own work at home, need to find discipline and structure if they are to fit it all in. If mums and dads learn to manage, the children will learn from their example.

Children are just like all the rest: they are doing home learning because they have to; they are watching what is going on around them; and they are learning by doing. In the process, they are learning new ways of learning.

When things "get back to normal", we will have a set of new skills available to use later. Just like all the grandparents who never thought they could learn to use Zoom and FaceTime and WhatsApp. Above all, we will all have practised "learning to learn".

A pandemic is not a good thing, but some good things can come out of it. Life is a process of learning, from the cradle to the grave. A lot of that learning comes in moments of crisis. So well done teachers, parents and pupils; and the rest of us too. Don't give up. Keep learning new ways to learn.

David White



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St Mary's Church runs one of the Northchurch Community Pantry venues and is open daily for donations

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Appledown Rescue Dog of the Month

Lovely lass Brina finds herself in rescue at the ripe old age of 12. She is a compact little Staffy, full of life and very affectionate. She enjoys her walks, is house-trained and travels well in a car. We would love to find this adorable girl a foster home where she will be loved and cherished for the rest of her days.

Brina would suit an older household where she would be the only pet. Appledown will meet any medical bills, so she needs foster folk who can take her to our vets in Leighton Buzzard. If you can offer Brina love and security please complete an adoption form from our website, or for more info please e-mail the kennels.

Viewings are now by appointment only.

For adoption information and application form visit our website www.appledownrescue.co.uk

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Plans to build over 200 houses in Northchurch Public consultation on the Local Plan

Dacorum Borough Council are consulting on the Local Plan for housebuilding in Berkhamsted and Northchurch.

The consultation is open until the end of February.

Follow this link to find out what is being planned:

https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/.../plan.../new-singlelocal-plan

You may have received a brochure from Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) through your letterbox giving details about the Local Plan.

In Northchurch, DBC are proposing to build 200 houses on the Wishing Tree Field. Most people will know this as the hillside between Darrs Lane and Bell Lane in Northchurch. For DBC, this is BK06, which they are calling West Berkhamsted.

DBC also plan to build 60 houses on Lock Field, which is the area of land above the canal bridge, opposite Southbank Road and the upper graveyard. This is BK07 in their plans.

Please talk to your local friends and neighbours about this as it is very important that everyone gets the chance to view, understand and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, comment on DBC's proposals. There are also huge areas of Berkhamsted's Green Belt land that are in the proposal and which could all end up being built on.

While it is undeniable that more houses are needed, they have to be the right sort of housing and in the right places so that our countryside is not spoiled. Specifically, we need more social housing on brownfield sites. It is important to prevent developer led housing estates from sprawling all over our countryside, ruining it for generations to come.



Hello from **everyone at St Mary's Northchurch and we do hope that everyone is safe and well.** Please do remember that we are here to help and support our community. If you or anyone you know is experiencing difficulties during this time, please do get in touch. St Mary's Church runs one of the Northchurch Community Pantry venues and is open daily for donations or if you need help.

- Our Sunday morning service is at 10am every Sunday morning, and on Facebook afterwards.
- Every evening at 10pm, we have a short Night Prayer (Compline) service on Facebook.
- Both services are subtitled. Both will be available to watch afterwards.

Look at our Facebook page <u>https://www.facebook.com/stmarynorthchurch</u> for these services and for more information.

CAP Money Course

Local residents are being given yet another chance to get control of their finances with CAP Money offering to run another popular free course in the first half of 2021 if there is sufficient demand for it.

The courses are run to empower people to fight poverty *before* it hits. Locally all of the churches in Berkhamsted support the work that we do in running the courses and we also work very closely with the CAP Debt Centre based at Liberty Tea Rooms in Hemel Hempstead.

The CAP Money course is run over three sessions and is aimed at helping the local community to best handle their finances. Its aim is to debt-proof people's finances, giving people tools to ensure that they get their bills paid as a priority, save for the future and know what their disposable income actually is.

Courses are useful for newly retired people, soon-to-be students, mums dealing with mounting bills, families saving for a wedding and everyone in between. The CAP Money course isn't just for people with debts. It's for everyone. Learning how to set a budget and stick to it helps to debt-proof people in the long term.

If you are interested in attending the course or would like to know more then telephone Mike Wallis on 07891 760244 or email him on michaelawallis@yahoo.co.uk.

Contacts for the Newsletter: Currently we are only able to publish online.

Editorial by email to the Editor, Jill Hipson **Jill.hipson@live.co.uk**. Copy date is 25th of each month.

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A candle prayer

God. Wherever vou are. *I have no words to pray.* I am in the darkness. Aching, Lost. In pain.

As I light my candle, I reach out to you, For my family and friends, For the world around me, For myself. *Give me strength To face another day. Shine your light into my* dark places And help me to know I am not alone.

Amen

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