



NEXUS

April - May 2020

Christ in Nether Edge & Us



St. Andrew's Psalter Lane Church
An Anglican Methodist Partnership

www.standrewpsalterlane.org.uk

Correspondence should be addressed to the editor, see inside.

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(A District Group which meets at Ringinglow)			

Welcome

This edition of Nexus comes at a uniquely strange time in the life of us as individuals, families and communities. Items relating specifically to events that can no longer take place have been removed.

Reference to regular groups remain, at least in part because some readers on the internet may wish to know what our normal patterns of activity are and will, we hope, continue to be after the virus has passed. We have retained the church diary and service plans in the hope (although it seems unlikely) that some part of our calendar may be restored. This is a challenging time for all of us; the virus that is currently rampaging across continents is no

respector of people or place and on behalf of everyone at St Andrews, we wish you all the best of health and of the care you may need should you be affected. We are trying to meet as many needs as we can in the community. Meanwhile we hope that this edition will give you a little food for thought.

The issue was originally planned to have something of an eco-theme, bearing in mind that the edition covers not only our celebration of Easter but also our city's environment weeks – these will not now be taking place. Since we are currently unable to visit the beauties of Italian art in person, the cover of this edition is a painting of St Francis of Assisi found in Santa Croce, Florence. The artist was Pala Bardi and he surrounded the painting with scenes of biblical life. I was fortunate enough to visit Santa Croce just before the situation in Italy deteriorated and, however severe the constraints we currently face, we must spare thoughts and prayers for those in both Italy and Spain whose quarantine restrictions are extremely severe, while both countries face a terrible loss of life. I would like to welcome a number of new contributors to Nexus, including some recent members of our congregation. It is our intention that whatever the situation, you can look forward to the next edition of Nexus in late May.

Please not that the Church Office is closed for the foreseeable future but will re-open as soon as is possible. Contact with the minister should be by phone.

Contributions to Nexus are always welcome and should be sent to me at anne.hollows@gmail.com
Contributions for the June- July edition should reach me not later than 19th May. Meanwhile please keep in touch through the church web page : www.standrewspalterlane.org.uk and Facebook page SAPLC Facebook Group

Members may be interested to note that the Methodist Conference will not be taking place this

year and the discussions on God in Love Unites Us will be deferred until next year.

Anne Hollows

Letter from Gareth

Dear friends,

The two months covered by this edition of Nexus take us from the last part of Lent, including Holy Week, through the whole of the Easter season to Pentecost Sunday on May 31st . I had been intending to dwell in my letter on this latter period, and to reflect on the meaning of resurrection. In fact, I had already sent Anne what I thought was the final draft of the letter, when the new advice from the Government in relation to coronavirus came out on 16th March, with its far-reaching implications for individuals and communities, and indeed faith groups and places of worship.

This period in the church's year will feel very different for us this time. Instead of a sense of moving from the waiting of Lent, with its emphasis on the sufferings of Christ, into the season of Easter with its joyful theme of new life, we may well feel that we are instead experiencing a prolonged Lent. Lent is, for some people, a time of voluntary self-deprivation in certain areas of their lives, in part as a form of solidarity with those who experience deprivation through force of circumstances.

The coming weeks and months will be a time of deprivation for all of us in a number of ways. For all those who belong to faith communities, there will not be the regular worship, meetings and social activities that form part of those communities' patterns. And most of us will be deprived of much of the regular human contact on which we usually depend. In wider society, as is so often the case, many of the people most deeply affected will be those who are already vulnerable and disempowered.

It will be especially important this year to remind ourselves of the meaning and resources of Lent. The Lenten narrative is that Christ enters fully into our human experience, which includes sharing in our suffering, poverty, anxiety and isolation. Some of Jesus' words in the Gospels – "Take this cup away from me...I thirst...Why have you forsaken me?" - may be worth dwelling on as a reminder of the divine sympathy embodied in Christ. But at the same time, we will need to remember in the coming weeks that we are indeed in the Easter season, even though we won't have the public worship to remind us of the fact. This is the season of the one who says in John's Gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life." Resurrection isn't just something that happens to Jesus following his death on the cross: it is rooted in his very being. And because for St John, Jesus is the human face of God, the eternal "I am", resurrection is rooted in the very being of God.

I used to own a book by the Anglican priest Harry Williams entitled True Resurrection. Williams interprets resurrection as an experience we can have in this world and in our own lives. "All that separates and injures and destroys," he writes, "has been overcome by what unites and heals and creates. Death has been swallowed up by life..." Just as we experience the sufferings of life, experiences into which Christ himself has entered, so in turn we can know the power of divine renewal and restoration, thereby sharing in the power of Christ's resurrection.

In the weeks ahead, we may find ourselves exploring what this can mean for us in these difficult times. May the experience of God who gives and renews life and hope be ours, as individuals and communities, during these days and always.

Peace and love,
Gareth



CONTEMPLATION

This meditation was read at the end of the Ash Wednesday service at St Oswald's and St Peter's. At first I found I had to read it several times to get the hang of it - and I'm still reading it.

Marilyn

TAKING ON AND LETTING GO

Love what love can do.
Be all that you can be.
God is calling you.
This is not the past.
Do not live there.
Let the voices go.
Do not cling to what is gone.
This is not the future.
You are not there yet.
Let the worries be.

Do not live where you are not.
This is here and now.
This is all you have.
Do not miss where you are.
For it will not stay for past or future to replay.
Live the life that you are in.
You cannot live where you have been.
You cannot be where you are not.
Be in the time you are in.
Love what you can do.
Be all that you can be.
No one can live for you,
Or be what you can be.
Live and love what love can do.
The time is now.
The place is here.
Love and live what you can do.
God is calling you.

Rebeka Maples

EASTER BLESSING

Risen Lord,
give us a heart for the simple things:
love, laughter, bread and wine and dreams.
Give us a green growing hope,
and make of us a people
whose song is alleluia,
whose name is love, whose sign is peace.

da Noust

**Talking Point: How much do you know
about refugees?**

Instead of the usual talking point, here is a quiz that provides more information about refugees and asylum seekers. Thanks to the Refugee Council for compiling this information

1. How many people applied for asylum in the UK in the past year?

- a) 35, 566
- b) 65, 256
- c) 12, 788

2. Of these applications, what percentage were granted protection?

- a) 52%
- b) 12%
- c) 72%

3. Which country do most refugees in the UK originate from?

- a) Syria
- b) Afghanistan
- c) Iran

4. How many people waited more than 6 months for an initial decision on their claim from the Home Office?

- a) 17, 459
- b) 22, 549
- c) 8, 114

5. While they await a decision, are people seeking asylum allowed to work?

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) No, except in limited circumstances

6. These are real reasons given by the Home Office for rejecting an asylum claim – TRUE or FALSE?

- a) Because you went on holiday.
- b) Because Christianity is not a religion of peace.
- c) Because of Brexit.

1. The answer is a.

There were **35,566** asylum applications made in the UK in the last 12 months, a **21%** increase on the previous year. The number of asylum applications equates to a tiny fraction of non-EEA nationals arriving in the UK.

2. The answer is a.

52% of initial decisions made in the year to December 2019 have been grants of protection, meaning they have been awarded refugee status or humanitarian protection. This is a **33%** increase from this time last year.

We welcome the fact that over the last 12 months, **20,703** people were granted protection in the UK through the asylum system or resettlement programmes, the highest number in a single year since 2003. Of these, **37%** were children.

The quality of decision making is often poor, with many refugees having to rely on the courts to award protection following an appeal of the Government's initial decision. The appeals process can be complex and lengthy, with people seeking asylum having to wait months for their appeals to be heard.

3. The answer is c.

In the year ending December 2019, the top five nationalities of people seeking asylum were **Iran, Albania, Iraq, Pakistan** and **Eritrea**.

4. The answer is b.

Thousands of people have to wait years for a final decision on their claim, meaning they are left in limbo and unable to plan for their futures.

The total backlog in cases pending an initial decision increased from 35,043 at the end of September 2019 to 40,018 at the end of December 2019. Of these, **22,549** had been waiting for more than 6 months.

Each one of these cases represents a person anxiously awaiting news of their fate.

5. The answer is c.

People seeking asylum are effectively banned from working and are provided with just over £5 per day from the Government to cover the costs of their basic necessities.

Could you live on just £5 per day?

The Home Office may grant permission to work to asylum seekers whose claim has been outstanding for more than 12 months through no fault of their own. Those who are allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the shortage occupation list, which includes ballet dancer and geophysicist.

6. The answer is, incredibly, all of the above!

Let's do 'All We Can'

Following the challenge from Tim Baker and his message from All We Can, our partnership with the people of Cherkos in Ethiopia should really take off. Several events have already been planned – a coffee morning in Shirley house with the Knit and Knatter group; a garden party on a summer afternoon, and a special Soup and Puddings lunch in church. Please look out for these dates. But don't wait for someone else to organise an event- have you a talent? Sewing, baking, photography.....?

Can you put it to use on behalf of our friends in Cherkos? Help them to stabilise their food supply, educate their children and access healthcare. Share in challenging climate change in Sheffield and Cherkos P.S. if you feel you cannot organise an event, please consider taking on a 'growing commitment' via Direct Debit for a limited period of time. A Big Thank You, Janet and Judith

Interfaith News

News from Shirley House Interfaith Centre

Two events that will have happened between my writing this and you reading it are led by Chris Hewer. He has a background in Christian theology and is an expert on Islam. He is well-respected by



members of both faiths and leads sessions for both to learn about each other. On March 16th he led a study day at Millhouses Methodist Church on 'Understanding Islam: First Steps' for non-Muslims (mainly Christians). This was followed in the evening by a talk arranged by the (Turkish, Islamic) Dialogue Society at Shirley House, on 'Life After Death- Islamic Perspectives'. In addition to hearing from Chris, it is interesting to hear from Muslims present what they think of his interpretations; they do not necessarily agree with each other any more than Christians do.

Much of our **Spring programme is now unlikely to take place but details of events in late May and early June are included in case they can go ahead. :**

- **Wednesday 27th May: Sheffield Interfaith Food & Friendship** dinner
6.00-8.00 pm
- **Wednesday 10th June, 7.30 pm: Kenneth, to talk about his 'Faith Journey as a Nigerian Jew'.** Caroline Cripps

Theology Everywhere: Don't worry, be happy

Stephen Wigley

A couple of months ago I was attending a funeral for a much loved colleague. Right at the end of the committal service and just as we were preparing to leave, the music came on – and to our surprise it was Bobby McFerrin singing 'Don't worry – be happy', a song guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone's face.

I was reminded of this when a couple of weeks ago, I attended a service at our local Anglican church. The Gospel reading was Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount recounting Jesus' invitation to consider the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. We were being encouraged to take seriously concerns about God's creation and our environment and then, right at the end of the reading, heard Jesus' surprising summary; 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.'

It certainly made me think – because worrying about the future, especially the future of our planet in the context of carbon emissions

and climate change, is precisely what we are being challenged to do. And not just to worry, but to do something about it; whether it's to re-examine our lifestyles, what we consume and how we travel, or where, as individuals or institutions, we place our money and investments. Worrying about tomorrow so that we can make critical choices today is just what we are being challenged to do.

So what is it that Jesus means when he says, 'Don't worry about tomorrow'? He speaks about the pressures people face in terms of what to eat, to drink or to wear. Are these more about wider societal pressures and expectations rather than concerns about the basic matters of subsistence? Yet Jesus also asks whether any of us can by worrying add an hour to our span of life; and we know that very basic decisions about diet and exercise can make a big difference in terms of life quality and expectancy.

The 20th century American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr was an advocate of 'Christian realism', an approach wary of abstract, aspirational claims which sought to emphasise instead what was practical and achievable, as in his famous prayer; *'God give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and wisdom to distinguish one from the other.'*

Is that what is going on here? Is Jesus suggesting simply that we should stop fretting about the things we cannot change and make the most of what we have and can do something about? Or is he reminding us of those things which should have stronger claims on our time and attention, in terms of striving first 'for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'.

This can give the impression of our wanting both to have our cake and eat it. But in the meantime, climate scientists remind us that we can't; that the difficult choices needed are not just ones required of other people, whether governments, multinationals and financial institutions; that they equally involve us in the decisions we make about our lifestyles and consumption, food, clothes, cars – and yes, holidays too.

Not worrying, it seems to me, is not seeking to be let off the hook or absolved from the need to make challenging choices, but it is about being clear-sighted and realistic. It's not just a matter of symbolic

gestures to focus attention, however significant these can appear; it's also about building a consensus for making those practical decisions which involve the most people and can make the biggest difference. It's also about that fundamental optimism which Jesus shares in the Sermon on the Mount and which goes to the heart of our faith; that in the end it's the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness which counts. That's why I remain encouraged by the tone and title of the Methodist Conference statement on climate change, 'Hope in God's Future'. It's not that we shouldn't be actively concerned – but it's more than our worrying which will make the difference. It's 'Don't worry, be happy – and share in God's care for creation'.

Rev Dr Stephen Wigley is Chair of the Wales Synod of the Methodist Church, where he has served for nearly 10 years. Before that he spent 18 years in circuits across Wales including time as a University and Prison Chaplain as well as superintendent. He has an interest in systematic and historical theology and written books on Karl Barth and von Balthasar. Recently he has taken on chairing JACEI, the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment. He is married to Canon Jenny Wigley, Rector of Radyr, and they have 2 grown up children.

Letter from Sofia: 12.3.2020

Coming to Sofia, I had certain ideas in mind of what life would be like. Many of these ideas never came into bloom (unlike the beautiful flowers next to me on my balcony as I write this). I hoped to fill my time with volunteer work and language learning, surrounded by newfound friends (who would obviously all speak Bulgarian), we would go travelling and I would leave in June feeling like a "true" Bulgarian. This isn't exactly how things have played out so far but it is still eye opening and fulfilling in various other ways.

I volunteer with two organisations doing very different things. I help out in the office with an NGO called Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria; their work is around housing rights within Bulgaria, particularly for deprived families and the Roma community. Although sometimes this is the easier of my volunteer jobs, it feels far less (instantly) rewarding. Every Monday morning I volunteer in a refugee detention centre in an area called Busmantsi (Бусманци) teaching English, through an NGO called Caritas (каритас). Understandably this can get quite intense, yet is always rewarding and I believe it is important.

The ability to give to others is a gift and a privilege, and I encourage everyone to if they can!

This work does not completely fill my time though, a fact that, at first, I wasn't happy with. I had ample free time and no way to fill it.

However, I've come to greatly appreciate the free time. I have grown to feel comfortable in my own company, and am busy planning many solo travels around East Europe.

Living in a flat with 6 other people who are all students with their own circles of friends was a bizarre experience at first. My flat is an incredible medley of different nationalities, with French, Spanish, Canadian, Slovakian and British all under one roof. Although this wasn't the Bulgarian culture and language I hoped to submerge myself in, I have learned a lot about different perspectives of Sofia and life here in relation to other European countries. I have loved every minute of bonding with these people and am oddly ecstatic to say my closest friends are from Spain and Slovakia! Not one of my friends is Bulgarian (language learning has been taken into my own hands)!

Travelling so far has consisted of a trip to Istanbul for a weekend with a flat mate and was quite possibly the most interesting and genuine trip I have ever been on. The beautiful mosques dotted every corner of the never-ending city, and the perfect combination of Asian and European cultures was incredible. With more trips planned, including a rather spontaneous trip to Plovdiv (ПЛОВДИВ) tomorrow, I am excited for future prospects.

I can't help but reflect back on a conversation with a flatmate about the "pros and cons" of Sofia. The Cons list was significantly longer; we both agreed that the politics and treatment of tourists needed some minor/major alterations, we both agreed that it seems hard to "gel" with the people here, and we both agreed that signs of the country's communist past were clear as day in the attitudes and cultural norms. The Pros list was shorter. The international young community (which is huge) was brilliant; living costs are cheaper (by Euro/GBP standards), and travel is cheap and easy, with endless stunning places nearby (mountains, lakes, forests). However, we also agreed that although there appear to be fewer Pros, their value (particularly regarding travel and location) is higher. Sat here on my balcony on a glorious sunny day, I can say confidently that I am

thoroughly enjoying my life in Sofia. It has its Pros and Cons, but it is rewarding in so many ways.

A huge hello to everyone at St Andrews! I hope everyone is happy and healthy, especially amidst the worry of Coronavirus. I can't wait to be back in June and tell you all about my time here and hear all about everyone's own exciting news. I'll continue to keep you updated on my adventure and travels.

Lots of Love from Sofia, Sabrina xx

Ed: since writing this, Sabrina has had to return home because of the virus situation in Bulgaria. Flights were imminently suspended and with scarcely any shops open, life was difficult. She hopes to return as soon as possible.

Eco Church

Flushed Away

Every year, the Eco Group organises an event to be held during Sheffield's Environment Weeks in May – you may remember last year's Greener Summer Holidays event, or the Carbon Footprint event the year before, when you could come and find out your own impact on the climate.

This year, our event is focussing on something a bit more down-to-earth: TOILETS!

Did you know that 2 BILLION people don't have somewhere clean or safe to go to the loo? We want to raise awareness – and plenty of cash! – for Toilet Twinning, which is a charity that aims to 'flush away poverty, one toilet at a time'. By donating £60 to twin your toilet, you help fund a project in a poor community that will enable families to build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives. When you twin, they'll send you a certificate to hang in your loo – showing a photograph of your overseas toilet twin and GPS coordinates so you can look up your twin's location on Google Maps. You've probably read in the weekly Notice sheet that we have already twinned 8 of our many toilets as a way of celebrating Patricia Simeon's Leave

to Remain, with her approval. We hope that after this event, we'll have raised enough to twin the rest!

So come and join us in Shirley House on Wednesday 27th May, from 2.00 – 4.00 pm, to find out more about Toilet Twinning. There'll be toilet-themed games, pee and poo facts galore, free refreshments and delicious cakes to buy at the Soggy Bottoms Cake Stall – with your help, we can fight poverty, disease and contamination in the world's poorest countries, and be Flushed with Success!

Clare Loughridge

Loos in the News

The coronavirus pandemic has increased awareness of the lack of public toilets in the UK. We are being instructed to be fastidious in our personal hygiene, but are dependent on pubs, cafes and department stores for access to lavatories and washbasins. When shopping in the city centre I have been known to call in at Central URC's Norfolk Room more for their loo than their (good) coffee. Significant numbers of older people find that they need to make frequent visits to the loo, and learn to plan outings with this in mind. In some cases, it is such a dominant concern that they hardly dare leave their own home. Perhaps we ought to allow a comfort break during Sunday worship: it can feel awkward or embarrassing to make a necessary hasty exit and a furtive re-entry.

Do you know the best toilet tale in the Bible? Have a read of I Samuel Chapter 24.

At St. Andrew's Psalter Lane, we have twinned some of our toilets with rather more basic ones in Sierra Leone. The lack of easily accessible toilet facilities is the single most important reason why the school attendance of teenage girls in rural parts of Africa is so spasmodic. Taboos attaching to menstruation are another factor. Let's not underestimate what adequate school loos can achieve : girls who have had a good primary and secondary education will bear fewer and healthier children and contribute to the leadership of their

community. It's a key way to combat climate change. So – let's not underestimate what toilets can achieve. Here is a poem penned by ANON in Comrie, Perthshire some years ago.....

AN ODE TO OUR POOR WEE CRAPPER

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vale and Comrie,
When all at once I saw a crowd
All standing outside their boarded-up cludgie.
Beside the brook? Under the tree?
Where the hell do they go for a pee?

PKDC must be the skinter
They've closed the bogs
For the whole damned winter!

Where do you go
If you want a poo?
They've gone and nailed
Up the loo.

Then again you can do as the birds
Fly under the bridge and leave your turds
But woe betide if you leave a big doofer
You'll definitely need your pooper-scooper.

Beside the brook, or under the tree,
But definitely not in the cemetery!
The poor old stiffs lying in their stalls
Don't want to look up and see your.... Bottom!

Thanks for reading
This load of drivel.
I'm off under the bridge

For a good long piddle!

So why, oh why
Does PKDC
Have to lock our lavatory?
The answer to this no-one knows...
Next time round
I'll write this in prose.....

This Ode was pinned on the Town noticeboard adjoining the public conveniences, which were still boarded up in early April when we spent a week in Comrie. PKDC is the Perth and Kinross District Council. Comrie is also renowned as the earthquake capital of Britain – but that's another story.

Jenny Carpenter

Gardening Notes

Sometimes amazing things are easy to see. The tree outside our house has branches covered in many types of lichen. This is due in part to the wet weather we have had but also the cleaner air.

Nothing destroys the filigree of finely branched lichen quicker than sulphurous smoke. These beautiful structures are capturing carbon from the air; I could not count the number of different shades of green they contain. They are easy to see because the tree they are on is dying and the bark they grew on is falling off the branches. So they land on the grass verges. On other occasions you need to know just what it is, to know you have seen it. Had you blinked you would have missed it. I was driving from Buxton to Leek. There was a fierce South Westerly gale. I was driving fast. Diving across the road, into the wind. Just missing the car, there was a ghostly pale grey bird shape there for a split second. Going that fast and that colour it can only have been a male Hen Harrier. I have



never seen one before or since. Yesterday I was sitting in a queue for the traffic lights to get out of the car park at Stoke railway station. Something, an odd ragged shape that could have been a bit of old plastic bag, went between me & the car in front and into some bushes. But there was something half seen about that shape that made me look more closely as we set off. It was a Sparrow hawk. Bright eye, curved beak and barred feathers mantling something on the floor just 2 feet from the curb. Even then I couldn't stop to look, as the traffic was moving again.

Oh yes! Oops, gardening! I was supposed to be talking about how to grow things not just the beauty and transience of our natural world. Well May & June, if does not pour with rain, can be the busiest time in the garden. So much to do, the days go on forever and there still isn't enough time. Planting out the brassicas, dust the planting hole with some lime, net to protect from the pigeons. Flowers, organic slug pellets to stop your Asters turning into "disasters!" The last frost should be mid May. But with the weather these days, who knows! When potting up your plants, whatever they are, please use a peat free compost. These have improved no end over the last few years. It is not that we will run out, but it is a major carbon store and it needs leaving where we found it. Using it in gardens causes it to breakdown and the carbon is released back into the atmosphere. If you must have a garden fire don't burn it down to the very last. The black twigs are now charcoal and will hold their carbon in your soil whilst helping it to hold on to water making the land more resistant to drought. May you be "green fingered."

I hope your raspberries are sweet and your flowers light up the street.

Bill

Food and Feasting: a Soup and Puddings favourite

Pumpkin and coconut soup.

1 pumpkin or squash (about 800g)

1 onion

3 tbsp oil
3 cloves of garlic
2 chillies
2 tsp fresh chopped ginger
1 litre veg stock
400ml can coconut milk
Salt and pepper

Saute onion, chunks of squash, garlic, ginger and chilli in the oil for about 10 mins. Add stock and coconut milk and cook until squash tender. Blend until smooth.

Season to taste. Sprinkle with coriander leaves if desired.

Ruth Groves

Church and Community

The following groups normally run on a regular basis however at the time of printing, they are currently suspended because of the coronavirus

Knit and Knatter

Mondays 10-12 noon Knit and Knatter. In Shirley House. Contact: Alison Gregg, 266 5638.

Parent and Baby Group: New baby in the family? Join our friendly group of parents - Mums and/or Dads with babies up to 12 months. Friday mornings during term time 10.00 – 11.30 at St Andrew's Psalter Lane Church. It's a chance to meet other new parents in friendly relaxed surroundings. Refreshments teas, coffees, other beverages and home made cakes. Cost: £2.00 per family per week Contact Muriel on 2551473 or Jean 2550198

17th Sheffield Monday Brownies

Mondays at St Andrew's Hall from 5.45pm – 7.15pm. If you are at all interested, please contact Chris Venables. 07950 432487 for further information.

The Tuesday Café

The Tuesday Café, our café for people living with memory loss or dementia and their carers opened in the middle of March. The café takes place in the narthex in church on Tuesday mornings between 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon . We intend that it will be open every Tuesday of the year (except Christmas Day!) The café offers hot drinks, biscuits and homemade cakes, music, memory activities, and the opportunity for a chat. The café already has a good group of volunteers from the congregation and we are also grateful to those who have offered to bake for us. If you know anyone who might be interested in coming to the café, do please take flyer with all the information. If you are interested in helping, please speak to Judith Roberts.

Church Family

Congratulations to

Imogen Clout on being elected as Vice-Chair of the Central Readers Council from April.

We remember with gratitude

Joan Francis, who died in February, and keep her family in our prayers.

We hold in our thoughts and prayers

Sue Preston and her mother Anwyn Morris, following the death of her father Thomas Morris;

Chris Venables and her mother Gwen Hargreaves, following the death of her father Norman Hargreaves;

the family of Marian Tylecote, whose funeral was held recently in SAPLC;

those with health concerns or recovering from times in hospital: Chris Lowry, John Kenward, Geoffrey Terry, John Booler, Marilyn Godber, Peter Rothwell, Pam Frost, Lisa Solk and Fiona Needham.

Competition winner:

Congratulations to Nick Jowett who was the winner of the Christmas competition to decipher the Greek characters on the mosaic from Gaza, arriving the day of the deadline. He said that the inscription identified the mosaic artists as follows: The work of the mosaic-layers (pebble-placers) of Ascalon, Victor and Cosma of Ascalon. Year 2,50, 600 (which being worked out from Greek format would be 652) Ascalon, as many of you will realise, is the original name of the modern city of Ashkelon, close to the site of the mural which is in the far north of Gaza. .

Young SAPLC

Junior Church: (Pebbles 3-5, Stones 6-10,) is during the main service at 10.30. Children between 2 and 3 can join in the youngest group (Pebbles) with a parent/carer)

About our services

Please note these arrangements reflect our normal activities bt are not taking place currently and for the foreseeable future

Sunday Services

Normal pattern: 10.30 am Service: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays Holy Communion service; 4th Sunday, Morning Worship

Please note that the bread used in our Sunday communion services is gluten free. Both fermented and unfermented communion wines are used.

Monthly services: 2nd Sunday: Sunday2 – Breakfast and family service from 9 am

4th Sunday – Holy Communion at 9.15 am (using Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer)

2nd Sunday – Holy Communion at Southcroft, 6.30 pm

Wednesday Services

At the 10.00 Communion service on Wednesdays, we reflect together on a piece of spiritual writing. This may be from one of the Christian traditions, or sometimes from another tradition of faith. The person leading the service will make copies of the piece of writing to give out to everyone. Come and enjoy an oasis of reflective calm in the middle of a busy week, and join us for coffee or tea afterwards

Last Words: thoughts for the times

The crucifixion

Was a real event in time

Not crucifiction.

Those hours on the Cross

Are but the iceberg tip of

God's eternal pain.

Josie Smith

Churches may be glad of the stillness.
These great stone ships seldom have the chance to
hunker down into replenishing silence.

Christianity is too talkative. Noisy religion.
The Society for Standing Up and Sitting Down Again.
The Society for Annunciation of a Momentary Silence

You see your empty church and see shipwreck
And think that because you are not there in linen robes
with rehearsals of creeds, that prayer is not there.

But your churches and temples are not empty.
Silence is there. Praying in her many houses.
Clergy nor creed nor any religion own Her.
Stillness beyond all religion,
Yet deeply at its core,
Even while you fill temples with the clatter of words.

Let Silence be the guardian and keeper of these stone vessels.
She who keeps the stillness on the ocean's floor
Who tends the cave where no noise echoes because no noise enters
Hers is the aching heart that hides ancient atomic groan
And her home, the rest between the beats in every heartbeat
Look out to the stars beyond the stars and listen
Listen to Her listening to the listening of your own

Go within and find Her in the hush.
In the breath of alleluia in the night
In the inhalation of hope before waking
Hers is the softness between the breath.
And the hidden quiet light that lingers at a death

Do not fret about your empty church.
Silence holds the space holy
And always did.

She holds all things and mourns all things
She is in all things
She holds every story but her own.
She knows each name, with no need to know her own
Let Silence guard the stillness and the stones.
While you care for the bereaved and those full of fear
That is your creaturely task. The task of all who call each to be priest
to each and every other.

And when the great keys are turned, the wooden doors re-open,
Tread gently. Do not rush to fill the stillness

The great stone ships held their prayer for you.
They bade the Absolute to enter in.
They prayed with you.

Honour them with silence of your own

Gilo, (Co-Editor of Letters to a Broken Church)