

Vicar and Curate's Musings

*and any other information we found interesting,
funny or a need to share!*

Vicar's Musings

Hi

I don't know about you but I've found this 3rd lockdown the hardest yet—whether it's the darker nights, more phone calls from and to people who are struggling and having a chat with them, working on the appeal for the churches in Broadway, taking funerals of people who died of Covid-19 or have been affected by it—it's seemed exhausting and that this lockdown would never end! But there is hope and light at the end of the tunnel and we just have to hope we can reach 21st June or a date near then and then we will be entering something rather different but also something that hopefully feels more familiar. A friend of mine and I quote 'hope it feels like an old friend but a new conversation.'

Whilst contemplating this lockdown I've been working with the PCC on the Appeal to the village the PCC mentioned in their letter to the people on the electoral roll at Christmas. The church website has dedicated pages to the appeal for people to go to and this enables us to put the message out there on social media as well, for a hopefully wider appeal—www.stmichaelsbroadway.org/broadway-pcc-appeal

There is also an article in the Broadway Magazine this month which is out this weekend.

So how far have we got?

The letter the PCC sent out at Christmas generated 2 responses out of approximately 90 letters which is a disappointing response so we hope that combined with this appeal to the whole village will generate a wider response and appeal. This really is an urgent appeal and life after COVID-19 will not resolve the issue unfortunately. We are told

that regular giving combined with one off donations is what is needed to pull us through.

We are however extremely grateful to the Magazine Team as they have organized a Silent Auction thanks to Keith Thomson from Cotswold Aerial Photography—
www.cotswoldsairialphotography.co.uk who took the amazing photo's below and to the right. Details of the silent Auction and the Article to the village in the Broadway Magazine are on the following pages.



How you can help?

We would be incredibly grateful if you would consider donating. There are various ways in which you can do this - donations can be made by:

- Join the Parish Giving Scheme - *the Parish Giving Scheme is for anyone who would like to make a regular donation, monthly or annually*
- Send a donation via the 'Donate to our churches' button (Gift Aid included).



- Cash* - in an envelope marked 'Broadway PCC Urgent Appeal' posted to c/o The Vicarage, Church Street, Broadway WR12 7AE.
- Cheque* - payable to 'Broadway PCC'.
- Online Banking Payment* - 'Parochial Church Council Broadway' Sort code: 40-20-27 Account number: 21330268
- You can also donate via the website **www.stmichaelsbroadway.org/broadway-pcc-appeal** using the Donate Here button

*If you would like to gift aid with your donation it allows us to claim back tax from the government increasing the value of your donation by 25%.

If you would like to discuss anything or have any fundraising ideas please contact:
Revd Shellie Ward (broadwaycofe@gmail.com or 01386 852352 or 07780002565),
Kevin Beasley (k bkbealsey@googlemail.com or 01386 858672)

Stay safe
Shellie

..... SAVE OUR Churches

A Church Appeal for the Parish of Broadway



Where does our money go?

You may be surprised that we need £100,000 every year. Many people mistakenly believe that the Church of England is nationally funded; this is not the case. Our churches are part of the diocese of Worcester, which reaches from Dudley to northern Gloucestershire, and has to be largely self-funding.

Our two churches are asked to pay £62,000 each year towards the cost of maintaining vicars across the diocese. The money goes towards the pay, housing, NI, pension and training and a contribution towards the training of future clergy. It does not include any contribution to other cost of running of the diocese (salaries constitute only a small part of the overall figure).

St Michael's and St Eadburgha's have always been here for the people of Broadway to lean on, in good times and bad, whether you are a regular churchgoer or not. They're part of all our lives, for weddings, baptisms, funerals, school nativity plays and concerts, to celebrate Christmas, Easter and Harvest. We want to continue being there for you, your children and grandchildren, but we have a serious problem. Our funds have run out and we can't meet our obligations.

Our parish churches, like lots of charities, are struggling to survive, and we need to appeal to the community of Broadway to help us keep our doors open. We have been struggling for the past 5 years and Covid-19 has hit us hard.



The remaining £38,000 pays for the maintenance of our churches' graveyards (£10,000), our organist, administrator and cleaner (£9,200), insurance for both churches (£8,000), office expenses (computers, stationery etc £6,200), running costs for services e.g. water, heating etc (£1,500), and sundry costs for architect's fees, fire safety etc.

Please help us to keep your Broadway churches open and enable us to keep on supporting the vulnerable through our food appeals and home visits; helping people through some of the most difficult times in life and also in celebration, for weddings and christenings. Our situation is serious. We cannot expect less affluent churches in the diocese to pay our share. At the moment, that is what is happening and we have been informed that it cannot continue.

How can you help?

By donating directly (with regular or one-off payments) through the **Parish Giving Scheme**.

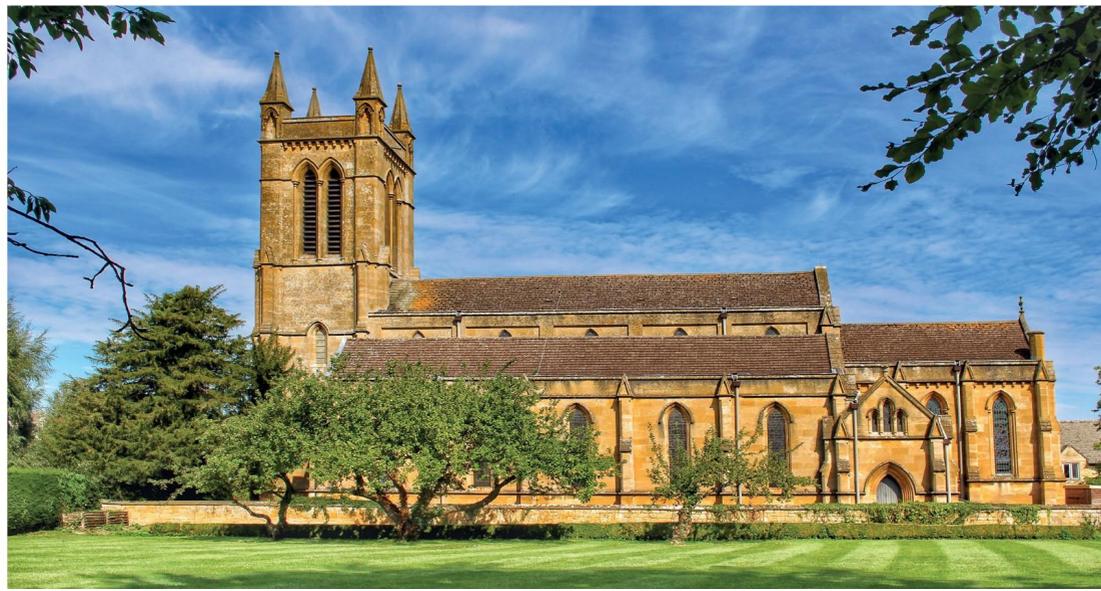


Donate online through our website
<https://www.stmichaelsbroadway.org/broadway-pcc-appeal>

Alternatively, talk to Priest-in-Charge Shellie, or to Kevin Beasley the Church Treasurer, about other ways to give.
Shellie Ward: 01386 852 352
Kevin Beasley: 01386 858 672

Together, we hope that we can continue to love and care for all who live in the parish of Broadway. ♦

Thank you to those who responded to our call out for photos (clockwise top left): Shellie Ward, Keith Thompson, David Atkins, Julian Cook.



Silent Auction

Sponsored by Cotswolds Aerial Photography LTD.



Cotswolds Aerial
Photography

Win the chance to have Cotswold Aerial Photography take a picture of your home, or of a view you are particularly fond of, mounted and framed. There are two lots on offer with every penny going to support the St Michaels and St Eadburgha's Churches.

Lot One

An 18"x12" framed and mounted single aerial photograph.

Lot Two

An 18"x12" montage of 5 images taken from the same site

How to Enter

Please email your name, phone number, your preferred lot and the amount you wish to bid by **Sunday 7th March at 5pm** to:
competition@broadwaynewsletter.co.uk.



© Cotswolds Aerial Photography



© Cotswolds Aerial Photography

ABOUT COTSWOLDS AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Born from a background in the RAF and a passion for Photography, Cotswolds Aerial Photography's founder Keith utilising two of the latest DJI drones, Keith captures images from previously unobtainable viewpoints and has a superb understanding of both photography and airmanship. Modern drone camera equipment is incredibly flexible and is similar to operating a modern DSLR camera except that the drone camera could be 400ft high in the sky! There is something about seeing the world from above that

provides a sense of scale. It can mean very early mornings and often waiting for the perfect conditions but the results are striking.

Cotswold Aerial Photography offers both aerial property photography and 360° Virtual Tours. Photography can be used for display purposes or to inspect property in hard to reach places such as taking close up images of damaged roofing. 360° Virtual Tours are proving to be a useful tool in the hospitality industry and Keith has completed work on the "Sunset Lodges" for Adam Henson.

Find out more about Keith's work at www.cotswoldsaerialphotography.co.uk or email keith@cotswoldsaerialphotography.co.uk ♦

.....

Silent Auction - Rules and Regulations

Bidding ends on Sunday 7th March 5pm. The photograph location must be within 10 miles of Broadway. If more than two people bid the same amount we will ask them to bid higher until there is a winner. Payments for winning bids are due by 4pm Tuesday 9th March. Any bidder not making payment within the allotted time frame will forfeit, and the prize will be offered to the next highest bidder. All aerial photography flights are subject to weather limitations and in airspace where the flight can be conducted safely and legally. In the unlikely event the location of the winner is untenable for aerial imagery, an alternative location will be offered. There will be no refunds. The offered lots are for property images and are not to be used for event photography. Contact details of the winning bidders will be provided to the Church for payment to be arranged.

A message on Lent from the Bishop of Worcester

It might feel as though we have been in the season of Lent for a very long time. Because of the pandemic we weren't able to celebrate Easter properly last year and the remainder of the year had a distinctly penitential feel to it, as has the first part of 2021.



There has been so much sadness, grief and loss during these past few months and we shall be living with the consequences of COVID-19 for years to come. My hope and my prayer, though, is that not all of those consequences will be bad.

Lent is the time for us to turn our faces towards Jerusalem and prepare to follow our Lord on the way of the cross. We do that knowing that out of crucifixion, God brought resurrection. That is the Christian pattern of things – God's redemption involves bringing good out of bad, joy out of pain, new life out of death.

After the resurrection Peter wanted to go back to fishing. It was what was familiar to him and he felt he could find comfort in that. But God was calling him to something much more exciting.

It would be a sadness for us to try to go back to the way things were before the pandemic, just as it would have been for Peter simply to resume his life as a fisherman. Like Peter, I believe God is calling us to something much more exciting.

This year, at the end of what feels like a very long Lent, it would be good for us to reflect upon and pray about what the 'new normal' might look like. I hope it will involve more care, more community, more goodness and more Godliness – but God will work things out much more wonderfully than I could ever plan.

Bishop John

A message for March from the Archdeacon of Worcester



An article in the *Church Times* took me back to a hymn I'd not sung for many a year with its wonderful opening line, 'O Love that wilt not let me go'. This is the only sort of love which really counts; it's the one we recognise in our own loved ones, in parents who loved us into life, in friends who mean the world to us - and, of course, in the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is one year ago that we first went into lockdown. Perhaps you can recall what you were doing then when life was more 'normal'. I can remember going for drinks with neighbours the weekend before it all happened, when Covid seemed something quite distant. Now there are few of us who have not been affected personally one way or another. We know people with Covid, we know people who have died from Covid, and all of us are living with the consequences of Covid.

Lent takes us back to Jesus' forty days and nights in the desert. It seems to me that we are living our own wilderness experience in a way we could never have imagined. For Jesus this was a time of struggle: as the 23rd Psalm puts it, he walked through the valley of the shadow of death. Yet he was held in a love which would not let him go, and emerged from it to a ministry which was to turn the world upside down in faith, hope and love.

Whatever else is lacking during this time of wilderness, one thing not absent is loving kindness. We've seen it in NHS workers, teachers, neighbours and many others. In practical down-to-earth ways we have seen and experienced living examples of 'love that wilt not let me go'.

George Matheson, who wrote the hymn, had his own wilderness experience. 'Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering', he says, and then he wrote these beautiful lines:

*'I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be.'*

Tracing the rainbow through the rain. Isn't this God's tenacious love for us, stronger than we can imagine, mirrored by our human experiences of being loved? We've surely had plenty of rain lately, but, you know, I've seen the odd rainbow too - hold on to such precious glimpses of glory in times as these.

Archdeacon Robert Jones

Snow Damage to the ceiling collapse at St Michael's Church, Broadway

Unfortunately there has been some damage we believe thanks to the snow in St Michael's Church. Fortunately no one was hurt when the plaster fell down and the Churchwardens with the architect and Rev Shellie were able to assess the damage on the same day that it happened—25th February 2021.

The insurance company will be out this next week to also assess the damage and we are getting 3 quotes to put to them to hopefully fix the water damage that has happened.



Six priests have been appointed as new Area Deans in the Diocese following the change in the number of our deaneries from thirteen to six.

All of those appointed will take on the role of Area Dean in addition to their parish ministry and other roles.

Area Deans will have a ministry of leadership and care in partnership with Bishop John, Bishop Martin and the archdeacons. They will work to support clergy and laity, representing the parishes at meetings with the diocesan senior staff and sharing information with parishes as we work together to build healthier and more sustainable churches across the diocese. In each of their areas, they will now establish a deanery leadership team including a Deanery Lay Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and set up the governance structure through the Deanery Synod, which they will co-Chair.



The new Area Deans will be:

- Greater Dudley - David Hoskin (Rector of Brierley Hill)
- Kidderminster & Stourport - Tim Williams (Rector of Kidderminster West)
- Redditch & Bromsgrove - Paul Lawlor (Vicar in the Holy Trinity, Redditch Team and Redditch Town Centre Centre Chaplain)
- Worcester - Diane Cooksey (Vicar of St Nicholas, Warndon)
- Malvern & Upton - Mark Badger (Rector of Kempsey & Severn Stoke w Croome d'Abitot)

- Pershore & Evesham - Sarah Dangerfield (Priest in Charge of Fladbury, Hill & Moor, Wyre Piddle, Crophorne & Charlton)

As the Greater Dudley deanery is much bigger than the others, the Area Dean will be supported by two sub-deans, who will work across the whole deanery with specific areas of responsibility. Andrew Sillis (Vicar of St Thomas in Stourbridge) and Rachel Newell (Vicar in the Dudley Team) have agreed to take on this role.

Bishop John said: "These very gifted priests have been commended to me in a consultation I undertook with their colleagues. I am very grateful to the for being willing to take on this crucial but demanding role. I pray God will bless them in it."

The new Area Deans commented:

Mark Badger:



"I am both humbled and excited to be asked to serve as Area Dean of Malvern and Upton. The new deanery is blessed with so many talented and faithful people and I look forward to working together with them as we seek to fulfil the deanery vision and grow together as Kingdom people."

Diane Cooksey



"I am looking forward to working with others to help discover how God may be working in parishes across the deanery as together we discern the best ways to help build a healthy and sustainable church."

Sarah Dangerfield:



"I look forward to working with teams of people from across the deanery and within the Diocese, to enable God's mission to flourish. Through the effective sharing of people's different gifts and callings to open worship to more people, together we will grow in faith and live as Christ's disciples

in all settings helping the Church to thrive for present and future generations.”

David Hoskin:



“As we all begin to plan for life after the pandemic, I look forward to working with Churches across the Borough of Dudley in enabling healthy and sustainable worshipping communities that will be able to serve the people of Dudley well in the coming years. We have been through difficult days and there will be difficult days ahead, but as the Greater Dudley Deanery we are being asked to work together as a community of hope and love.”

Paul Lawlor:



“We are living in a time when we need, more than ever, to seek to discern where God is leading us as: centres of worship, as a diocese and in our new deaneries. It is a privilege to be able to play a part in helping us to do this in Redditch and Bromsgrove. I also look forward to working alongside my Area Dean colleagues, our Bishops and wider diocesan staff team. It will be exciting to see what God has for us.”

Tim Williams:



“I’m looking forward to continuing to work with colleagues locally and across the Diocese, taking forward what is good and looking at how we may do things differently. These unusual times mean that the ways that we contribute to the progression of the diocesan vision and strategy for growing as Kingdom People may take many new and varied forms, which is very exciting.”

[Read more about the simplification of our deaneries](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/simplification-of-deaneries)

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/simplification-of-deaneries.php



*Pictures on Facebook
of the snowdrops at
St Eadburgha's
Church, Broadway*



Church Information

Give a little



The diocese is trying to help churches, which due to Covid19 cannot fundraise or meet weekly as they did before March 23rd. This has had an impact on churches across the diocese and church including our own churches that still have weekly and monthly expenses that have to be paid but are struggling to fundraise and as yet aren't meeting for gathered worship.

To help support St Michael's and St Eadburgha's churches—give online to Broadway PCC please use this link from SUMUP: https://givealittle.co/campaigns/517bdd8b-33bf-4a59-92f4-7b8d88840249?fbclid=IwAR0RNYX2EJfHX_J5A2RjB6SpuCyYU0DrtPL4CynAYu7Shdy8NlXBEvq6vFI

You can also give to any of our churches by cash or cheque made out to either Broadway PCC or Wickhamford PCC and post to me or the relevant church treasurer



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

Seeing some great examples of organ stops here today.
How about these?

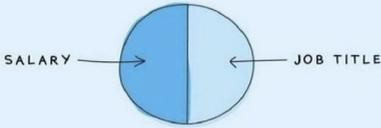


COVID PEDESTRIAN ETIQUETTE

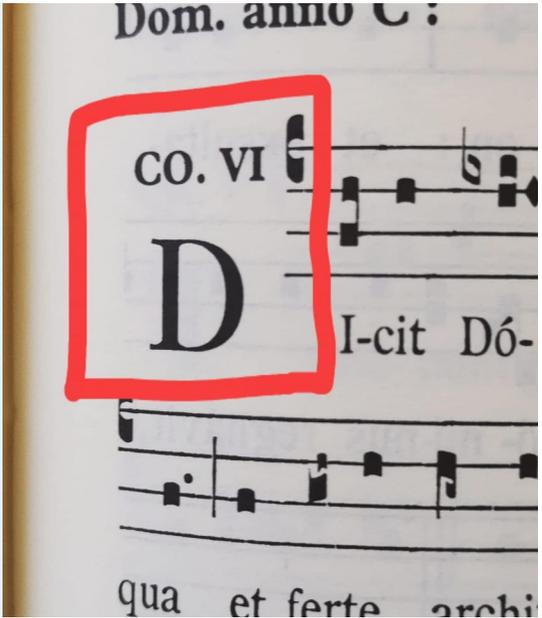
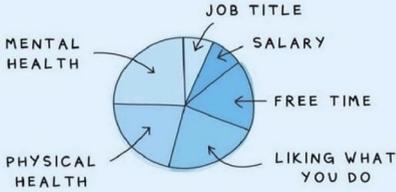
Olaf Falafel



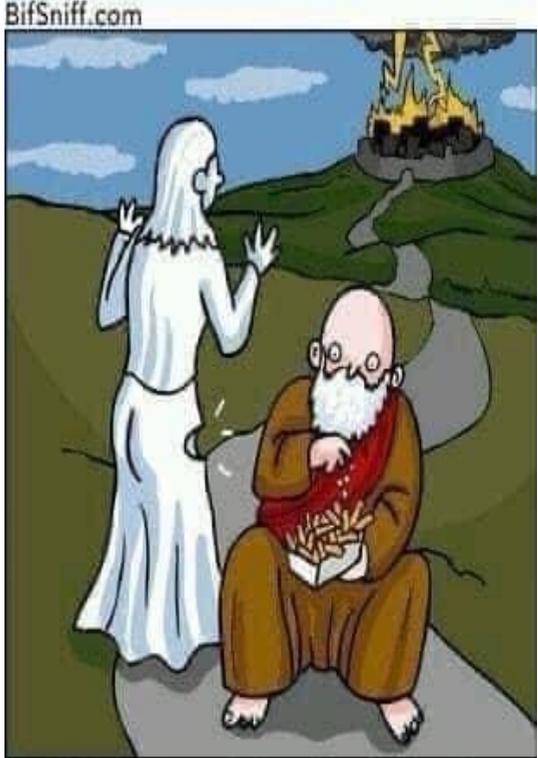
HOW WE'RE TAUGHT TO MEASURE SUCCESS



A BETTER MEASURE



How Sheep Get Away With Murder



While Lot was obviously going to miss his wife desperately, he could see no reason not to make the best of the situation.

What to 'Give Up' When Everything's Been Taken Away?

www.viamedia.news/2021/02/19/what-to-give-up-when-everythings-been-taken-away/

by Canon Robert Hammond, is Lay Chair of Chelmsford Diocesan Synod and a Member of General Synod



It's that time of year when I'm sure we've all been asked by work colleagues: 'What are you giving up for Lent then?'

It's a 'good opportunity' question, really. A chance to do a quick bit of round the water cooler theology. Explain why many Christians give something up for Lent, that it's more than not eating chocolate, or giving up cake. I tend to explain that it's also about focussing on prayer life, God and perhaps taking something else on, or at least replacing the meaningless with the meaningful. And then I'd usually answer the question. One year it was single use plastic; that was interesting as with my Pret lunch being on full view in the office, I couldn't sneak the odd plastic pot of (imported) strawberries and blueberries past my colleagues. Usually of course it's alcohol or more specifically in my case, wine. I should explain though that I have a sideline in wine education, judging and leading wine tours abroad and

that unfortunately March and April just happen to be when many of the international wine fairs are held: Düsseldorf, Verona, Vienna, Bordeaux... So, when I say I'm giving up drinking alcohol I usually add 'unless it's professional drinking'. At least, I used to.

Last year was different of course, The first Lockdown was introduced during Lent and we were all adapting to new ways of going about our daily lives: Zoom Church, online shopping, face masks, hand washing, the daily Prime Minister Briefing, the statistics and sadly probably also having some personal experience of the effects of Covid-19. Everything changed so quickly; plans were changed, flights cancelled, hotels re-booked, working from home was a novelty and frankly, I can't remember whether I continued to give something up for Lent or not.

So, what about this year?

Like many of us my life has become far simpler, less complex, less frenetic but no less busy. I've become used to operating in one place – the canvas my life is played out on is smaller. As a Civil Servant I'm working from home full time and haven't been to a work office for almost a year. I spend most of my time in my study, so separation between home and work life is blurred. I miss my daily commute by train; time to think, to pray, to read, to be quiet. I miss the walk to my office in Canary Wharf along the Thames. I thought I'd gain time but I seem to have lost it; the pandemic has been a time thief. I go from bed to office in 5 seconds now and that's not long enough for me to contemplate the day ahead.

Of course, it's also taken many other things we valued, eating out, our favourite coffee shop, travel, holidays, visiting friends and family or having them to dinner... the list goes on. It's easy to feel the pandemic has robbed us of them as well.

But, I then read the Gospels set out for Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday:

"Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" (Mark 8:17),

"But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret and whenever you fast, do not look dismal, ... put oil on your head and wash your face, so

that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your father who is in secret and your Father, who is in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6: 6 & 16).

Have things really been stolen in the way I thought they had? Yes, I've lost my favourite apricot tart from the bakers in Canary Wharf each morning and my coffee. I've lost the glamour of flying to wine fairs and tasting some excellent wines, and I've lost the kudos I got from posting that on Facebook. Hardly important things in the scheme of things!

So, this Lent I'm not going to focus on what I've lost or what I feel has been taken from me; none of that really matters and pales into insignificance when I look at how some people's lives have changed over this year. But I am going to put effort into 'perceiving and understanding' and not dwell on 'talking about having no bread'. I'm going to get some of that lost time back, which hasn't been stolen – I've just lost the ability to use it properly. And I'm going to focus on going into my room and praying, not just working. It seems to me that this Lent especially is an even better time than usual to focus on what's important and not to get too hung up on giving something up. If I were at the water cooler in the office I'd say that what we've given up already is more than enough and perhaps we should enjoy that coffee or apricot tart and not feel too guilty, but we should reflect on the whole last year and what we can learn from it.

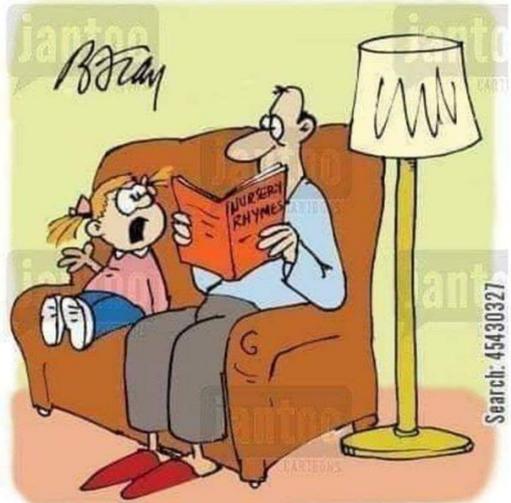
I got up earlier this morning, went for a walk and said Morning Prayer overlooking the sea; it felt good to have regained something I'd lost. And I will be giving up drinking alcohol this Lent, including professional drinking.





Breath taking view of
The milky way from the surface of mars

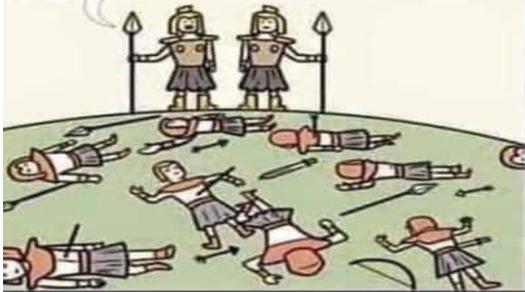
josrby80, funny.mobi



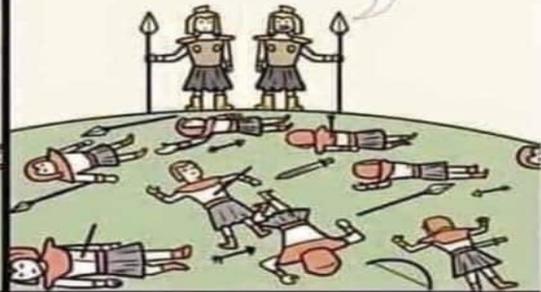
Search: 45430327

"SO, THESE THREE LITTLE MICE ARE BLIND AND THE FARMER'S WIFE COMES ALONG AND CUTS OFF THEIR TAILS WITH A CARVING KNIFE!? WHO WRITES THIS STUFF, STEPHEN KING?"

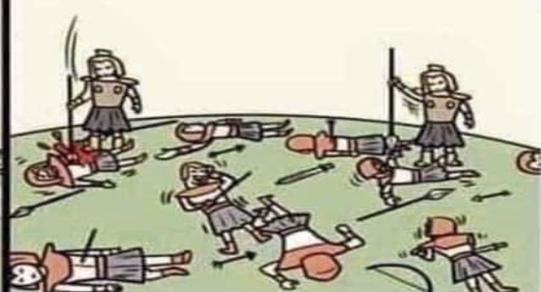
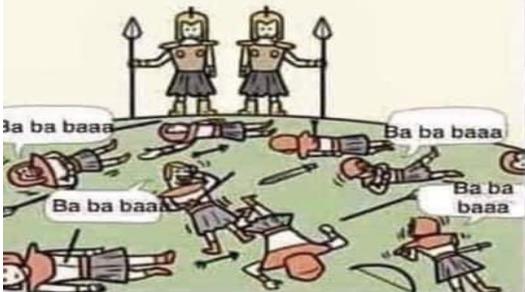
HOW DO WE KNOW IF THEY'RE ACTUALLY DEAD OR JUST PRETENDING



♪Sweet Caroline...♪



@SpaceboyCantLol



Change is Coming... Even if We Feel the Record is Stuck

www.viamedia.news/2021/02/26/change-is-coming-even-if-we-feel-the-record-is-stuck/

by the Ven Nikki Groarke, Archdeacon of Dudley and Member of General Synod



*"I can hear change humming
In its loudest, proudest song.
I don't fear change coming,
And so I sing along."*

Words from US Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman's forthcoming book, '[Change Sings](#)'

Change is humming. Can you hear it?

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote in a recent article "[the Church in changing times](#)":

"The Anglican stability that people rightly cherish — as do we — is the result of our willingness to change. As the theologian Hans Kung once observed: 'To stay the same when everything else around you

changes is not to stay the same.”

Are we willing to change, to sing along?

Some of us thrive in changing times. I admit to relishing the challenge of leading change. It energises me, yet I understand that others find it threatening. What I am struggling with right now however, is not being able to sing along with change, as everything feels stuck, and June freedom still feels a very long way away.

Change is humming, but it's so quiet now it's almost imperceptible. We know that the world has changed. We know (whether we like it or not) that some aspects of church life will need to change. We can work towards that change to a degree, but this has all gone on so long, that many of us can't really remember what 'normal church' felt like, so planning for change feels very abstract.

In a reflection entitled, "A change has begun" delivered in March last year, Rowan Williams said:

“And as we contemplate the coming months, not knowing when we can breathe again, it's worth thinking about how already the foundations have been laid for whatever new opportunities God has for us on the far side of this crisis.”

The change that began humming last March will provide new opportunities, but the far side is still yet to come.

Change is humming, but the record has stuck.

I was challenged last week by a wise woman, when I spoke of feeling that so much of the work I believe we need to do to change and strengthen our churches for the future is 'on hold'. She urged me not to press pause, but rather to respect the unique phase we are in and look for opportunities to do new and different things, to nourish, support and enable people in this season so that we come out of it flourishing rather than depleted and exhausted.

She pointed me to William Bridges' writing on transitions, where he argues that the process of change is different from the change itself. Change is situational, transition is more personal, the inner reorientation that enables the change to become real. It involves rites of passage, appropriate endings and beginnings, dying and

rebirth. He writes helpfully about the 'neutral zone' between the ending of one stage and the beginning of the next, being the key element of transitioning well. In this neutral zone we can easily feel apathetic, we drift in an untethered way, disorientated and uncertain, disconnected and disengaged. It's certainly how I have felt in this last lockdown especially. But Bridges asserts that "the neutral zone provides access to an angle of vision on life that one can get nowhere else. And it is a succession of such views over a lifetime that produces wisdom."

Change is humming, but in the neutral zone it's humming a different tune.

We are going to be in some degree of neutral zone until at least late June. How can we embrace this gap for something fruitful? Rather than trying to go into reverse, back to the way things were, or into fast-forward, planning for the future without knowing the parameters, can we simply embrace the emptiness to prepare well for coming out of lockdown into a new beginning?

Individually, the neutral zone can be used positively for retreat, time out for prayer and reflection. Although social distancing and staying at home have meant most of us have had enforced time away from others, there is a difference between isolation and retreat. Choosing to enter the wilderness as Jesus did in preparation for beginning his ministry might reframe the experience, enabling it to be a more spiritually regenerating period. Perhaps engaging with Brueggemann's grouping of the Psalms into those of orientation, disorientation and new orientation will speak hope into our soul.

Collectively, the neutral zone can provide space to invest in relationships. How can I use this moment to deepen understanding with a colleague, to communicate well, to facilitate creative thinking? How can we offer just enough structure to reassure people they are held and secure, without constraining new ideas which will, in due course, emerge? How best do we set short term goals that can be celebrated when met, without overwhelming people? How can we set an outline direction of travel, in the midst of uncertainty, such that the background hum of change is helpful mood music rather than dissonant clanging?

Making peace with the present will enable a more healthy emergence into the future. In due course we may have to revisit endings. Some

things didn't end well, because we had no idea they were gone for good. This time last year much that was laid down was done so temporarily, but some of it has since died and inadvertently been let go of for ever, and must be appropriately grieved for before something new can begin and grow in its place.

We will, as always, weave in and out of endings, beginnings, and the neutral zone, as transition is part of life, and navigating transitions well is what grows wisdom.

This season of change has the potential in our churches to build to a crescendo at the right time. The enthusiasm with which we add our unique voice to the song to make it loud and proud will depend to no large extent on how we engage with this neutral zone of our transition. But we do so, in all our rich harmonies, knowing that our remodelled selves, and our remodelled churches, are safe in Christ.

“Christ yesterday and today’, says the prayer over the Easter Candle, ‘all times belong to him and all the ages’. He is contemporary to me now; and when I remember with honesty and hope, I discover that he is contemporary with what I remember, faithfully at work in my past as in my present. And as I struggle and pray to bring together the fragments of an identity that is always being shaken around and remodelled, I get some glimpses of the promised end in which Christ simply embraces the whole of me, all I have been, and makes it one with itself and with him.”

Rowan Williams, *“Candles in the Dark – Faith, hope and love in a time of pandemic”* (see article from The Church Times on the next page)

I will refuse



Glimpses of a new world

www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/20-november/faith/faith-features/glimpses-of-a-new-world

In a new book, *Rowan Williams* considers the impact of the pandemic for believers

Empty supermarket shelves during the Covid pandemic



“THE summer is ended and we are not saved” (Jeremiah 8.20). Anyone who remembers those bleak words from the prophet will probably feel that they have a harsh appropriateness just at present. We still don’t know for how long we will have to live with this pandemic, what the eventual cost will be in lives, jobs, confidence, physical safety, mental, and spiritual well-being. For all of us, some much more than others, the effects of the pandemic continue to bite deep.

Over-excited commentators are happy to hand out blame. Easy enough to do, and there are indeed some hard questions to be answered about slow and half-hearted responses and inflated claims. But it’s a lot more difficult to acknowledge that we have genuinely been overtaken not only by practical challenges that no one had fully foreseen but by *feelings* no one had foreseen.

Some of the more insightful commentators have noted that the pandemic has set a large question mark against the assumption of guaranteed security that has been the backdrop to the lives of more

prosperous communities and individuals for decades — the narrative that we are steadily “taming” our environment.

Most of the human race has not, of course, enjoyed that luxury anyway; and one thing that should come into focus in the light of the pandemic is this new and unwelcome solidarity in uncertainty. The British theologian Andrew Shanks has written a good deal about “the solidarity of the shaken” — the possibility of discovering real community on the far side of recognising a vulnerability in which we’re all involved.

That’s one of the things that a community of faith might well be thinking about at the moment. The Christian gospel repeatedly tells us that we are always involved in a situation of shared failure and shared insecurity; it tells us that this is overcome only when we stop denying it by closing our hearts to each other; and it announces that our closed hearts can be and are broken open to each other through the action of God in Jesus and the Spirit.

Faith does not deny the fragility we all share, nor does it make light of the cost and pain of it. It invites us to confront our shared fragility with honesty and compassion, recognising our need of one another, our need for the neighbour to be well and safe — instead of falling back on our fearful attempts to be safe at the neighbour’s expense.

TRUST that we can face the truth without being destroyed; hope that the crisis we seem caught in is not the last word about what’s possible for human beings; and love, the full-hearted will for the well-being of the entire world we inhabit. This is the landscape we live in, the landscape whose contours we have to try to make more real to those around us. The great question, as and when we have emerged from the immediate shadow of the pandemic, will be: What have we learned? Christians should be able to prompt, and to build on, some answers.

Perhaps we have learned more about our dependence on one another; perhaps we have learned something of the need to accept the limits and risks of living in a world we are never likely to tame successfully and totally.

Or perhaps we have had our eyes opened to who is least safe in our neighbourhood — and not just our immediate neighbourhood, but our global neighbourhood: those who have never shared the security we

take for granted; those who have lived for years with the isolation and frustration that we so chafe at; those whose jobs are the first to be lost; those enduring depression and other mental challenges; those with partners or relatives who've become mentally or physically abusive; those in front-line care work who have given their lives in the fight to control the virus; those who have lost loved ones either to the virus itself or because the treatment needed for other conditions could not be delivered in time.

Ultimately, the question for us as a society is whether we have grown through the solidarity into which we have been forced. Simple solutions are not yet in sight as we move into a hard winter. But, to go back to the very first of these reflections, what if the change has already begun? What if something of a new world has been seen afresh and has kindled a new force of longing for generous, equitable, joyful living together?

Pray that it is so; act as if it were.

The Rt Revd Lord Williams of Oystermouth is a former Archbishop of Canterbury.

This is an extract from Candles in the Dark: Faith, hope and love in a time of pandemic by Rowan Williams, to be published by SPCK on 10 December at £9.99; (CT Bookshop special offer £7.99).

helping one person might not change
the whole world,



but it could change the world for
one person.

Many people are hanging by the very thinnest of threads. If you treat them well, without knowing you may very well be that thread.



johnpavlovitz.com



Tweet

Malcolm Guite and 7 others liked



charlie mackesy
@charliemackesy



10:45 · 16/02/2021 · Twitter for iPhone



charlie mackesy
@charliemackesy



One day soon



"Yes"
"Just take that," said the horse.



One day x



NSPCC
0808 800 5000
(24hrs)

National Domestic
Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247
(24hrs free)

Mind
0300 123 3393
(Mon-Fri 9-6)

Victim Support
0808 168 9111
(24hrs)

Cruse Bereavement
0800 808 1677
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

ChildLine
0800 1111
(24hrs)

Action on Elder Abuse
0808 808 8141
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

Respect - Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327
(Mon-Fri 9-5or8pm)

Samaritans
116 123
(24hrs free)

National Centre for Domestic
Violence
0207 186 8270

NEVER ALONE





Tweet



John Inge 
@BishopWorcester



Fabulous Worcester Cathedral which has stood rock solid for Christian hope through wars, plagues and pandemics.



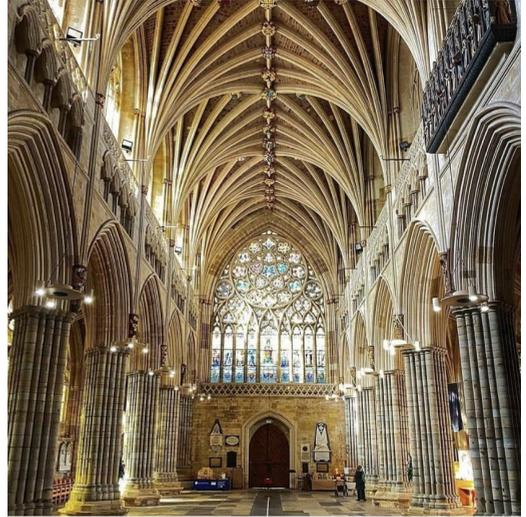
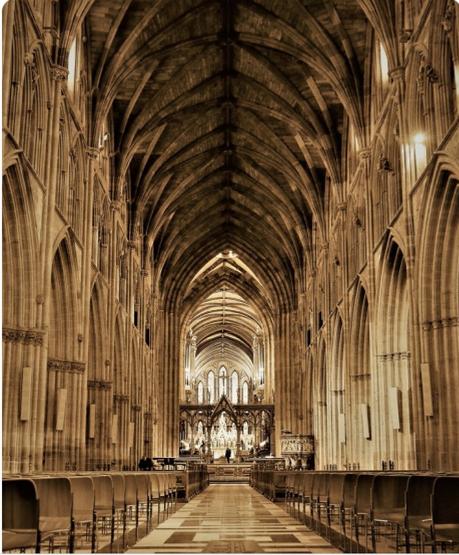
Association of English Cathedrals

21 h · 



The 'Excellent Exeter'

From @visiteastdevon using Exeter Cathedral by @snorywalrusson @visitsouthdevon



Confidence isn't thinking you are better than everyone else, it's realizing that you have no reason to compare yourself to anyone else.

Courtney Carver

ContemplativeMonk.com




In A World Where Everything Can Be Bought & Sold...

INTEGRITY IS PRICELESS



12 months that changed the church

www.premierchristianity.com/Past-Issues/2021/March-2021/12-months-that-changed-the-church

A global pandemic, which no one was expecting, has had drastic and far-reaching spiritual implications. In speaking to a host of different Christian leaders, Tim Wyatt uncovers three important ways Covid-19 has altered every congregation in the land

Twelve months ago, the Church entered the month of March in much the same state as it had been for years. The usual internal battles continued to unfold – Franklin Graham insisted his evangelistic tour would not be derailed by LGBT protests and a Catholic cardinal was forced to resign over an alleged abuse cover-up. The theological concerns were not new either – *Premier Christianity's* March 2020 issue saw Louie Giglio reflecting on student mission while Glen Scrivener explored the ethics of abortion and Down's syndrome.

There was no indication that the Church, far from plodding along as normal, was about to enter the most seismic year it had seen for perhaps a century.

The coronavirus pandemic has upended everything. Church services mostly take place on the internet, but sometimes to congregations twice their regular size. International travel, conferences and festivals have all been cancelled. Urgent theological debate now centres on whether communion can take place virtually and if Christians should resist government-imposed restrictions on our services. One year into the Covid crisis, how exactly has it changed the Church? And, just as importantly, with the end of the pandemic beginning to creep into sight, how many of these sweeping transformations will last?

The digital explosion

By far the most obvious shift in the Covid era has been churches of every shape, tribe and size moving their services online. Whether livestreaming on Facebook, uploading prerecorded videos to YouTube or hosting Zoom meetings, almost every church in the land will have broadcast in some manner via the internet. While it has been legal to resume some in-person worship since last summer, many churches are yet to return physically and almost all continue to offer services online even if they now also meet in the flesh.

It is this hybrid model that many leaders are convinced will become the new normal, even once all the restrictions are finally lifted. For while the move online was imposed at short notice by the first lockdown, it has born unexpected fruit. Many say the lockdown has opened their eyes to just how many people in their parishes, communities and congregations had been excluded from church before.

“It feels like the vast majority of churches have never really considered the people who simply cannot get to the building,” reflects Kate Wharton, a vicar in Liverpool and assistant national leader with New Wine. The disabled, unwell and housebound can now engage fully in the life of the church like never before, but so too can those with unusual shift patterns, or those who, because of mental health problems, find large groups of people difficult.

Rt Rev Dr Graham Tomlin, Bishop of Kensington, believes the story of Covid so far is about all kinds of widened access to Church. He comments that if he had launched a campaign to get all his clergy livestreaming services before the pandemic it would not have got very far at all. “What would have taken us ten years in normal times – catching up with the digital revolution – has happened in a year.”

Arun Arora, a vicar in Durham and the former head of communications for the Church of England, recalls how back in 2016 his team had run a pilot programme of broadcasting church services on Twitter for a year, only to shutter the scheme as there was so little take-up. But having been thrown in the deep end last March, many church leaders have discovered there is now a huge demand for weekly online worship.

In one survey by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, as many as 90 per cent of clergy said they would continue to use techniques picked up over the last year. Not least, because

offering church online – especially for those utilising the livestream model – has seen hundreds of thousands of people take part for perhaps the very first time.

Almost every church leader you speak to has stories to tell of newcomers who, despite never darkening the doors of a church building prior to coronavirus, are now logging in – sometimes from hundreds or even thousands of miles away. “It takes quite a lot of courage to walk through the door of a church but you can very easily just watch somebody’s video service without anybody knowing from your pyjamas with your cup of coffee,” observes Right Rev Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Penrith.

Pete Phillips, a Methodist minister and theologian specialising in digital issues at Durham University, says his research has shown a phenomenal increase in people trying out church online since the pandemic began. In a professional survey last September, 28 per cent of those polled said they had engaged with some kind of online worship. “The potential increase in regular worship is four million in a week to 15.6 million,” he says. “That’s just unbelievable.”

Some have been intrigued enough to attend online Alpha courses, join the church family formally, or even get baptised. When looking forward, many church leaders excited by these possibilities sketch out a future where non-Christians are first encouraged to try out church from home online, before gently being encouraged to come in person.



This hybrid model may also include keeping midweek meetings and home groups online permanently. The pioneer of the Alpha course, Nicky Gumbel, has admitted he was initially very reluctant to hold the courses online. In an email to Alpha leaders earlier this year, he wrote: “This is another occasion where I have been proved wrong. I

didn't think Alpha would work online, and I never thought I would be saying this, but I now think Alpha online works *even better* than Alpha in person."

Phillips agrees it has proven much easier to invite non-believers to evangelistic courses that are held online rather than in person. And others note how evening events on weekdays are much more accessible when done on Zoom – particularly for parents who cannot leave the house because of childcare needs.

But not everyone is excited by the sudden quantum leap in digital church. Several leaders have expressed concerns that current church members will be tempted to stay tucked up in bed on Sunday mornings and watch church online rather than make the effort to commit to physical community and fellowship. Others are worried larger churches with higher production values will suck away congregants from smaller and less tech-proficient parishes.

Other leaders have deeper concerns, especially around communion. "We are unintentionally gnosticising the Church," warns Andrew Wilson, a teaching pastor at King's Church, London. "The medium is the message; you intentionally communicate that this is a thing you can do at a distance without sharing a cup or a loaf with anyone."

Online church is like a marriage conducted on Skype between two people in separate continents, he argues: it might be able to limp on for a while but real church, much like true marriage, can only happen when people come back together in person.

Phillips' concern is different. He worries that broadcasting church services to anyone who wants to watch will turn denominations into a religious version of the BBC and could represent a form of "selling out [and] merging with contemporary culture". Instead, he believes churches must focus on how to use digital tools to 'narrowcast', blending physical and online communities together and remaining laser-focused on how to connect interactively with people, not simply churn out 'content' to the anonymous masses.

Yet, despite significant technical and theological hurdles to overcome, most leaders seem confident the hybrid digital-physical future of church will turn out OK in the end. As the pandemic enters its second year, Christians seem to be as desperate as anyone to rekindle in-person relationships. Theologian and writer Krish Kandiah says any initial worries about a permanent end to physical church has been wiped out as the coronavirus crisis grinds on and

on: “We miss it like crazy. As soon as it’s possible, people will be itching to be together again,” he predicts.

The fragility of youth ministry

If the digital transformation story is one of innovation and excitement, the second major change felt by Christians over the past year is mostly the opposite. While it has turned out more possible than almost anyone thought to persuade adults – both believers and seekers – to do digital church, it has proven extraordinarily difficult with children and teenagers. “One thing that’s happened throughout lockdown is that we as a church realised, devastatingly, how fragile a lot of youth ministry and relationships with children and young people have been,” comments Rachel Gardner, director of national work at the charity Youthscape. “If you’re in a church where you have kept in touch with your young people, that’s absolutely brilliant, but that’s not the national picture.”

According to figures gathered by the Evangelical Alliance, about 35 per cent of churches surveyed last year were doing no kids’ work, either in person or online. Youthscape research suggests on average churches have lost contact with about two-thirds of the young people they were working with before the pandemic struck. Teenagers in particular are understandably not enthused about joining tepid Zoom calls instead of their usual Friday night youth group with pizza and PlayStation.

“It is massively worrying,” says Wharton. “Teenage years are already the time we lost most people.” If an entire cohort of children fall out of youth work and thus never become Christians at all, the Church could have a permanent lost generation, long after the pandemic ends. David Voas, a leading sociologist of religion from University College London, says the pandemic could be a “critical moment” for this very reason. Most religious decline in the West had largely been the result of young people not following in the faith of their parents and grandparents, so a large drop-off in adolescents engaging with church would only exacerbate plummeting church attendance figures.



To avoid the British Church coming out of Covid as an even older and staler institution than it already was, Gardner says there has to be a “whole-church, big-hearted, audacious vision” to reorientate mission around emerging generations. “This doesn’t mean other age groups don’t matter, but this is the moment for the Church to say: ‘We want to be a church which is growing into the future’. I think it is as stark as that.” And for a cohort of young people emotionally scarred and anxious after a year or more without much human contact, perhaps that needs to be a simplified, more authentic kind of youth work, which abandons efforts to be cool and instead focuses on relationship. After all, once life returns to normal there will be countless other places where teens can be entertained far better than church could do, Gardner concludes. “But what we do far better than anybody else is walk young people in the path of life.”

The social action surge

The final significant shift prompted by coronavirus is the surge in community engagement and social action. Rather poetically, as church buildings emptied on Sundays under lockdown, the streets around them began to fill up with Christians Monday to Saturday. Church leaders have been encouraged and inspired by how wholeheartedly their congregations have risen to the challenge: starting foodbanks, delivering prescriptions and groceries, staying in touch with the isolated and lonely, volunteering to help deliver vaccinations.

By being ordered to stay at home, many Christians – like the rest of society – have found themselves reorientated to their local community. The HTB-organised network Love Your Neighbour has seen thousands of Christians from dozens of churches form hubs in their cities and towns, partnering with foodbanks, charities, schools, hospitals and businesses to send willing Christian volunteers to wherever the need is greatest. Bishop Emma says one of her vicars has even taken up a job in the local fish and chip shop – one of the few things still open in lockdown – in an effort to reach her community in the absence of Sunday services.



For Bishop Graham, the flourishing of social action is part and parcel of the widening of access to Church through digital means. “I can think of a couple of our churches whose foodbanks have tripled in size this last year, compared to the year before,” he says. “And they’ve become real community hubs for their neighbourhoods, linking in with social services, becoming a prime frontline provision of support.”

Gardner, who is also one of the leaders at a church plant in Preston, says it was unlikely her congregation would have thrown itself into social action if their lively, charismatic worship services had not been forcibly shut down by the pandemic. “I think on the whole we would have waited for people to come to us,” she reflects. But by getting “boots on the ground”, it has transformed her still nascent congregation. “We saw people grow because they were doing stuff. It changed how we pray on a Sunday, it changed how we worship, how we preach. If we know that they’re afraid of losing jobs and health and fearful of domestic violence then that suddenly transforms how you preach on a Sunday morning. So yes, that’s been extraordinary.”

These efforts not only show God’s love in the here and now, but could bear fruit long into the future too. Kandiah recounts a story of how decades ago he had been part of a Salvation Army band playing music on a beach. A stranger came to talk with them and ultimately hear the gospel explained, simply because he remembered how, 50 years earlier, the Salvation Army had helped him practically during the Second World War. “If the Church continues to pour love and mercy and care into the most vulnerable people, that will linger long in the memory, even longer than the memory of the pandemic itself,” he says.

And many hope that this will not be short-term emergency action during a national crisis, but instead a permanent shift in emphasis for the Church. Lockdown has made everyone re-examine their priorities, Arora notes – whether that is how much time they spent at work or what they truly want to get out of life. “Friendship is being rediscovered, voluntary kindness and service being celebrated,” he says. The same must happen in the Church too, he and others conclude. “If nothing else, everybody’s got to know the names of the people who live to the right and the left, if they didn’t know them before,” laughs Wharton. “And maybe even that’s a bit of a step in the right direction.”

Revival or survival?

At the start of the first lockdown, many Christians became excited that God might be kicking off a revival. There were anecdotal reports of churches seeing hundreds of newcomers log in online, sales of Bibles surged and even Google searches for “God” and “prayer” went through the roof. After ‘The UK Blessing’ worship video went viral, Pete Greig seemed cautiously optimistic. “Is something stirring?” he wrote. “Prayers that some of us have been praying for decades, suddenly seem to be finding answers in the most unexpected ways.” Others feared the opposite: a collapse of Christianity in Britain, as believers locked out of their church buildings and struggling to see where God was in the crisis lost their faith for good.

One year on, it remains unclear if either of these scenarios has unfolded. Some surveys do show staggeringly high numbers of people claiming to engage in online worship. But YouGov research in November concluded the pandemic had had a negligible net impact on faith: five per cent of those polled said they had found faith or seen it strengthened during the crisis, almost entirely offset by four per cent saying they had lost their faith during Covid-19. Peter Lynas, the national director of the Evangelical Alliance, says their research tallies with this: definite increases in numbers but also clear signs of less engaged and more nominal Christians drifting away. The death of nominalism has been a trend in the UK Church for years. Perhaps this is the death knell? As Lynas comments: “This kind of cultural Christianity; I do wonder how that that will survive or come through this.”

As we enter the second year of Covid, the picture remains decidedly murky. “Is this the beginning of a great growth of the Church or is it actually a winnowing of the Church? We don’t know at this stage,” remarks Bishop Graham. What is needed now is “perspective and prophets”, to discern what God has been saying through coronavirus. Arora, who says one of the greatest changes in his congregation has been a renewed commitment to prayer, agrees and urges churches to take time to discern even in the midst of financial headaches and technical challenges. Quoting Jesus’ words to Nicodemus, he says believers must remember that the Spirit of God is like the wind – not controllable or even predictable, but always on the move. “What is the new normal? It’s about discerning where God is on the move throughout this and recognising there is no going back.”

smile.

amazon.co.uk

SMILE.AMAZON.CO.UK

Support The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of St Michael And All Angels, Broa...



Silver Elephant



NOW OPEN

Though I walk thru the shadow of death

I fear no evil



MOSES LOST IN THE DESERT...YEAR 40

RECALCULATING!

RECALCULATING!

RECALCULATING!

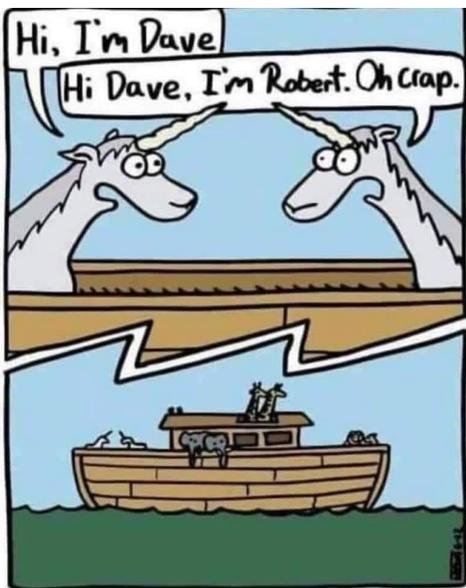
KNOCK IT OFF!!

Reynolds

www.divinecomedydan.weebly.com



Another useful organ stop.



A PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

Heavenly Father,
In every age, you have been our refuge.
Yet again and still, we stand before you
asking for your protection on your holy Church.

For the victims of abuse and their families,
pour out your healing and your peace.

For the Bishops of this country,
continue to inspire their decisions,
and guide them with your Spirit.

For the thousands of good and faithful priests,
who have followed your call to serve you and your people in holiness,
sustain them by your grace.

For the faithful who are angry, confused, and searching for answers,
embrace them with your love,
restore their trust,
console them with your clear Gospel message,
and renew them with your sacraments.

We place our Church in your hands,
for without you we can do nothing.
May Jesus, our High Priest and true compass,
continue to lead her in every thought and action –
to be an instrument of justice,
a source of consolation,
a sacrament of unity,
and a manifestation of your faithful covenant.

Grant this through that same Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.