

Shoreline

The Church of the Good Shepherd

Shoreham Beach

April 2020

50p





April 2020



First Thoughts

Revd Jane explores how the sacrifices we're making will help bring rebirth

Everyone's lives around the world have been dramatically transformed in a very short period of time. All of us are shaken by the speed and severity of these changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Normal life is on hold, including our Holy Week and Easter services.

We all have different experiences as to how the global health crisis is impacting our lives. Some of us are self-isolating, some of us will be putting our health at risk by continuing to work, some of us will be looking after children who would have otherwise been at school, some of us might have lost our businesses and livelihoods, some of us might be ill.

Our situations are so different, but there is a common thread that weaves throughout them all, and that is the need to make personal sacrifices. We all have to make sacrifices at this time; we all have to give something up for the greater good. We are sacrificing our freedoms to socialise, earn money, travel, go the gym, study, eat in restaurants and live enjoyably as we used to, and we are doing this so



that the most physically vulnerable in our society can be saved.

The importance of sacrifice is deeply rooted in our Christian tradition, although not always well understood. In the Old Testament, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his precious son Isaac, because he thought it was the will of God. In the Exodus story the Lord tells the Israelites to sacrifice lambs without blemish, and put the blood on the door posts and lintels, so that when death came to the Egyptians it would pass over the people of God.

There is, in the Old Testament, the whole Jewish sacrificial system of worship, with burnt offerings, guilt offerings, sin and peace offerings,

as ancient humanity struggled to find ways to connect to the divine. Jesus, in his life, modelled for us the necessity to make sacrifices, but it was not animal blood that he offered to God. He kicked over tables in the temple and put an end to all that. God doesn't require dead doves or bulls, but the gift of ourselves.

Jesus spent his life sacrificing himself for others, in his ministry of healing, teaching and loving service. He sacrificed wealth, worldly power, a family life and security, so that he could give himself away. And of course, ultimately he poured out his life on the cross, a journey we share with him as we move towards Easter.

There is a profound exchange that happens in the act of sacrifice. Something has to die for something bigger to be born.

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit," says Jesus in John's Gospel. We are asked to step beyond our small selfish needs and to put others first. In so doing we become part of something glorious.

Mother Teresa wrote:

"A sacrifice to be real must cost, must hurt, and must empty ourselves. Give yourselves fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in his love than in your weakness."

Already we are seeing how God is accomplishing great things with our sacrifice. Precious lives are being saved because we are staying at home. Local communities are coming together and we are getting to know our neighbours as never before. Some people are relishing the time to slow down and live more simply. Others point to the way that pollution levels have dropped.

Many of us, myself included, are having to find new ways to communicate using new technologies. Our situation is tragic and difficult, but we can trust that our sacrifice at this time will become a God filled creative force, and out of the tomb of this Covid-19 experience there will be a resurrection.

Rev'd Jane

What the Archbishops Say

In these unprecedented times, the Church of England has called on us all to truly become a church for everyone.

Since 17th March, when the Archbishops of Canterbury and York had to put the public worship of the Church of England on hold, they have called on Christians to become “a radically different kind of church, rooted in prayer and serving others.”

They have also urged congregations to be in the forefront of providing practical care and support for the most poor, and the most vulnerable, during the crisis.

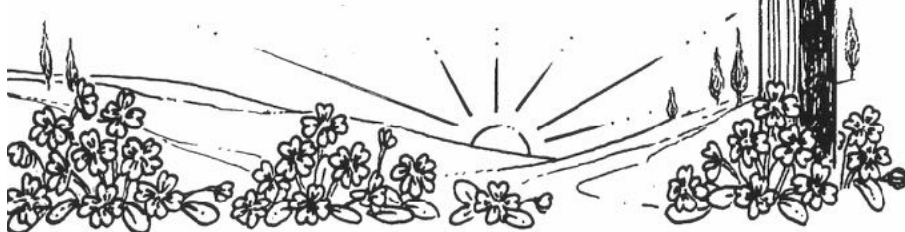
“We may not be able to pray with people, but we can certainly pray for people.

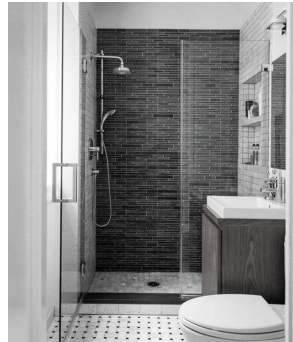
“And please do carry on supporting the local foodbank and buy extra provisions for it. Ensure also that the night shelters, wherever possible, are kept open.

“Then by our service, and by our love, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that can counter fear and isolation – will spread across our land.”

They add: “This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly a church for all, or just the church for ourselves?

“We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.”





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Coronavirus: a lesson from the past

Paul Woolley of the Bible Society draws inspiration from a plague that hit in the 2nd century.

‘So many people died that cities and villages in Italy ... were abandoned and fell into ruin.’

That’s not a report about the impact of coronavirus, but an epidemic of smallpox that infected the Roman Empire in 165 AD. A second, equally devastating plague, possibly measles, swept the empire less than 100 years later.

Rodney Stark’s work *The Rise of Christianity* looks at the way Christianity spread in such a difficult context. The question is: How did this happen? Stark gives three reasons:

An account of the world

Firstly, Christianity offered a more satisfactory account of the world – and a better hope for the future – than the dominant pagan and Hellenic philosophies of the day.

Values into action

Secondly, the Christian values of love and charity which characterised the early Christian community were also ‘translated’ into social service and community solidarity. In other words, those early Christians took care of the sick and vulnerable. Stark quotes the early bishop Dionysius:

“Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbours and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead...”

And the Romans marvelled at these Christians.

Loosing the social bonds

Thirdly, during the epidemic people lost the ‘social bonds’, the peer pressure, that had previously discouraged them from rebelling against prevailing ideologies and embracing the gospel.

Stark goes on to note that frequently in human history, crises produced by natural disasters have translated into crises of faith where the religion of the day is considered inadequate to the reality of people’s life-experience. In response to these failures of religion,



societies often look elsewhere and adopt new faiths.

Of course, this all raises an important question: in light of coronavirus, how should Christians respond today? Inspired by those who have gone before us, perhaps I can offer three suggestions:

Back to the Bible

Firstly, we should use this period of 'social distancing' to reacquaint ourselves with the big story of the Bible. In the unfolding story of God and the world that we see in the Bible,

we are presented with a robust and life-giving account of who God is, what the world is like, and what it means to be truly human.

Live out our Love

Secondly, we need to 'translate' the Bible into our everyday lives. We need to practically live out 'love of God and neighbour'. We should support our neighbours by offering to do shopping, collect parcels, post mail, and ensure they have someone to talk to on the phone.

Be ready to help the unsettled

Thirdly, we need to be sensitive to the fact that the current situation will unsettle people and, uninhibited by their social bonds, prompt them to think about God and the purpose of life, perhaps for the very first time, and we need to be ready for conversations about this.

In the 2nd century, the Christian community responded to the smallpox epidemic not by being anxious or fearful, but by being courageous, prayerful, and deeply, and lovingly practical. We need to do the same, secure in the fact that 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' (Psalm 46.1)

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Children are our future

Joy explores the past and future of our youth work, as we gain a new youth leader in Daisy Durrant

Because I am passionate about living in a Christian community, I am happy to be part of the church family at the Church of The Good Shepherd. This prayerful, loving community has an open door to welcome all who are willing to step inside. To ensure the future it is essential that all ages are represented.

Unfortunately, at present, young families and children are fewer than us older folk.

During the first decade of this century we did manage to build a thriving Lambs Tales and Sunday School/10 o'clock Rock. These were strengthened by our youth worker BD for a few years.

Changing times

Since then our society has changed. In our area, house prices have spiralled and most young families need two incomes to keep a roof over their heads. In addition, all kinds of children's sporting activities are on offer on Sunday mornings.

We have been blessed with loving, dedicated and talented Children's Leaders, Emma, Lucy and their helpers. They have offered well-prepared lessons, accompanied with interesting activities.

Despite their best efforts they have had the disappointment of seeing the numbers attending gradually diminishing.

It is obviously time to have a radical rethink about how and when we can offer Christian education to our children.

Messy Church

Jane has made an excellent start with this, getting a team together to offer 'Messy Church' on the 3rd Saturday afternoon each month. Children need to be accompanied by a parent to attend.

The format of themed games, craft, and a short act of worship is followed by tea. It all takes place in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and seems to have been enjoyed. We

have seen a gradual increase in numbers.

I was pleased to see that the PCC had agreed to employ a Youth Worker to further get to grips with the situation and delighted that Daisy Durrant has been appointed.

She is multitalented and as she comes up with new ideas and initiatives I hope that we will be able to support her, not only with our prayers but with practical help when needed.

Strong prayer support has contributed to success in the past and I am sure it will in the future. Please pray for God to guide Daisy in her planning for when the church reopens.

If you are to hold her work in your prayers and would like to be kept informed about particular issues, please let me have your email address. Daisy is going to



let me know of them as they arise and I will pass them on to you.
You can reach me on:
joydaintree@gmail.com

Let us all work together on this one. It is too important for half measures.

God Bless you all,

Joy

Chrystabell tells of her inspiration for the poem.

I was walking the dog the other day and praying as I often do, as I walked through the park. It was a cold, windy day and the skies were grey, as they have been so often this winter. My heart felt heavy, too.

This has not been the best time of my life. In fact I would say it is the worse time I have ever been through in all my 70 years! I was praying for God to change things and it felt as if my prayers were hitting a concrete ceiling ;God was not listening. I have been a Christian most of my life and I know all about the 'Faith, not feelings' point of view, but I also know that God has made each one of us as we are with our feelings being a very essential part of us. Faith is something that most of us have to work hard at most of the time!

I decided, on this particular morning, to put my imagination to good use, instead of allowing it free rein to imagine all kinds of awful things that bring me down lower than the situation has already done!

I imagined Jesus as He was here on earth with His disciples. I saw Him listening to them as they told how they were feeling and asked His help. I reflected on the nature of Jesus and how patient and understanding He

would be. I thought about how He would respond in love and kindness.

I thought of my own father when I was a child and how he could, in my childish mind, fix everything. Once, after some minor "disaster" made my mother cross with me, I stood by the window looking for him to come in the gate and thinking: "It will be all right when Daddy gets home!"

And this is how I imagined it would be with Jesus and His disciples. And that is how, IN FAITH it can be now when we bring our needs to God in prayer...and of course it is!

BUT, when we are in the middle of difficult times and everything seems to be against us, it is very difficult to bypass our feelings and believe in faith without seeing, that Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday. He does not change and He does answer prayer.

It is so hard to hold on to faith in the darkest times but He is a faithful God and He knows and loves us just as much as He did those followers here on earth over 2,000 years ago!

It isn't easy now. It wasn't easy then.... He never said it would be, He just said He would be with us... always!!

So Easy Then?

by Chrystabell

It seemed so easy Lord
When you were here on earth,
When people could see you and
hear you...
It seemed so easy then.

When the women found
acceptance
And the children climbed on your
knee,
When you reached out and
touched the untouchables...
And found faith in someone like
me.

It seemed so easy then.

You told them there would be
troubles
And bad things would come to
this place,
That things would get worse
before better...
But you would keep your children
safe.

It seemed so easy then.

Now I'm going through it Lord
And sometimes it feels too much!
I'm walking in faith

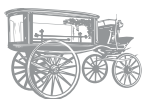
But it's dark down here,
And so hard to feel your touch

I have the words in a printed book
But I want to see the love in your
face,
I need your arm around me...
To know your forgiveness and
grace.

I need to hear your gentle voice,
Feel the touch of your nail-scarred
hand
And when I'm sure I've lost the
way,
To know it's all part of your plan.

To know you are there beside me
Even though I am lost in fear...
That your promise will never be
broken,
To be forever near..

But faith is the gift you left me,
In the darkness, a light shines
bright
A flickering flame burns deep in
my soul
And I walk on through the night...
But it feels much harder now.



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When the world STOPPED

And God created the world....
He enabled the world with all its beauty
He gave life to each and every one of us
With free will to do as we choose

We walk forward, many times forgetting
That we need faith to get us there
We succeed, we often fail, yet
God picks us up and soothes our way

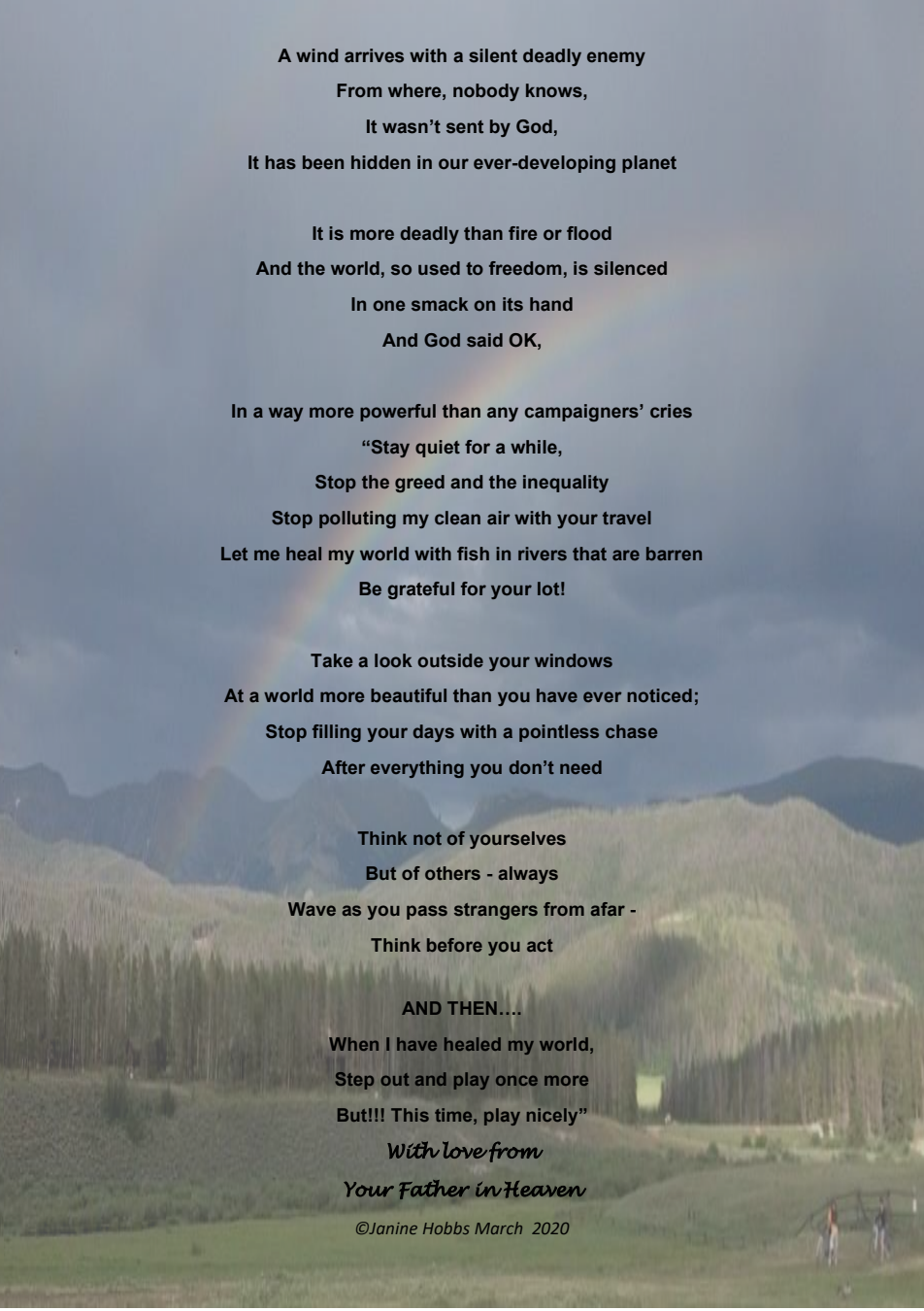
He cannot change the path we tread
That is ours to choose
He offers help, if we but care to notice,
For we believe we can cope

Our ancestors do not recognise this world
With travel, communication and wealth
beyond anything they could have imagined
We have become invincible... so we think

Floods cover the earth
Fires rage
Droughts leave our pastures dry
People have no food, yet
Still we believe we can cope

Young shout and angrily cry for
SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING!
Before it is too late

THEN...



A wind arrives with a silent deadly enemy
From where, nobody knows,
It wasn't sent by God,
It has been hidden in our ever-developing planet

It is more deadly than fire or flood
And the world, so used to freedom, is silenced
In one smack on its hand
And God said OK,

In a way more powerful than any campaigners' cries
"Stay quiet for a while,
Stop the greed and the inequality
Stop polluting my clean air with your travel
Let me heal my world with fish in rivers that are barren
Be grateful for your lot!

Take a look outside your windows
At a world more beautiful than you have ever noticed;
Stop filling your days with a pointless chase
After everything you don't need

Think not of yourselves
But of others - always
Wave as you pass strangers from afar -
Think before you act

AND THEN....

When I have healed my world,
Step out and play once more
But!!! This time, play nicely"

*With love from
Your Father in Heaven*

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23. 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
24. 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

1. Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
2. Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
3. Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
5. For example, the Crusades (4,3)
6. 11 Across is certainly this (5)
7. He reps (anag.) (6)
9. Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
13. Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)

14. They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
15. The human mind or soul (6)
16. 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
18. 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
20. Bared (anag.) (5)

*For answers to this crossword —
see page 25.*

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A couple of cartoons to remind you of days gone, and days that shall come again.



*Helen went to church three weeks running,
so she was co-opted to the P.C.C.*



*"The organist isn't too sure about it,
he says he can't play that fast."*



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- 2 A S P L T W
- 3 A G T M C T A E
- 4 A F in L and W
- 5 A W T E W
- 6 A T G I N G
- 7 A W and N P M J A D B
- 8 A P I a S
- 9 A N Q and B T N L
- 10 B N T F
- 12 B I I T E O T B
- 13 B C B C
- 14 B L N E
- 15 A B I T H I B T O I T B
- 16 B O A F T
- 17 B I T T W
- 18 B W B B
- 19 C B A H
- 20 C S B S a N H
- 21 C C B O A Y
- 22 C I N T G
- 23 T C O T L N R S
- 24 C Y C A T Y C
- 25 T D H I J B T D

Think you've got them all? Email your answers to
brianwheeler1944@gmail.com

Shoreline

Editor: Adam Tinworth 07414 109009
shorelineeditor@hotmail.com

Advertising: Trish Holme 01273 455323
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ShoreLine is the parish magazine of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Shoreham Beach and is provided as a service to the community and the congregation. The church is part of the Church of England's Diocese of Chichester and is also part of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

If you would like further information on the Church of England and its beliefs, please use the 'Useful Links' on the back cover.

The magazine is also available as a PDF file on the church website: the address is on the back cover.

Any and all contributions are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor by the 15th of each month. Contributions should ideally be as a Word or rtf file. Please send to the editor's e-mail above.

For advertising requirements, please contact Trish Holme direct on the above telephone number or email address. Advertising copy deadline is the 15th of each month for inclusion the following month.



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Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

Final Thoughts

Keeping in touch, with the church shut and social distancing necessary.

ShoreLine has been produced in some odd places. The very first issue I did was actually laid out in Singapore, where I was training some local journalists over there. It's been produced at various hotels over the years — and Tom Foolery must get a mention as a frequent “office” for the magazine.

This issue, it won't surprise you to learn, has been produced entirely at home. And I imagine that the May issue will be, too, given the current situation. Some of us are only leaving home for exercise and essential supplies, others to support those who are in need and vulnerable.

And some of you reading this might well be settled in at home for 12 weeks, to protect you from the virus.

As I mentioned to my wife, it's as if we've all been playing a giant game of musical chairs - and suddenly the music has stopped, and you're stuck where you are. I'm thankful I'm in a place I love with people I

love. And truly impressed by how quickly the church has organised to support those who are less fortunate.

As you've probably noticed by now, most of the issue has been devoted to the pandemic. This is not a time when just a single magazine a month will suffice. So, to help keep communication flowing, I'll be helping keep the website updated.

Both CoGS and St Mary's have been quick to “pivot” to online services, with Canon Ann and Revd Jane taking a leap into the unknown as YouTubers. You'll be able to find regular information, sermon videos and readings on the website, on Facebook, and via the weekly email. Please check them out - there's information about them all on the back cover.

Best wishes to you all. Keep well, safe and do reach out if you need assistance.

Adam

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