

Old Malden News



The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist, Malden

April 2020

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Old Malden News

**The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden**
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Communication during the Crisis

It is very important for us to stay in touch with one another over the coming days and weeks. In many ways we are waiting during the calm before the storm and events will likely move very quickly once the Coronavirus takes deeper hold in our community. It cannot be said often enough to keep physical distance, especially outside our homes, and to keep washing our hands! The Ministry Team and I will be regularly contacting people especially thought to be vulnerable. If you want to add your name to the list, please reply to this mailing and we'll pop you on too.

I want to ask you all to seriously consider keeping in touch with us through Facebook and by phone or email. If you fall ill and are alone or the whole house is ill, contact us straightaway and we will do all that we can to help you. In this time of isolation we can share news, check in with one another, and cheer one another up via our St John's People private Facebook group. The Communication Team will try to keep the website updated with news as well as links to our Sunday Service for One so that you can join in. Contacts posted below.

St John's Website: www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk

St John's Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/638587582995188/?ref=group_header

Worship from home

Daily Prayers- https://mcusercontent.com/d0fc454c51d7e9daa986cd29a/files/758ffe05-0baa-4927-b9c9-b2126b5bb7c3/midweek_worship_at_home_0.pdf

Prayers

https://mcusercontent.com/d0fc454c51d7e9daa986cd29a/files/b012ee35-2f0e-4ec6-b5e5-e2fe9365a362/personal_prayers.pdf

To be honest these past few days have been the stuff of bad dreams, things so improbable and ridiculous that they are only frightening when you are asleep. All the threat and menace fades away quickly in the morning light and makes you laugh that you could ever be scared of anything so silly. And for a brief moment every morning I think that this has all been just a silly dream, so nonsensical that it couldn't possibly be true. Sadly they aren't figments of my imagination. This is the reality that we must deal with as best we can. And so the day begins.

Anyone who has heard me preach or spent any time with me, will know that I tell stories, lots of stories, maybe too many stories; but life is full of people and places that make for good stories and often have a point to make as well. I hope this one is no different. For five years, in my mid-twenties, I worked as a Ward Secretary in the North Carolina Children's Hospital. It was a place of laughter and joy, and sometimes heartache and sadness. I wouldn't be here doing what I do today had it not been for those five years as they shaped me. It was also there on the wards that my vocation to ministry was first pointed out to me, but that's another story.

I began hospital life working the evening shift, 3:30pm until midnight, on the Paediatric Cancer ward. Evenings always started out busy, settling the new admissions in and transcribing the doctors' orders for tests the following day and ordering medication. By nine or ten things were usually quiet, the children fast asleep and the staff catching up on their nurses' notes. Most nights after my shift, I would catch other secretaries and we'd walk out to the car park together, but one night I got side-tracked.

After handing over to the night shift, I walked across the hospital to the General Paediatric ward to catch my friends on their way home. No one was at the desk so I went down the corridor to the second unit. No secretary there either and it was very dim. One nurse could be seen rushing from room to room, making her rounds. All was not quiet though! In a small room on the far side was a little African-American girl about twelve months old. She sat bolt upright in her cot crying the house down, the kind of crying that often makes a baby sick. If there's one thing I cannot bear, it's leaving a baby to cry. I couldn't find the nurse at that point so I went into the room, lifted her out of her cot, and wrapped her in a little baby blanket. She called "Mommy, Mommy!" sobbing all the while. She reached up to me, grabbed my collar and held on for dear life. I sat down with her in the rocking chair, talked to her as soothingly as possible, and sang the "Grand Old Duke of York" for good measure. She stopped crying and then lay like a limp little ragdoll on my chest as we rocked and rocked. She drifted off to sleep and all sense of time melted away. Some time later the nurse came into the room saying how grateful she was, that the other nurse had been called away and she'd been left alone on the ward. The little girl had been admitted that evening and her parents hadn't arrived from upstate yet. Together we put her back to bed and tiptoed to the door, trying not to make a sound and wake her up. I took the lift down to the lobby and walked out into the still warm September night. I thought to myself that I may have done a little good turn, but not sure if it would make any real difference. Life has since taught me that every good deed, however small or fleeting, does make a difference, often one we never get to see but a difference nonetheless.

I'm sure that the feelings we all are having are varied. Some are enjoying the enforced time at home, others are bored, many uneasy, and a lot of us rather fearful and frightened of what lies around the corner. If someone had told me that something like this would ever happen in this day and age, I would have said they had been watching some very silly science fiction films. But this isn't science fiction, it's science fact, and the facts are that we need to stay put as much as possible to save as many lives as possible. We need to hold tight and pray that a vaccine and/ or treatments will come to the fore and save the day. In the meantime we wait.

It is okay to be afraid. We don't know yet what the impact will be on ourselves and those we love, but that doesn't mean we don't have hope. We have every reason to hope. God is not punishing us nor is he testing us. God is dealing with the situation that he is faced with, trying to bring out the best possible outcome. We need to do our part and keep praying for a solution, keep supporting one another, and hold on to the greatest gift of all, God himself who is with us come what may. All we need to do is reach out to God and he will do the rest.

That little girl all those years ago found herself in a strange and frightening place. Her mother wasn't there, her father wasn't there. She didn't know anyone. She had no idea what was going to happen. But then something rather ordinary happened. A young man stood talking at his desk too long, missing his friends, and searching for them until a cry caught his attention. He'd been sent, though he did not know it at the time. Although her world had been turned upside down and she felt lost and all alone, she found something to hold onto that would carry her through the storm. She recognised love in the arms that held her, the gentle voice pushed back the darkness. She found all she needed in that moment. Tomorrow her mother would arrive and eventually she would go home, safe and sound.

We all have the ability to be a source of comfort and strength to those who need us. God is likely nudging us to help others who are worried, to make a connection with someone who needs to hear a reassuring voice, to share a burden, to bring a laugh or a smile to brighten up the darkness. That is something within us all. So please do keep on doing what you're doing because you shouldn't underestimate how much even the smallest gesture means at a time like this. Corvid-19 will not win. It will be defeated. We can do our part by staying at home and taking care of one another.

Michael

"God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them."

While in isolation....

While we all have more time on our hands at home I thought It would be wonderful to showcase any craft projects, drawings, paintings, gardening projects or anything you have been putting off but now have had time to complete. I have decided to start my own little project, a drawing a day while in isolation. I hope that when we come out the other side of this, I can display them or even create a video montage! Here are my first two days.

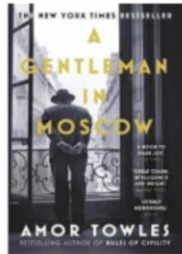


So, email me your photos, or diary logs or videos and we can all stay connected and enjoy in each other's pastimes.

administrator@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk

Amy Chan

Parish Administrator



At our March meeting discussed 'A Gentleman in Moscow' by the American author Amor Towles. This novel was enjoyed by the majority of us and we came to know Count Alexander Rostov and his friends extremely well. Count Alexander Rostov is under 'house arrest' for writing a seditious poem. Instead of being shot, he is incarcerated in this luxury hotel for years and years. After a while he becomes a waiter and his meticulous eye to detail comes in very useful

There are some lovely humorous incidents in the book – and I like particularly the time when management removes all the labels from the wine bottles so there is no distinction between good and bad, A communist ethic?

Alexander faces everyday with great dignity and strength of character. He comes to realise what is important in his life. The ending is a lovely surprise and a clever twist of circumstances. A book with a great 'feel-good' factor and beautifully written. Average score of 9/10 and we recommend it.



Our current read is 'Friends in Berlin' by Anthony Quinn, set in London during WWII and the Blitz. It is an intriguing spy thriller. Amy has set up a dating agency: one of her clients, named Jack Hoste works as an ARP warden but is also tracing Nazi sympathisers, one of whom, Marita was a friend of Amy's in the 1930s.

It is a good read – and a story of romance, betrayal and danger in war-torn London.

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus, all social groups at St John's have been suspended so we shall not be meeting until the situation improves. However, on the positive side, many of us will have even more opportunity to read and catch up with all those books we have been meaning to read for some time.....

A suggestion for the next book is 'The Doll Factory' by Elizabeth Macneal. This historical-thriller novel is set in 1850s London with references to the Pre-Raphaelites and The Great Exhibition. I thought it was a good read so I shall be interested to hear your views.



We look forward to the resumption of our Reading Group, but until then, Happy Reading.

Marilyn Burkett

Sermon

4th Sunday in Lent

The news is dark and gloomy, we must be honest with ourselves. What the world is experiencing now is unprecedented. Epidemics are, of course, nothing new. They have impacted human history from the beginning. What is different is the level of communication that constantly intrudes and alarms us. Every ping of the mobile phone heralds conflicting headlines and accusations that the authorities are not doing the right thing. Worse still is the level of misinformation that deepens fear and anxiety, much of it wilfully propagated and unwittingly shared. The same forces that caused such division in our elections and political life have now turned their hands to causing division and mistrust between us across the country and here in our own community. We need to listen to the advice from the medical community and use our common sense.

The keen-eyed will realise that the Bible reading is not one we would have for Mothering Sunday. I had decided to shelve that particular celebration as it is so hard to do alone and I had something much more important to say. The reading I had in mind was John 9 and as it just so turns out the set reading for the day if a church is NOT keeping Mothering Sunday. How fortuitous for your humble preacher.

Now to the Gospel. We are rightly shocked at the disciples questioning Jesus as to who had sinned to cause the man to be blind from birth. Their world view, and one that is still with us in many places, is that illness and handicap were seen as divine punishment for sin. Every effect had to have a logical cause and before scientific and medical understanding taught us otherwise, the most likely explanation for these was that the person suffering was somehow responsible for the challenges they struggled with. But Jesus had no truck with this commonplace notion and dismissed it out of hand. God does not and is not punishing us for anything! The whole world would be in and out of hospital all the time if God did such a thing. No, just like the impending climate crisis, human beings have a hand in the outbreak, but God is not using it to even the score. Jesus was clear with his disciples, the man's blindness was an **opportunity**, an opportunity to show God at work in the here and now.

Just imagine what life for this man must have been like. Spending day after day begging for a living near the Temple gates, depending on the kindness of passers by. He may not have known if he would have anything to eat each day as he took his place with the other beggars. It is even possible that his parents also depended on him financially. But what he lacked in money, the blind man more than made up for in faith. He didn't doubt Jesus' words or intention when they met. Jesus making mud echoes the second creation story in Genesis when God made Adam out of the dust of the earth. Jesus explains that he is the light of the world, a light most of the Pharisees cannot bring themselves to acknowledge. They themselves are divided between those who think this Jesus may very well be a prophet because of the miracles he performs, and those who dismiss him out of hand because he has healed on the Sabbath and no one among the righteous would ever break the Law. They themselves are spotlessly pure in their own minds, so this Jesus cannot possibly teach them anything. The blind man is sent just as Jesus was sent by the Father, to help others see that God is at work in their midst. The man testifies boldly to his

family, friends, and the Pharisees to what Jesus has done for him. He even acclaims him as “Lord” and worships Jesus because he has encountered the living God face-to-face and his life is changed forever.

Over the past few days all our lives have been changed forever as well. The comfortable routine and the certainties of life, have been put on hold. We aren’t sure what we will be eating day after day, it is not simply a matter of popping to the shop and fulfilling our every desire. What was once taken for granted as predictable and safe has been turned upside down. We are worried and afraid, and quite rightly so. But if we are going to get through the days and weeks ahead, we need to ground ourselves in faith that, come what may, we will be all right. We need to put our faith in the one who is still the light of the world, trusting in his love and care for us, because he alone can give us the confidence and assurance we need to weather this storm. The big difference will be that we will have to work harder to make that spiritual connection that feeds us as the Church building will no longer be the focus of our shared life. We can’t just turn up at Church and be carried by the music, the worship, and the face-to-face fellowship that has served us so well through the years. Even when we have been distracted or out of sorts, just being at a service has buoyed us along emotionally and spiritually. Letting go of this facet of our spiritual lives is a bitter pill to swallow, but hopefully will be only a temporary one until it is safe again to gather and share together in person. In the meantime, we have a new **opportunity** to be Church in a new and different way.

Our prayer lives need to broaden and deepen, they aren’t just for Sunday mornings or stuck inside those four walls. Prayer will continue in Church as I pray the Daily Office, but all of us can grab a few minutes catch-as-catch-can and talk to God. We need that space to decompress, to share our concerns and hopes, to pray for ourselves and those we love, as well as for the wider world. We all can be a light to someone else who may be struggling or down at the situation we find ourselves in. The revolution in communication has opened the door to constant headlines and misinformation, but it also has the capability of keeping us connected even in isolation. The internet is a useful tool, as is the telephone. Do continue to use them as much as possible to keep in touch with each other. We will learn a lot about ourselves as a Church community. We may discover new strengths and reorder our priorities. We need each other and Old Malden needs us in this dark time. Let us put our trust in the one true light of the world, and shine for all to see in his reflected brilliance so that all may find comfort, strength, and hope in our hour of need. Amen.



Anyone for Murder!

Barby Doll was thought to be murdered and others, all members of Wollatonne Tennis Club, were suspects. Who did it though? While enjoying a 'Wimbledon Tennis' style meal of 'chicken kebab' followed by 'strawberries and cream', the guests tried to solve the mystery with the help of the cast:



Ken Doll, Barby's husband - Lynn Sanger, John Macintosh - Andy Down
Martina Nuttyturnover - Sally Josolyne, Pete Compass - Les Stow
Serena Woolliams - Anne Beales, Venus Woolliams - Margaret Barrington
The Inspector/ Umpire - Graham Boland



Our Murder Mystery Evening in March was thoroughly enjoyed by all, thanks to Lynn, the cast and the Fundraising team.

An enjoyable evening all round!

Our elders were called to
war to save lives.
We are being called to sit
on the couch to save theirs.
We can do this.



The current advice (or instruction) that all households with vulnerable adults, which includes us, should stop at home has reminded me of events 72 years ago. A major news item at that time was not the Corona virus but polio, then usually referred to by its other name of infantile paralysis, a crippling disease which left many young people paralysed. My sister caught polio, apparently while we were on a family holiday in Devon. She was not hospitalized, but nursed at home with the family doctor and the district nurse calling frequently. I was also ill for a short time with what proved to be an unrelated infection, but it meant that my mother had the additional problem of keeping three children apart. I recall my parents commenting appreciatively on the new National Health Service, without which the medical bill would have been enormous.

My brother and I could not go to school, though I doubt whether missing a period of primary education did either of us much harm. We could go out in the garden when the weather was fine, but we were not allowed to play with the neighbouring children. My father, who taught apprentices at the nearby RAF technical school, was not allowed to work, but that was a blessing in disguise. We had recently moved from wartime temporary accommodation to a newly built, but not quite finished, bungalow. My father spent his quarantine 'holiday' dealing with bare brick internal walls and painting the whole house. Milk and groceries were delivered, but left outside the house to be picked up after the delivery men had gone.

The world has changed greatly over my lifetime. A memory that will certainly remain from our present experience is how neighbours, some of whom we knew only slightly, have contacted us to offer help.

Brian Bowers



AWAY FROM IT ALL

As spring comes, many think about summer holiday plans, but others have little hope of that. This Mothers' Union programme, largely funded by members, gives the opportunity for a break to those experiencing stress in their family life. The MU may cover all



or part of the cost to make holidays possible for those who otherwise could not afford one. In an average year AFIA enables some 2500 people across the UK to have a holiday (200 from Southwark), including some with disabilities. Families are able to spend time away from stressful situations at home, engage in activities together, and have fun. A child has his first sight of the sea, a woman is helped with the cost of travel to see a new grandchild, strained relationships get a chance to heal in a different environment, a family gets a chance to reconnect with a member newly released from prison. Southwark families enjoy a week at St Leonard's on Sea, while two busloads of mothers and children living in refuges because of domestic abuse are able to enjoy a day out.

How many are helped each year depends on how much is raised for the AFIA fund. If anyone is moved to support this, please have a word with Pauline Armour, who chairs St John's MU, or Liz Pullen, our branch treasurer. Does anyone here know a family who should be referred for such help? The criteria is their need, rather than church attendance.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Julian Meetings from home

We at The Julian Meetings hope you are all keeping well. We are writing to you as first contact for your meeting. We will be grateful if you can pass this information onto your members.

This is to let you know that Bob who runs the online Julian Meetings is now running this every week on Mondays and Wednesdays 7.30pm. See our Events page for details of how to join. It is very easy.

He is also running an early morning meditation, and services of Morning and Evening Prayer (Church of England Common Worship version) Monday - Friday. Please see the News section of the website for details.

www.thejulianmeetings.net

These are open to all so please do pass the information on to any friends who may be interested.

You might be considering setting up your own online Julian Meetings. If you would like information about some audio/video conferencing software that people are using for virtual meetings please email me.

We can also put these on your meeting entry and in our Events calendar.

Best Wishes

Ann Moran on behalf of The Julian Meetings National Council





friends of
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REVIVIFY MANOR PARK! FUND OUR NEW PLAYGROUND

Join our community crowdfund campaign to help raise funds to pay for an amazing new playground in our Manor Park.

The community working together with Kingston Council,
local businesses and the Mayor of London to help fund a better playground.



Dear Neighbour,

We're writing to let you know about our crowdfund campaign, to raise funds for a brand-new playground in Manor Park, and how you can take part.

Our existing playground is past its sell-by date. Our current equipment is not very exciting, it doesn't spark the imagination, or stretch a child's ability. It's looking tired and shabby, and needs replacing.

An exciting playground for ALL our local children. Imagine how amazing it would be if we had a brand-new playground, catering for a wide age range. A dedicated play area for infants, and an adventure play space for the under 14s.

The community working with Kingston Council. As part of Kingston Council's playground improvement programme, they've got us off to a great start by allocating £140,000 towards this crowdfund campaign. Our campaign target is £195,000, **leaving us £55,000 to raise.**

And that's where you come in....

We're looking to you - the community, to back this campaign with small individual pledges, we'll then approach local businesses to help boost this. We also hope that the Mayor of London will make a generous donation, as he did last time.

How much will the new playground cost in total? Depending on final designs, created with the help of community workshops and public consultations, the total playground cost will be £250,000-£300,000. This £195,000 will enable us to build the first phase by January 2021 with extra elements added as the additional funds are raised. The more we raise, the better our playground will be.

How to make a pledge: It's really easy....

Visit our spacehive crowdfund page or use the QR code below.

Many thanks for your support,
Simeon Linstead and Fiona Sowell,
from the Friends of Manor Park team

Email: team@ourmanorpark.org.uk

ourmanorpark.org.uk



FriendsofManorPark



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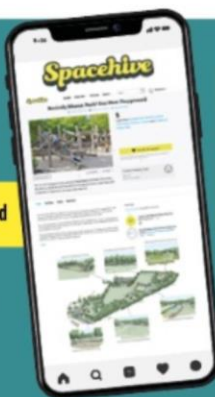


www.spacehive.com/revivifymanorpark-ournewplayground



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