

GRAPEVINE

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Food Appeal

Matthew 25:35 *“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” New International Version – UK*

Friends,

The lockdown has not been easy for us in the UK and some of us have lost loved ones in very sad circumstances. We have missed many things including freedom to go where we want, when we want; to have a haircut, a meal with family and friends, fellowship at church. Now some of those things are opening up for us and we are uncertain how to move back into the slightly more normal. Church attendance is once more possible, we can have a haircut... a meal with friends, but it is still not normal and we don't feel entirely safe. Covid-19 has not gone away and many things will not feel normal until a vaccine is readily available. But we should thank God (literally) that things seem to be under control now.

That is not the case around the world, Tear Fund reports that in many parts of the developing world Covid-19 has brought an even worse killer with it, that



of starvation. <https://www.tearfund.org/en/2020/04/in-zimbabwe-people-fear-starvation-even-more-than-coronavirus/> In Purulia staff from the Leprosy Mission report that there is a lack of food for the patients. In Rukungiri, Uganda, the

children have been sent home and there is no food for many of the children, and staff are visiting homes and giving what they can. Open Doors reports the fact that aid is not being given to persecuted Christians so they starve (<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/covid-19/>).

The PCC made the decision to make an appeal to St John's so we can send money to the Leprosy Mission, to Open Doors and to Rukungiri to help them with food at this time of need. We agreed to underwrite £1,000 for each of them – please consider how you could give towards this. Please make sure you mark any donations to St John's for this purpose with the words 'Food Appeal' and we will make sure it gets to where it is needed. How to donate is [here](#).

Jesus' words and our one stained glass window make it very clear that He requires His people to feed the hungry. Many blessings, I look forward to seeing you soon,

God bless,
Adam

Adam Foot, Vicar St. John's Welling and Priest in Charge St. John's Erith

St John's News

"More of the same, more of the same", has become the default answer to the question, "What are you doing today.. this week.....?"

But things are beginning to change. A weekly zoom chat I have with longstanding friends, increasingly has one or more of us unable to join in because of family or other commitments. Regulars at zoom prayer sessions have returned to work or even managed to go on holiday. There is the possibility of joining Sunday worship in church (albeit still the recorded service at least in the morning).

• So, are we returning to normal?... or, more likely, having to grow into a new normal?

• How, as we emerge from lockdown, is our relationship with God, with each other?

• What have we learnt from the past four months about our faith, our worship, our interface with pre Christian friends, neighbours and family?

• How can we apply what we have learnt as we move into the future?

PCC spent some time discussing these and similar questions and you may have the opportunity to share your thoughts with your House Group, or if easier, (or you are not in a House Group), let me (Estelle) know via email, a telephone chat or message (07718476670, estellewoodcock@icloud.com).

In the immediate future we look forward to Sparkonline. Maybe just over by the time you read this, but we need to pray that the need for, and reality of, a loving

God, to impact every family that joined in.

We are offering the Alpha course online starting in September. Many churches are reporting significant take up for this, and we pray that for Welling too.

Family News

We are delighted that Gordon, Csilla, Gareth and Iona MacBean have joined us as Gordon becomes our Curate but sad that Alison Hawthorn and her husband have moved to Broadstairs. We couldn't even say a proper welcome to Gordon or goodbye to Alison.

Our Congratulations to Doreen Pride and Twink Upson who have recently celebrated significant birthdays. Congratulations to Sean Hill who has graduated with a First class degree Have the best August and September you can, till October!

Estelle Woodcock

Introducing: Gordon MacBean

may occasionally ask for a brief precis of what has been discussed as



ground is wide thanks to my seven and a half years in Lee Abbey London community. HTB, All Souls Langham Place, charismatic, evangelical and Anglo Catholic Churches. Thanks to my musical mother, I grew up with BCP Evensong. My father was a lay minster and churchwarden in most Churches where we settled.

Please remember that because I am profoundly hard of hearing I have to lipread, so if you face me when we talk, I will be okay.

Please note that in Zoom meetings, it can be difficult for me to hear dates/times. So to be sure I "get the message", put the salient information in the Zoom chat or email me: revdmacbean@gmail.com. I

sometimes the changes in topic can leave me floundering at times. Forgive me for asking you to repeat things, but I need to be sure I've not missed what is being said.

I met my wife Csilla at Lee Abbey and she is from Hungary. We have two teenage children, Gareth who is going to study Paleontology at Portsmouth and Iona is doing sixth form. Csilla is a teacher in a nursery school in Abbey Wood.

We have two cats, I am pescatarian. When we can, we like to travel and we enjoy music. We are looking forward to being in the St John's family and rejoicing in the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kind regards,
Gordon and Csilla

My name is Gordon MacBean. I grew up in South Africa, living in both suburban and rural communities. My worship back-

JOBS COLUMN: Allison Caddock

Allison was not born locally, as you can tell from her delightful Scottish accent. Until her parents separated when she was 10, she lived NE of Glasgow, and for 3 years of it right by a loch, the Gare Loch where the Fastlane Submarine Base is. In 1976 she moved with her mum to Abbey Wood, where her mum's family lived, then into a flat in Thamesmead.

Allison left school at 16, and as she had always enjoyed numbers, she thought it would be a good move to apply to all the banks. Lloyds was the first one that took her. With two children soon to be in the job market, it's pertinent that it was so much easier to find a job then. She was assigned to the Lloyds clearing house near Blackfriars. Back then, the clearing houses processed cheques 24 hours a day. Overnight, vans collected cheques from all branches of all banks in the country and delivered them to the clearing houses of the banks into which they were to be paid (step 1). Each cheque's information was entered onto a big sheet with the sort code, transaction code and amount, to be credited to payees' accounts, and encoded electronically, which Allison did, then sorted automatically into which

bank they came from (step 2). Cheques rejected from the first sorting process (eg illegible, damaged) had to be manually encoded. They were then transported to all the originators' clearing



houses (step 3) from where all batches were collected together, sorted and sent to branches all over the country, for the funds to be deducted from pay-

ers' accounts (step 4). No wonder it took three days to clear a cheque, now some banks allow cheques to be paid in by photographing them.

It was through the bank that Allison and Simon met and married. Allison was born in 1998 and James in 2001. After James' birth, Allison took a year away from work. After 6 months of going back, she was offered redundancy, which she took, as the clearing houses in London were relocating to Northampton. By the following Spring (during which Simon left the bank to work for his father's company), Allison found part-time work at Bexley Grammar School for 4 hours a day - 2 in the finance office and 2 in reception. She loved the finance office, but couldn't say she felt the same about reception, and having joined at Easter, by September when asked to consider moving wholly into finance, she jumped at the chance. Regulations were changing - teachers, who had mostly collected money for trips themselves, were no longer permitted to do so hence there was more to do in the finance office. Allison now works full-time in the finance office, term time plus 1 week.

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This year SPARK in the PARK is taking a virtual trip to the beach as we become secret agents on a mission to the deep sea!

SPARK@HOME

MISSION:

DEEP SEA

MONDAY 27TH JULY
to
FRIDAY 31ST JULY

Daily missions, activities, crafts, songs, and more for children, teens and families!

WWW.SPARKINTHEPARK.ORG.UK

Brought to you by the churches in Welling and Bexleyheath

We are so excited to tell you that this year Spark in the Park is going online and has transformed into Spark@Home!

Our theme is Mission:Deep SEA and you are invited to join in on the mission and to become an S.E.A agent.

Spark Kids are going live, Monday 27th July. Each morning at 11am you will be able to access crafts, songs, videos and stories! Plus competitions that will run throughout the week and a Treasure map that will take you to real Treasure sites which are located all over your community to interact with.

We also have a Spark Youth programme that includes online hangouts, online group gaming and more.

There will also be our Spark Extra programme that includes all age activities and competitions that run throughout the week. Zoom prayer daily 11-11:40 (link on the website).

Please LIKE and SHARE the page and event on Facebook.

Let us know that you will be joining us by clicking GOING Keep an eye out for further details and ways that you can join in! Please use the #SparkatHome

Download, colour and display in your window the Spark@Home poster to show your support! Find us at www.sparkinthepark.org.uk

Spark@Home Team

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From when she began, just administering local school trips (theatres, science, music, sports, exchange visits, etc) and the school fund bank account manually, trips have grown enormously (they regularly take student groups across the world). Two part-time people look after this in 10hr a week; one takes care of the accounts, now all online, and the invoices, mostly likewise. The other runs the paperwork for trips – letters, chasing, EHIC cards, medical forms, passports, liaising with parents and travel bookings and insurance. Allison handles the main school account, nearly all payments are BACS, very few request cheques. The payroll is all outsourced and handled separately.

How much contact does she have with students? Very little in reality, occasionally help is needed with a passport. From long queues at lunchtimes for finance staff, mostly everything is now online. She finds herself the pioneer. She set up the biometric canteen payments system (a fingerprint needed for payments so no cash in school), and Parentpay (an online payment system). Her character is slightly impatient, if she spots it can be done better or quicker, she will make that happen.

"It is an amazing job, I have been so blessed. It's just around the corner, it's grown with our family situation, it's convenient to home, and I work with a great team. It's sometimes very busy, but I can work at my own pace, and it's flexible allowing me time off if needed."

Kate Foot



Life in Lockdown. What a strange few months we have all been through. Who would have imagined seeing videos on FaceBook of Central London totally deserted, roads so much more free of cars, shopping almost exclusively online, queuing to get into the few shops that were open? As someone who lives alone, I thought I would find this time especially difficult. But as usual, our God knew about this in advance, and prepared the way with the wonderful technology that we have become familiar with, and moreover become quite adept at using.

So what has helped me to bear this time? What have been the blessings? Well, firstly, I am blessed by living adjacent to one of the largest open spaces in the borough. Being allowed to exercise has enabled me and my friend and neighbour to witness at first hand the emergence of



spring and summer. We started walking in rain and mud, seeing only bare trees, and today we walked in lovely sunshine with the trees in full leaf, and being able to watch the baby waterfowl grow.

The other joy has been the Zoom prayer meetings every day except Sunday, and the Wednesday Zoom chats. What a blessing! It would have been good to see more folk joining in Zoom prayer. I have had more time to reflect on my walk as a Christian, and to consider what God may have for me in the future. The online services have been a boon, and I have really enjoyed watching them, and contributing to them via the online choir.

I inherited a cat from my neighbours last July when they moved, and that, too, has been a blessing. There's nothing like having another one to care for to stop you feeling sorry for yourself. I've done some reading, and at the moment I am about to take up again Timothy Keller's book on prayer, very deep but very worth-while. The Lectio 365 app has helped me keep my prayer life on track, and I'm currently studying the gospel of Mark via 'The Bible Speaks Today', again, very deep but very good.

There have been downsides, of course. The physical presence of friends and family has been very much missed, but praise God again for means of communication by phone, video, WhatsApp and FaceTime. I am so looking forward to hugging and being hugged again. That has been sorely missed. I have to admit that lockdown is wearing a bit thin now, but one thing I have never felt is fear. I have truly known that peace of God which passes all understanding, because when it comes down to it, He is in control.

Apart from hugs, I am so looking forward to the time when we can all worship together back in St. John's, not because that's the only place

where we can worship God, it isn't, but because Scripture encourages us not to neglect meeting together. Apart from that, wonderful as modern technology is, it can't take the place of face-to-face contact.

May the Lord bless you, make His face shine upon you, and give you His peace. With love,

Lesley South

Jesus, Covid & Me

..... **My Lockdown** Lock down soak up the vibrant colours of 2020 has meant a much busier life Creation. and less time for 'me'. It has brought Joy, Sadness and Revelation.

It has been a joy for Keith and myself to share in the wonder and joys of Home School with Abigail especially in Science and Music. The wonder and excitement have been rewarding and countered



Sadness sharing in the worry, anxiety and grief of family and friends waiting for urgent appointments and unable to visit dying parents. Missing hugs and warmth of touch.

the exhaustion! Joy in perfect Spring days crowned with azure blue skies, intense and beautiful bird song, no aircraft noise or pollution. PEACE! Joy learning new skills, group apps, zoom family time and prayer sessions. Joy listening to the Sunday Service and seeing baby robins bathe in the bird bath outside at the same time. Joy for Keith and me to sit in the garden and

Revelation with the story of Jesus stretching out and touching the man with Leprosy. A man in physical, social, and emotional isolation due to the ravages of Leprosy and Jesus touched the man and gave total healing. Jesus understood then and now the need for touch and relationship! After Covid 19 we all understand that need a little better too!!! **Jackie Mackley**

As the Nation entered lockdown I received a text from my GP and a letter from the Government advising me to "Shield" for 12 weeks! So the taxi was parked up and I virtually locked myself away. As it happens, being in

Lockdown has been a great opportunity to get closer to God, I've completed the Pete Greig 8 session "How to Pray" course, me & Terry are completing the



Bible Study Course and whilst I'm enjoying the discussions with Terry, what's been great is actually praying with Terry. We've done some virtual tours of Jerusalem via You Tube. We visited Val & Ray (2m rule observed) to pick their knowledge on gardening and have planted, strawberries, runner beans, courgettes and cucumbers to try my hand -

watch this space as I'm no Percy Thrower! I've also done some DIY, painting the kitchen cabinets and the hallway. For my daily exercise we walked and found some lovely parks (and churchyards!) that we didn't know ex-

isted and are so beautiful. What's been really hard is not being able to visit Jeff and Kim and see

Phoebe and our new grandson Jessie and having a hug with Linzi!

Technology has played a major role especially zoom, it allowed Kingdom Builders to continue and it always amazes me how enthusiastic all the young lads are and I can't wait to meet up with them! Until we return to St John's, stay safe & God Bless. **Jim Golding**

I believe we have been rewarded at this very uncertain time. The first stage of 'lockdown' blessed us with beautiful weather and many of us were able to enjoy our gardens. The awareness of birdsong has been beautiful.

I have, like many of us, have felt isolated not being able to meet with friends and family. The wonderful technology that has been made available to many of us have met with these feelings of isolation. The "Zoom" application has been wonderful to hook up with folk and has been great to meet with friend



groups at church. I am very grateful to those who have been able to put together the Sunday worship 'streams'.

Week by week filling a different room in our house with God's presence in word and song not forgetting a memorable service enjoyed in the garden amongst flowers, butterflies and birdsong was wonderful. Daily times with our Lord with the "Lectio 365" online devotional program have been extremely spiritually supportive.

Graham Condy