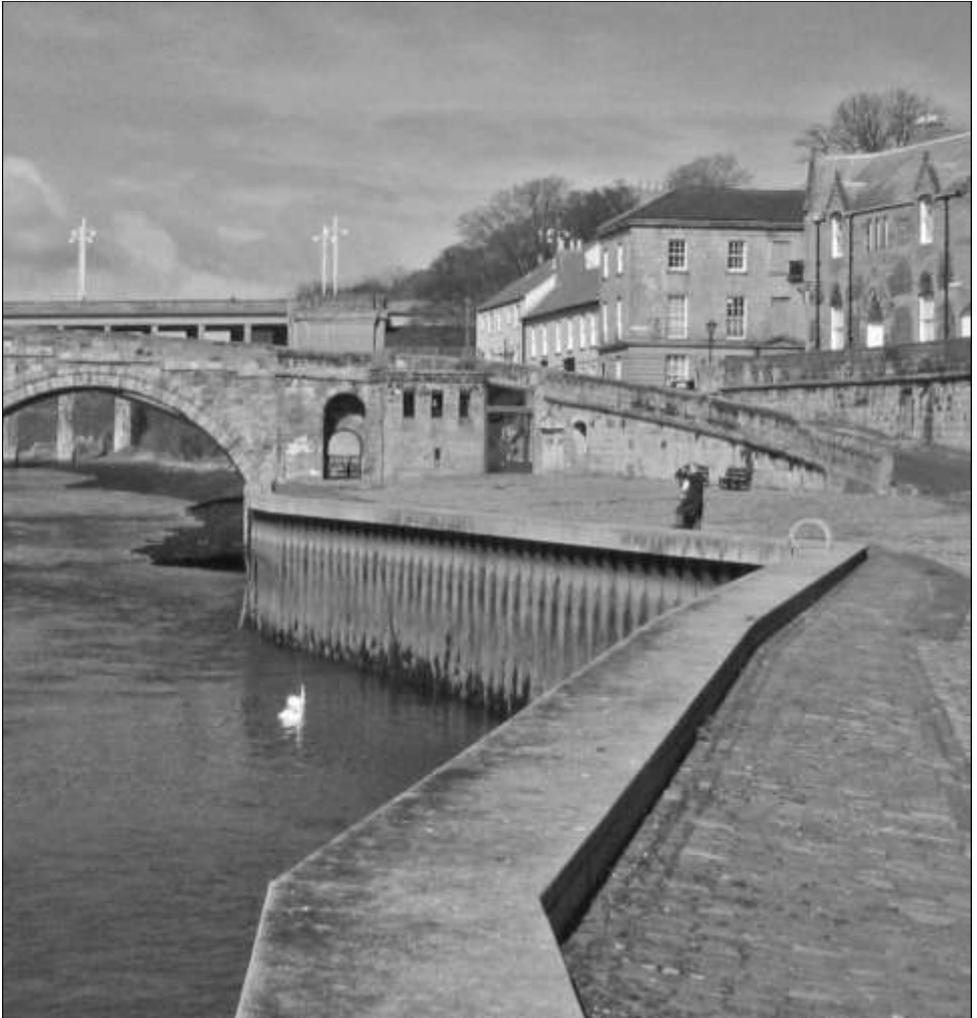




The ARCH Messenger

*To show our love for God and You
February 2021*



Abbots Morton, Rous Lench, Church Lench & Harvington
www.archbenefice.org.uk

ARCH Benefice: parishes of Abbots Morton, Rous Lench, Church Lench and Harvington

Rector: The Reverend Canon Richard Thorniley
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Office hours: 9.30am to 9.30pm Monday-Thursday, Saturday;
day off: Friday; Sunday afternoons: quiet space
Urgent pastoral matters – any time

Readings

7 th February	Proverbs 8:1, 22-31; Psalm 104:26-37; Colossians 1:15-20; John 1:1-14
14 th February	2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9
17 th February Ash Wednesday	Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
21 st February	Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-9; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15
28 th February	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38
7 th March	Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19:7-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
14 th March Mothering Sunday	Exodus 2:1-10; Psalm 34:11-20; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Luke 2:33-35
21 st March	Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-13; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33
28 th March Palm Sunday	Mark 14:1-15:47

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www.archbenefice.org.uk
to submit editorial or enquire about advertising.

Thought for the month

Who are you? – a thought for Lent

'Hello! Who are you?' I wonder how you would reply. It probably depends on who is asking, but, in general, what would you say? Or, what if you're asked, 'What do you do?' or 'Where do you come from?' Do you find those easy to answer, or not? More importantly, do our answers to those questions define us? Aren't we much more than just what we do, or where we come from?

So, who are you? Not 'What is your name?' but what makes you the wonderful and unique person that you are? And do you realise how special you are?

In the gospel reading from the first Sunday in Lent (*Mark 1:9-15, Mark's gospel starts with a bang!*), we read how Jesus truly realised who he was. Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist, just like the others who came to John at the River Jordan. But, as he comes up from the water, Jesus hears a voice, God's voice, saying to him, 'You are my beloved Son'. Jesus then – 'immediately' Mark says – goes into the wilderness where He can explore what that means for Him. We sometimes focus very quickly on the three temptations, but Mark doesn't even mention them in detail. He says only that He was tempted while He spent 40 days among the wild animals. And 'angels waited on Him'. In the Bible, angels are a way of talking about the presence of God. God was with Him.

What's truly amazing is that God loves us all like that! We too are God's beloved and valued sons and daughters. When we are in the wilderness – whatever that means and whatever that feels like in our lives – angels wait on us. God is with us. As we begin this year's Lent, think about what it means that you are God's much-loved child.

No matter who you are or what you have done, **you are God's much-loved** child.

From 'Roots on the Web' thought for the week

Stop date for next issue: Monday 8th February

Rector's Corner

Midweek Holy Communion (BCP): *Replaced by recorded midweek reflection*

Tuesday prayers:
Benefice prayers: *Suspended until further notice*
Home Communion:

Daily prayers: via Zoom – contact me for details
8.30am and 6pm (e-mail rector@archbenefice.org.uk)

Men's Night Wednesday 10th February, 7.30pm, via Zoom, for approx 45 minutes. Come, see, sip and socialise – be refreshed and refreshing! It works, after a fashion...
Link to be supplied closer to the night

From the Registers

Rous Lench

30th December Funeral Michael Gisbourne

Church Lench

29th December Wedding Wayne Lloyd and Paula Amer

Harvington

27th November Funeral Sheila Whitehouse

7th December Funeral Mabel Stockton

Pastoral calls and contacts

If you know of anyone who could do with a phone call or help for any reason, please let me know. I am NEVER so busy that I cannot fit in a call to someone who needs it. If you want to get in touch, please do – I love a chat!

Thoughts on Lent from Bishop John

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 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 so 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 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 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 of Worcester

Thank you!

A huge *thank you* for the incredibly generous support for our Christmas Present appeal. Bags and bags of high-quality items and £50 cash were donated by the parishes of Rous Lench/Radford, Church Lench and Harvington and handed to The Salvation Army in Evesham. The presents were wrapped and distributed locally to those in need aged 3-93.

Thank you very, very much to everyone who participated.

Notices

Heating oil delivery dates for the ARCH buying group

Evesons Fuels: 01905 775920

Thursdays: 11th February, 11th March, 8th April, 13th May, 10th June
Phone your order to Evesons by 5pm on the preceding Monday

Collections – please keep helping local needs

Thank you to everyone for the generous supplies for the local food bank and presents via the Salvation Army at Christmas. Both organisations were very appreciative of your generosity. It was heart-warming to see the back of an estate car filled with gifts before Christmas – huge thanks!

The demand is not going away, so if you could maintain your giving many local families will be grateful. We are continuing to look for cleaning items, toiletries and similar, rather than food, as this is what our local food bank has requested. If you can, please drop your items into church on a Sunday or Wednesday and they will be delivered to Caring Hands in Evesham.

Richard Thorniley

Carol singing at Christmas

A few of us die-hards enjoyed carol singing in a socially-distanced fashion on our front door steps or drives on Christmas Eve – the weather was perfect. Some also walked around Harvington singing carols in the street over a couple of evenings and it was lovely to have people joining in or watching from windows and doors.

It was not the same as normal years, but it enabled lungs to be cleared and reminded us how much we were out of practice – even short spells of carol singing led to worn-out throats! Hopefully we will be able to enjoy communal singing later this year... if so, we will organise some public events and, together with friends and neighbours, let rip!

Richard Thorniley

How to handle temptation

'I can resist everything but temptation' (Oscar Wilde). During Lent we remember Jesus' experience in the wilderness when *'He was led by the Spirit...to be tempted by the devil'* (Matthew 4:1-11). Temptation is a test of obedience; will we do things our way or God's way? After 40 days of fasting, Jesus was tired, hungry and vulnerable. Just like Jesus' experience, the Devil will attack us at our most vulnerable moments, especially during this pandemic.

The first temptation was to turn stones into bread: Jesus' ministry was not about meeting His own needs, but being nourished by God's Word. 'We do not live by bread alone but by every word...from the mouth of God' (Deuteronomy 8:3). Like Jesus, we are called to make God our priority and trust Him completely.

The second temptation was to put God to the test: Jumping off the Temple pinnacle would have been a dramatic way for Jesus to gain popularity, but this is not God's way! 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test' (Deuteronomy 6:16). We too need to learn this lesson!

The third temptation was to worship Satan: Finally, the devil took Jesus to a mountain to offer Him worldly power. In contrast, His calling as Messiah was marked by suffering and honouring God. 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only' (Deuteronomy 6:13). This is often our experience in living for God.

Jesus stands with us in our temptations. As we claim the promises of Scripture, we will find strength in the power of the Spirit and the victory of the Cross.

'If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest!' (Corrie Ten Boom).

Canon Paul Hardingham

Miscellaneous observations...

I don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.

Cleaning is just putting stuff in less obvious places.

If I want to hear the pitter-patter of little feet, I'll put shoes on the cat.

Warning: dates in your calendar are closer than they appear.

How many more waves?

Many of us find the prospect of more restrictions for months to come even harder than when we went into the first lockdown. After eleven months of coronavirus, we are emotionally drained. We are financially drained; lonely, depressed, frightened and facing deep uncertainty, from job losses to health problems to relationship breakdown. We are running out of steam, and the virus is still going strong.

This bears a strong parallel with the ancient book of Job and his experience of loss and pain. Like Job, we are discovering that we are not always entitled to health, wealth, and happiness; and like Job, our suffering inexplicably goes on **and on**. Like the irritating moralising of Job's comforters, the constant critique of the media only seems to make things worse. And, like Job, our minds are incapable of totally grasping the meaning of all this suffering. We need hope.

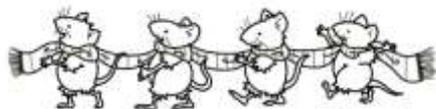
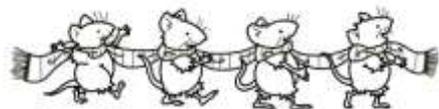
Job was deprived of everything, yet even in his despair he never lost his belief that God was there. Occasionally an indestructible hope burst forth like a ray of light in the darkness of his pain. *'I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God' (Job 19:26).*

But the truly transformative moment for Job came when, instead of seeing his situation in front of God, he finally *saw God in front of his situation*. Then, even in the intensity of his suffering, the greatness of the Almighty eclipsed the problem. That is the revelation we need.

In this sad and weary time, lament is therapeutic and we can be completely real with our Father in Heaven. Yet in our lament, the path to rekindling true hope lies in the possibility of focusing on the character and immensity of God. Greater is He that is in us than the pandemic that is in the world.

Join in with the ancient words of Psalm 42: *'Why are you downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God.'*

Paul Valler



Five things I'd like to see in 2021

I keep hearing people say that 2020 was a 'year like no other'. Many want to leave it behind and look to a happier new year. I've been looking ahead to 2021 and thinking about the five top things I'd like to see during the year. I wonder if you'll agree with them or not? Maybe you could put together your own list.

Let's make sure the vaccines are distributed fairly and speedily: those who need the vaccine most urgently should receive it first, with a fair system for others to be vaccinated quickly and efficiently. We must ensure everyone receives the vaccine, wherever they live in the world, from the poorest to the richest, and especially in those parts where there is war and people are living as refugees.

Let's learn the lessons of the pandemic: not just going back to how life was as quickly as possible. Many of us learnt to appreciate our family much more, especially when we could not be with them. We learnt lessons about the importance of our neighbours and local businesses, our NHS, care providers, medical researchers and other frontline workers. **Let's not forget them.**

Let's value nature: those with access to gardens, parks or fields have been massively blessed. I've learnt to pay attention to birdsong, to the changing colours of the trees, and how unexpected plants have taken root in our garden. Pets have played a major part in helping us endure the lockdowns. May we all learn to value the natural world on our doorsteps in the year ahead and beyond.

Let's bless technology: without the ability to 'meet' people online or keep in touch via e-mail, Facetime or other technologies, 2020 would have been a lot tougher. Churches across the country moved their Sunday services online, and soon adapted to a different way of worshipping – not the same, but still helping us to worship together and see familiar faces. **Let's continue to give thanks for the science that made that contact possible in 2020.**

Let's value our church family: imperfect we may be, like any family, but the months without being physically able to worship and share communion with them, sing alongside them, have been hard. I really value how many churches have risen to the pandemic challenge and sought to serve their communities in all kinds of ways. May we take all this experience into 2021 and build upon it.

Revd Peter Crumpler

Why our church does not need health and safety...

Happily, the Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least, whose elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to his nephew Darren, a recently-ordained low-church curate...

My dear Nephew Darren,

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was commendable, and I know that **sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice** was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented **even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.**

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the **only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave** – which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over – and if it happens when preparing **for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus is slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the church**, but it is very slow and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit to commemorate his death at Agincourt – which is probably just beyond remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling are solved with a row of buckets – and you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is an issue, but it looks so pretty in Spring when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

How to deal with your church's correspondence...

As we endure another lockdown, a double-bill of Uncle Eustace's letters...

My dear Nephew Darren,

You may have had several years of intensive training on biblical interpretation, **preaching and church history**, but that doesn't cover the really important matters in parish life: how to evade disgruntled parishioners, run a brisk Summer Fete and, in your case at present, deal with correspondence, either by letter or e-mail. My regular practice is to read all the letters/e-mails you receive and then discard them. If the matter is truly important, you will receive a second message, to which you respond; more likely, the sender will either have forgotten all about his first letter/e-mail after the second month or will write to some other cleric instead. In either case, you will be saved a great deal of trouble.

You only need two folders for your filing system. The first is for complaints; they are to be filed and ignored, no matter how many duplicates you are sent. Should you be confronted personally, you simply say that the matter has been passed on to the bishop. Those truly dogged complainants who pursue the matter will eventually receive an episcopal reply saying he knows nothing of the matter, for which you then blame the postal system/spammed e-mail. After letters and e-mails have ricocheted round the country for many months, the person complaining will either have lost energy to pursue the matter or the will to live. The second file receives all other correspondence/e-mails chronologically. The earliest letters and e-mails will be at the bottom of the pile and the most recent on the top. The postal file only needs attention when it reaches a height of about two feet and becomes unstable. The practice then is to discard the lowest six inches and allow it to continue its steady growth. If the stack is kept in the church vestry, mice usually attend to the papers on the bottom of the pile.

Sadly, your own church, with its electronic systems for filing, sorting and retrieving correspondence and with your parish secretaries, removes all these blessings at a stroke. You have therefore no excuses for not dealing instantly with every note that comes your way. As ye sow, so shall ye reap.

May I also remind you that not even St Paul, that unflagging letter-writer, ever ended one of his letters with a request for a prompt reply. Need I say more?

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Keep smiling!

Putting the cat out

A vicar and his wife were going out for the evening and carefully put the cat out. But when they opened the door to go to the taxi, the cat slipped back in and disappeared upstairs. Irritated, the vicar followed it.

The wife waited with the taxi driver. Not wanting him to know that they were leaving the parsonage empty, she said, 'My husband is just upstairs for a quick word with my mother.'

A few minutes later, the husband arrived, breathless. 'Sorry I took so long but she put up a fight! Stupid old thing was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger and grab her by the scruff of the neck to get her out.'

Fire?

The team of firemen had assembled to hear their training officer discuss the behaviours of various kinds of fire. He began, 'You arrive at a house and notice puffs of smoke coming from the eaves. But the windows are blackened out and there is little or no visible flame. What does this tell you?' he asked.

Hoping the men recognised signs of a possible 'back draft', a very dangerous condition, he heard instead, 'It tells me I've got the right house.'

Numbers

When the minister announced the first hymn *Ten thousand times ten thousand!* the little boy turned anxiously to his father. 'Does he want us to work that out?'

Falling

One way to find out if you're old is to fall in front of a group of people. If they laugh, you're young. If they panic and start running toward you, you're old.

Eyesight

A man went to his doctor to say that his eyesight was getting worse. The doctor asked the man to look out the window and to tell him what he saw. 'I can see the sun,' the man replied.

'Well,' said the doctor, 'just how much farther do you want to see?'

Bishop

An exam for R.E. asked the question, 'What does a Bishop do?' Amongst the answers was 'Move diagonally across the board'.

Abbots Morton **St Peter's Church**

NO SERVICES FOR THE TIME BEING

With regret, there will be no services at St Peter's until further notice.

People are welcome to come into the church for private prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays. However, please don't enter the church if you are showing symptoms of Covid-19 or have tested positive for the virus. Once in the church, you must wear a face mask and observe the rules of social distancing and hand sanitising.

A QR code is pinned on the porch notice board to enable mobile phone users to register with the government's Test and Trace system. When services resume there will still be someone in the church at the start of the service taking names and contact details for the purpose of Test, Trace and Isolate.

As things change with Covid-19 we will post information on the St Peter's page on the Parish Council's website www.abbotsmorton.info/st-peters-church.

FLOWER ROTA

Those on the flower rota please note that no flowers are necessary for the time being. If you want an update on the situation please call Gill Barker on *****.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

It was lovely to have the Christmas Eve service at St Peter's. The Rector said that singing *O Come All Ye Faithful* in the churchyard by the porch was a particular delight. Hopefully by next Christmas it will be a more traditional affair.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Our huge thanks to everyone who gave Christmas gifts for the benefit of needy children. They were taken by Action for Children who expressed their enormous gratitude for all the presents.

Abbots Morton

VILLAGE HALL

(www.abbotsmorton.info/abbots-morton-village-hall)

It's been a roller coaster of a Christmas/New Year! Lockdown Two began on 5th November and the hall was closed. Then we re-opened on 2nd December which allowed JUMP Ballet and Hay Yoga to complete their autumn term classes and, being in Tier Two, we were able to host a wedding reception under Covid rules with the maximum 15 people attending. It was very successful and they loved the hall.

On 5th January we closed again in Lockdown Three, which means the planned return of ballet and yoga classes is postponed until further notice. But we do have a booking for a wedding reception in August!

COVID Testing Centre

Worcestershire County Council have asked for venues for use as asymptomatic lateral flow testing centres. We have offered and are waiting to hear if they have chosen us. They have had a big response.

Do you want to hire the hall?

The hall is available for hire for a range of activities but is limited to a maximum of 20 people at the moment. If you are thinking of an activity or a small event, please do call our Bookings Officer Colin on ***** to discuss the possibilities, which will depend on Covid regulations.

Our hire rates are unchanged:	<u>Local</u>	<u>Non-local</u>
WINTER (Oct Daytime (9.00-19.30)	£8.50 per hour	£11 per hour
to end March) Evening (19.30-24.00)	£11 per hour	£13.50 per hour

EasyFundraising tops £700

Our 23 EasyFundraisers have now raised £721.66 for the village hall and our AmazonSmile customers have raised £30.86 for our funds. Thank you so much! You can support the hall by going to the webpage smile.amazon.co.uk and following the prompts to register.



Abbots Morton

ABBOTS MORTON PARISH COUNCIL

There are currently two vacancies on the parish council. Join us and be an active member of the community, assisting with crime and safety, planning issues, the environment, highways and local services.

The council meets approximately six times per year with meetings lasting around 1-1½ hours. The position is unpaid and voluntary, but some expenses such as training are paid for by the parish council.

There are up to four vacancies on the parish council. To join, you must:

- ◆ be over 18 and on the electoral register, or a resident of the parish, or live within three miles of the parish as the crow flies, or own a business in the parish
- ◆ be able to attend evening meetings every other month
- ◆ have an interest in local issues
- ◆ have a desire to improve the quality of life in the parish
- ◆ be able to represent the views of local people

For further details contact the Parish Clerk, David Hunter-Miller, on ***** or abbotsmortonpc@gmail.com.



The vicar was already regretting ordering the new stained glass window from IKEA

Rous Lench
St Peter's Church

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The PCC would like to wish everyone a safe, happy new year. While getting on top of the coronavirus may take longer than anticipated, let us hold on to the hope that we *will* get beyond this and look forward to 2021.

GRANT AWARDED FROM CULTURAL RECOVERY FUND

We were thrilled to hear that St. Peter's has received a financial boost from the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to help fund repairs at the church during the coronavirus pandemic. Grants from the fund are designed to protect heritage sites and ensure that jobs and access to culture and heritage in local communities are protected during the months ahead.

St. Peter's has been awarded £25,000 for essential repair work which will stop water seeping through the vestry roofs and damaging significant architectural features including the Rous family memorials, 14th century chancel roof, apse altar to the Lady's Chapel, and oak panelling and a fine capitalled doorway in the sacristy. The grant comes at a crucial point because, if left longer, damage to our much-loved church would have been beyond repair.

You may not be able to visit the church right now, but thanks to *@HeritageFundUK* and the government's *#CultureRecoveryFund*, St. Peter's will still be *#HereForCulture* in the future.

St Peter's is closed for repairs

Good news – repairs are taking place at St Peter's.

Bad news – the church needs to be closed until further notice.

We will, of course, let you know when we are re-opening.

Please pray that it all goes well.

Richard Thorniley

Rous Lench

LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR EVENT – THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who supported the advent window event – there are so many who ensured it was a great success: the organisers; those who decorated their windows so beautifully; Brian Herdman for braving the elements and taking some spectacular pictures of the windows that will be used to create cards for next Christmas; residents who provided material, music and lighting for the community windows; everyone who donated goodies for the Christmas deliveries, especially Corrine White who made 200(!) beautiful chocolate truffles; Ed Pearce for helping with deliveries; and all those who donated.

A magnificent sum of £1,559.25 has been raised. Yes, you read that correctly, £1,559.25!! Half will be donated to Caring Hands in the Vale and the other half **will go towards St. Peter's fabric fund.** THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL.

We look forward to making the advent windows an annual event.

And congratulations to Darcey Williamson who was the holder of the winning trail map that included a little robin. Well spotted, Darcey!

CHURCHYARD MEMORIAL ROSES

Would you like to plant a rose in memory of a departed loved one in the churchyard? If so, there is space for a few more roses in the newly-created memorial rose bed. Adjacent to the rose bed is attractive bench seating, providing the opportunity for a few moments of quiet reflection.

Please contact Lloyd Wing on ***** or *****@*****.

HELP WITH CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE

Thanks to the help of village volunteers, the churchyard is looking ready for the arrival of spring and warmer weather. We will be continuing with the excellent work in 2021 and are planning to improve its appearance even further.

If you have a spare hour or two each month and are up for some fresh air and exercise in a lovely setting, it would be great to hear from you. Please contact Lloyd Wing on ***** or *****@*****. Many thanks.

Rous Lench

MARCH 20TH – SPRING INTO ACTION FOR THE EQUINOX

In considering Covid-compliant activities for the spring, some of us are contemplating a Sponsored Step Challenge. It would involve a crowd funding **page requesting donors to support St. Peter's for collective steps taken over one week or weekend, up to a certain amount, then inviting residents to take to the great outdoors for their daily exercise and rack up those steps to represent something big. Could we manage one million steps between us for St. Peter's?**

If anyone would like to be involved, or has suggestions for another activity, please contact Fran Herdman on ***** or *****@*****.

IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS HAVE BECOME A GRAVE CONCERN

The PCC has received an increasing number of complaints of dogs fouling in the churchyard. This is particularly distressing for those visiting the graves of loved ones. As in other public places, it is an offence to allow a dog to foul and not clean up. Signs at the entrances to the churchyard ask owners to clear up after their pooches.

Please could dog owners always keep their dogs under control on a lead in the churchyard, and always clean up after their dog and put the bag in a bin. It would be helpful if everyone were to use a friendly approach to encourage other dog walkers to do the same. There is a black bin at the back of the church which is still accessible during building work, and another beside the bus stop at the front of the church. Thank you for your co-operation.

CARING HANDS

Do not forget that you can continue to leave your donations of canned and dried goods as well as cleaning materials and toiletries when you go out for your permitted daily exercise. There is a yellow box behind the buttress on the **left-hand side of St. Peter's that is checked regularly, and all items are taken to Caring Hands in the Vale for distribution to those in need.** Please ensure you follow government guidelines and wash/sanitise your hands when you get home after leaving items. Thank you.

Rous Lench

SHOPPING ONLINE WITH EASYFUNDRAISING

Thank you to all our supporters for raising FREE donations for St. Peter's in 2020 by shopping online via *Easyfundraising*. In just a few weeks, a handful of shoppers has already raised £28.45.

There is so much we buy online, from groceries to gifts, clothes, insurance and holidays (one day!) so why not do it the *Easyfundraising* way and collect free donations for St. Peter's every time? It costs you nothing extra – the retailers make a small donation each time you shop. Thousands of retailers are signed up to the scheme. If you are not supporting us on *Easyfundraising* yet, you can sign up at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/churchofstpeterrouslench/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=fdrq21-f1.

COVID-19 FINANCIAL APPEAL – WAYS TO DONATE

Thank you for continuing to support us – your generosity is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to donate to the appeal, please contact our Treasurer Lloyd Wing on ***** or e-mail stpetersrouslench@archbenefice.org.uk.

One-off donations: if you would like to donate by bank transfer, our account details are name: PCC Rous Lench, number: *****, sort code: **-**-**.

Parish Giving scheme: to donate through the Parish Giving scheme, please call 0333 002 1271 or visit www.parishgiving.org.uk/home.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please consider Gift Aid – it makes a huge difference!

ROTARY COMMUNITY DRAW

A virtual draw took place on 30th December 2020. First prize was won by ticket **014691 purchased in support of St. John's Ambulance. 12 prizes of £50 each** were also drawn – the winning tickets are: 012719, 012925, 014487, 015615, 026496, 027207, 027423, 029435, 030610, W40247 and W40652. All winning ticket numbers are posted on www.midlandscommunitydraw.org.uk.

The beneficiaries thank all who purchased tickets. The draw provided much-needed funds to many organisations and raised £134.40 for our fabric fund.

Rous Lench

GRAND AUCTION OF PROMISES – POSTPONED

Thank you to everyone who made a promise for the Auction of Promises. We will arrange a new date for the auction as soon as possible. Everyone who has made a promise will be contacted to see if they are still willing to be included in the catalogue. Please watch out for more updates. If anyone has any questions, please contact Fran Herdman on ***** or *****@*****.

ROUS LENCH PARISH COUNCIL

Rous Lench Parish Council welcomes all residents to their meetings and invites them to raise concerns or share ideas during public question time at the start of the meeting. Meeting dates for 2021 are:

- ◆ 25th January 2021
- ◆ 22nd March 2021
- ◆ 24th May 2021

Further dates to be arranged in July, September and November – please see the Rous Lench section of the website e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish.

There will be an Annual Parish Meeting (APM) on 24th May, preceding the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM). At the APM any matter pertinent to the parish and its parishioners may be discussed (as opposed to council meetings where discussion subjects are limited to those matters on which the council has the legal power to act).

The Parish Council consists of 7 councillors – there is currently a vacancy to which we invite community-minded persons to apply. To be a councillor you must be over 18 and on the electoral register OR a resident of the parish OR live within three miles of the parish as the crow flies OR own a business in the parish. It is a voluntary role; free training and support will be given.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings – currently online during the pandemic but usually at Rous Lench Village Hall. If you need further information or would like to get involved, please contact Hazel Robinson, Clerk to Rous Lench Parish Council, on ***** or rouslenchpc@gmail.com.

Rous Lench

ROUS LENCH VILLAGE HALL

(www.rouslench.com)

New bar

The NEW BAR project for Rous Lench Village Hall is progressing well and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to the hall as soon as possible.

Hall hire for private events

Rous Lench Village Hall is available for hire for private events such as parties, anniversaries, receptions, etc. For conditions and prices, please look on our website under the hall hire section, call ***** or e-mail info@rouslench.com.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Rous Lench and Inkberrow Royal British Legion branch would like to thank everyone who contributed towards the £2,864.10 raised for the Poppy Fund in 2020. This amount includes poppy boxes in shops, schools and businesses, and individual donations. Sadly, due to Covid-19 restrictions, our loyal band of house-to-house poppy collectors were not able to take part nor were we able to hold Poppy Appeal events during the year, which has greatly reduced the amount compared to what we would raise in a normal year.

Janice Briney, Chairman



*...between you and me, it's
the only way I can remember
my PIN number!*

Church Lench **All Saints' Church**

SOUTH LENCHES PARISH COUNCIL

Vacancy for Parish Councillor: are you interested in your village, your parish, your local environment, recreational facilities, local transport, planning and housing issues? These are just a few of the areas where the Parish Council is involved to help make a difference to your community.

Wanted: handyman to maintain:

- a) *Village Pool area, Evesham Road, Church Lench*
To cut the grass and maintain shrubbery/trees fortnightly during the summer, monthly during the winter.
- b) *Children's play area, Ab Lench Road, Church Lench*
To rake the existing bark, remove weeds, check the membrane covering every week during the summer months, monthly in the winter. On each visit, to visually check the area and equipment and notify the Clerk to the Parish Council immediately if any damage or disrepair is apparent.

For further information please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council on ***** or southlenchespc@gmail.com.

VILLAGE HALL

In December, Church Lench Village Hall sold notecards and mugs to raise funds. **If you didn't get the chance to purchase or would like to buy more, never fear!** We still have stock. There are two different sets of notecards, each containing **local scenes, for only £5. In addition, we are selling 'A Day Outside The Lenches is a Day Wasted' porcelain mugs for £7.50 each. They are available from any village hall committee member.**

100 club

These are the results of the December draw for the Village Hall 100 Club:

1st prize (£25):	Raymond Hyder
2nd prize (£15):	Luke Hughes
3rd prize (£10):	Celia Hall

Church Lench

LENCHES WI

(lencheswi@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/thelencheswi)

Following the continued Covid-19 restrictions we still cannot hold our monthly meetings in the Village Hall. Our members receive monthly newsletters from our Committee and take part in competitions. We are open for anyone who would like to become a member so please do not hesitate to contact us.

GLADS

Despite the curse of Covid smiting the plans of GLADS to keep you entertained during 2020, we are still working on plans for when we will be able to perform for you again. Unless circumstances prevent us, we will perform:

- ◆ *PERHAPS*: sometime in mid-2021; venue and dates tbc. A sketch show postponed from 2020
- ◆ *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*: November 2021; Rous Lench, dates tbc
- ◆ *DEAD GEORGEIOUS*: murder play with supper; March 2022, Church Lench Village Hall, dates tbc

Updates on dates and venues will be publicised in the *ARCH Messenger*.

Harvington

HARVINGTON EMERGENCY FUND

If you are in need, or know of someone in need

St James' Church is managing an emergency fund on behalf of the community to support people who are in need. If you know of someone, a person or family, who is in need or if you are that person or family and need an emergency helping hand, please get in touch.

Contact ***** and we will offer what support we can.

Richard Thorniley

Harvington St James' Church

PASTORAL SUPPORT NETWORK

As a new year gets under way we are still dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. I know that times are difficult for everyone, both in practical terms and because of the restrictions in our contact with friends and family, and I hope everyone is weathering the storm. We all have to take care to keep ourselves safe, network volunteers included, but the team are happy to help where they can, so if you need shopping, help to get to an appointment, small jobs around the home or simply a friendly chat, do get in touch with us on *****.

We generally suggest a contribution of 45p per mile towards our volunteers' petrol and running costs. However, we appreciate that for some this may be a stretch, especially in the present circumstances. Thanks to some very generous donations, we have been able to build up a small hardship fund, which we will happily use so that no-one need feel deterred from asking for help.

Wishing everyone a better 2021;
here's hoping things look up very soon. Stay safe

Wendy and Konrad Monks

CAMEO GROUP

It is almost a year ago when we met last. In our wildest dreams we would never have thought that our social activities would have been so curtailed. I am sure we have all missed our monthly get-together over tea and cakes and we long for the time when we can see each other again. In the meantime I wish you well and hope that you and your family keep safe and that we will be able to meet again and have a special celebratory tea party.

*With lots of love and many blessings,
Sophie*



Harvington First School News

We are all very pleased to welcome the children back into school. Children are attending either in person, because they are from families of critical workers, or remotely through our learning platforms. It is certainly a challenging time for **staff, children and parents but we are all doing our very best. The children's** health, happiness and continued learning is important to everyone and we are impressed with how resilient they appear.



Although our Christmas school plans were very different from last year, we made sure the children had a lovely time with a week of festivities enjoyed by everyone, including socially-distanced carol singing in different **class groups (the children's favourite traditional carol was *Ding Dong Merrily on High*).** KS2 **enjoyed watching the younger children's** Nativity play which was recorded in small groups, then edited and arranged as a full performance. Our Year Five class were excited **to contribute to the local churches' Carol Service** and enjoyed singing *Silent Night* while our Year Three children enjoyed singing a carol for the Worcester Diocese performance.

We planned a day of outside Christmas learning, making Christmas items using natural materials, followed by hot chocolate to warm ourselves up! The whole school enjoyed a Christmas turkey dinner, complete with homemade pigs in blankets thanks to our fabulous kitchen staff, and we also had two very special visitors: reindeer! **The highlight of everyone's week was being able to stroke one of Father Christmas' special helpers.**

Now we are trying to keep safe and continuing our learning within school or at home. **We are not closed, we are very much open ... just in a different way.**

We hope everyone reading this remains healthy and positive.

*Helen Fishbourne,
Headteacher*

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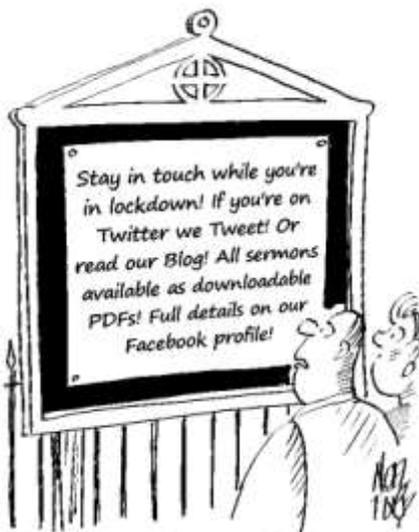
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Key to Church Services

We are not holding services during the current lockdown. Please check the website for the latest information.



Covid-19: we are open but...

During the current lockdown, our churches in Abbots Morton, Church Lench and Harvington are open on Wednesdays and Sundays for private prayer and when regulations allow for services (Rous Lench church is closed for repairs).

We have hand sanitiser available and *must ask you to wear a mask when visiting*. Further instructions and floor markings are in each church to enable us all to remain safe.

Churches are available for weddings in an emergency, with the congregation restricted to 6. Funerals are allowed with a maximum of 30 in the congregation if church capacity permits. Please check the government and Church of England websites to see the current regulations which are regularly updated.

Numbers in our churches are currently limited to:

- ◆ Abbots Morton: 20
- ◆ Rous Lench: *closed for repairs*
- ◆ Church Lench: 30
- ◆ Harvington: 30

Sunday services are NOT being held in church at present. Although the government regulations permit us to hold services, the local Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) felt this would put us all at too much risk bearing in mind the high transmissibility of the current variation of the virus. Recorded services are available via the North Avon Group YouTube channel – just follow the links from the calendar on the ARCH Benefice website www.archbenefice.org.

If you would like further information please get in touch with me on 01386 870527 or rector@archbenefice.org.uk or check the website.

Richard Thorniley