

WESTONING NEWS

brought to you by St. Mary Magdalene Church

In this newsletter



That was Christmas



Services



Can we help you?



Can you help others?

Dear Friends,

The Christian faith is not essentially about a building, a denomination, or an institution full of tradition. At its heart, Christianity is not a set of rules or a religious structure. The Christian faith is essentially about a "now" relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the essence of Christianity is not about the past, important though that is, but it is about right now.

Of course, faith has an important component that *remembers* the past. We have just been recalling the Birth of Jesus. We recall God's saving acts on the cross, for example. We remember what God has done for us in the past. But faith is only alive when it impels us to continue to live out our faith in the present, in the now, in our current circumstances. St. James said, "Faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26). What are our current deeds?

Sometimes I find myself interrupting and starting to answer before someone has finished speaking. Oh, that is not good. But when we are tradition-bound, we do that to God. We stop listening because we assume we already know what he'll say and that he'll never say anything new in the future. We become presumptuous.

By our traditions we second-guess God about what he wants us to do tomorrow or about how he wants us to react to a situation we're faced with today. Dear friends, this is not good!

In our current lockdown we have been forced to think afresh and discover that God can be with us in the here and now and is not confined to an ancient building on a hill. He is with His people and doing something new and circumstance has meant that we have had to set aside some of the old things we have been doing.

I strongly believe God longs to speak to you and me afresh today. He is a loving God and he longs to link with us and show us way through.

In this lockdown Jesus undoubtedly wants to renew his personal relationship with you, today, this week. Not just to get together to talk about old times, but to talk about today and the fresh new tomorrow, about your future. About the exciting plans he has for you in this new year. He longs to show us new ways as individuals and as church.

We can never let the traditions we value become a substitute for a present day relationship with the living Christ, since the essence of the Christian gospel is that Jesus is alive today!

Can I encourage you to pray right now? That might sound silly but please give it a try. Just sit somewhere quiet and surrender a couple of minutes. Be sure to ask God what he wants you to think about and what he wants you to do today. Ask what he wants you to do as the vaccines are rolled out and the grip of the virus is removed. Ask God to share with you his dreams and visions for you and as a member of His church and share your dreams with God, too. As you discuss your dreams with the God of the Future, be assured he will guide and mature them.

Lord, I confess that sometimes I have confused traditions with present-day faith. I've coasted on the memories of the past and what I thought you were, while neglecting to earnestly seek you and your will for me in the here-and-now. Forgive me. Let me hear and enter fully into your New Year's plans for me and for our church. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

With love and prayer,
Reverends Nigel and Linda

Services



No services are taking place in Westoning church at present, although this is being reviewed regularly.

Within the Quintet of churches we have introduced a **Live 11am Sunday Service via Zoom**, so you can tune in to a live service from your home. (Contact Nigel or Linda).

Recorded services are still being offered each week. The audio service is presented by Nigel and Linda and produced by Robert Johns, with musical support from Nicholas Hopton. Access can be gained each Sunday and during the following week via our Facebook and Website page.

If anyone would like to visit the church for a time of **Private Prayer** this is possible if you contact one of the churchwardens or a Minister to arrange a time.

A Quintet **Upper Room Service** takes place **each Sunday at 6pm**. Again you do not need to stray from your home. This is an hour offering music, scripture, reflection and prayer. Contact a minister for an invitation to the Upper Room.

Exciting News from the **Families Team**... As we are still unable to meet face to face, we are having a short **Families Together Sunday ZOOM** on 31st January at 10am. If you would like to participate please contact Rebecca [email:cairdclan@ntlworld.com](mailto:cairdclan@ntlworld.com) or Mob: 07877 342640 and we will make sure you receive the zoom invitation. The service will be short and include singing, a story, a prayer and lots of fun!

Morning Prayer services are held via Zoom on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 9.30am.

If you would like a chat or prayer, further information on services, or would like to discuss marriages, funerals or baptisms, do call us on 01525 714442 or email Nigel: nwashy2@gmail.com or Linda: revdoddington@gmail.com

That was Christmas



Christmas was very different for us all but there were many who visited the outdoor nativity scene in the churchyard, which was a first for us this year. The Christmas tree of light and hope was much appreciated. It offered a space for reflection and for prayer as some hung wooden star decorations on the tree with their own messages of hope, with prayers and with remembrances.

Westoning Cares

Westoning Cares mission is simple, to identify those in our community who may need various types of help over coming months and those who can offer that help. The aim is to bring those two groups together in a structured way so that the right help is available when needed.



If you find you need help, particularly whilst we are in lockdown, with shopping, collecting medication or if you just need to chat, please

contact

Steve Alcock	01525 755039 or 07710 172546	steve.alcock3@ntlworld.com
Joyce Nethersole	07770 642159	holmes02@icloud.com
Maureen Graham	01525 873830 or 07922 011515	malcolmgraham1@ntlworld.com
Rev Nigel	01525 714442 or 07722 297299	nwashy2@gmail.com

Helping others - The Need Project

As COVID-19 continues to make life difficult for us all, some more than others,



Westoning continues to support the Foodbank by working alongside the Need Project team by acting as a collection point for food donations. Food, toiletries etc. are needed. These can be left in the container in the church porch which is emptied regularly. If you would like further details please visit theneedproject.co.uk or

telephone Chris on 07894 154 100 or Phil (01525 862357) from Westoning Church.

At the present time, due to COVID-19 restrictions we are unable to produce and deliver the Westoning Link magazine to you. This will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

How to contact us

email: nwashy2@gmail.com

Tel. 01525 714442

Website www.westoningchurch.org.uk

You can also find information relevant to Westoning on the Parish Council's website www.westoningparishcouncil.org