

# The Voice of St Paul's



September  
2020



Lk 22:  
19-20

Welcome to what we plan to become a monthly newsletter for St Paul's while these changed circumstances last. We all find ourselves in a very different situation and the production of a full magazine at this point is neither economic nor particularly useful as distribution by hand to people's homes is not allowed. Hopefully, this kind of news-sheet can be available in church, for those able to attend, on the website and a few extra paper copies to post or for individuals to pass on.

Please feel free to contribute your thoughts, information, or articles to this reduced publication—there will always be room!

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## A Letter from Revd Helen Scanlan

*Isaiah 40:28-31*

*Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth.*

*He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.*

*But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

This is a particular favourite text of mine and, taking into consideration the past six months, it brings me a great deal of comfort, for our hope and trust should be in the Lord and not in our own understandings.

Life has changed in so many ways, our everyday routines have been cast to one side and we look for new ways of being, our experiences of shopping and socialising with friends and family have changed beyond what we held dear.

Worship too has changed and will I'm sure evolve over the coming months. We are not to be discouraged or become fearful, we are to rejoice and trust in the Lord.

That does not mean we don't wear our masks or

wash our hands, but that we hope in a future we are yet to see.

One of the joys during lockdown was to see the recovery of the earth. Environmentally we were healing, and so we must push forward in looking at changing what we do and how we do it so that the earth's healing can continue.

We healed ourselves in being taken away from pressures of work and in how many hours we worked. We enjoyed the good weather and spent most of our times in gardens, parks and countryside. This pandemic took us back to nature.

And yet there was a cruel side to it. We lost many good friends and family members and the grief is and continues to be hard to bear. Yet we have a hope in the Lord.

My faith has remained steadfast, the majority of the time anyway!

We have a Saviour who walks with us through the times when we were bobbing along quite cheerfully, but he's also there when we reach our lowest point. He bears the load with us, and encourages us to take a step leaning on him.

Having a faith doesn't isolate us from the pain of living but rather beckons us to see through it to the other side.

We are still here to help, listen and care for you. Let us know what we can do—perhaps it's just to share the load.

Every blessing  
Helen

It is not possible to provide a listing of future services but at present we are meeting as follows: **Sundays: 9am** Service of the Word via Zoom

**10.45am** Parish Eucharist in church—please remember to wear a mask. There is no singing but there will be musical accompaniment, either played by Gordon on the organ or taped.

**Sunday September 6th** at 10.45am Harvest Festival

**Weekdays:**

Monday & Wednesday Morning prayer on Zoom at **9am**

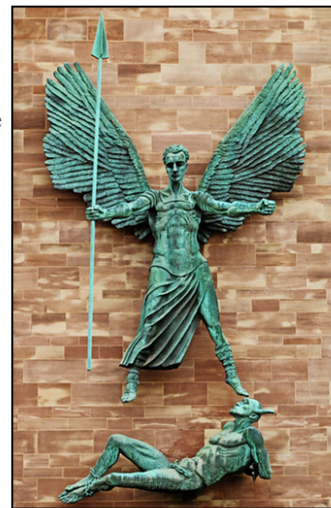
Tuesday & Friday Compline on Zoom at **8.30pm**

For further details please contact Revd Helen: 0161 432 1227

***Some thoughts on Angels to celebrate the Feast of Michaelmas (St Michael and all Angels) on September 29th by Canon David Winter (Parish Pump)***

What is an angel? Easy, people think: a shining figure with glorious wings, who appears from time to time to do some mighty work for God or bring a very special message from him. Well, that's right in one sense (apart from the wings, which owe more to stained glass windows than the Bible). But the fact that not all 'angels' in the Bible are 'glorious' or 'shining' should make us hesitate to categorise them in this spectacular way. After all, the three apparently ordinary men who visited Abraham and Sarah to tell them that she would have a son even though she was long past child-bearing age had none of those outward embellishments. Nevertheless, Abraham recognised them as divine messengers.

The Bible is full of angels, from the early chapters of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, and often they had a key role in crucial events. It seems, from just two instances, that Michael was their leader, an 'archangel'. In many stained glass windows he's seen with a sword, because in a vision in Revelation he led the angelic host who fought and defeated Satan and his army.



**St Michael by Jacob Epstein**

In the Gospels, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, to tell him that his elderly wife was to have a son, the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist. An angel – Gabriel – appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God. An angel appeared 'in a dream' to Joseph, the village carpenter in Nazareth, to tell him to go ahead and marry his fiancée, Mary, and later – also in a dream – warned him not to go back to Bethlehem. A 'young man', whom we take to have been an angel, was sitting in the empty tomb on Easter morning, waiting to tell the startled women that Jesus wasn't there – He had risen (Mark 16:5).

Without going into every biblical reference to angels, those should be sufficient to show that the word covers an enormous diversity of experience. So the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of those who practice hospitality as sometimes 'entertaining angels unawares'. Sometimes people recognised angels for who they were, and sometimes they didn't. Angels, quite simply, are God's agents or emissaries, messengers and ministers of His will. Sometimes they are human; sometimes they seem to be spiritual beings.

Perhaps we could even say that *anyone*, in any situation, who is at that moment God's 'messenger' to us, or serves us graciously, is an 'angel'. So, when we say, 'Oh, be an angel and pop up to the chemist for my prescription', we may be nearer the heart of the matter than we think!