

himself. With a flurry of feathers, he landed on my hand, almost weightless, took the bread and was off again. He didn't wait to say thank you – or did he? I felt so privileged. That moment of total trust was thanks enough. Trust takes time to build. The confidence to someone doesn't happen in a flash. It is an act of faith. In trust we surrender something of ourselves to another person. It can be risky, but it enriches life.

And that was it. Our encounter was over. The robin flew away with his piece of bread. I went away with a smile on my face, my day was brightened by a flash of red, a snatch of bird song, and a moment of trust. *Lord, help us to trust you more each today; to take the bread of life your hand holds out to us.*



So, my dear friends, please keep safe and learn to trust more, this will make a difference, coping with life as it is now, or simply enjoying each moment. I pray that this little story gives you cause for thought, and just maybe help you to turn a corner in your life. God bless each one of you,
Your friend and Lay Minister Ken.

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THE BENEFICE OF WESTFIELD AND GUESTLING

A letter from Rev Joy 10 January 2021

It's early Friday afternoon and I'm feeling slightly virtuous. I summoned my energy and a bit of courage and walked fairly briskly to Barclays in the town centre to pay in two cheques. The roads had hardly any traffic but the pavements were quite busy. I paused briefly on the way back to catch my breath and soak up the sunshine which was surprisingly warm. We all need to keep our levels of vitamin D topped up. When I got home I had a bowl of my homemade chicken and vegetable soup which was delicious. Hence the feeling of virtue- exercise and healthy eating!

Thank you to PCC members and everyone who has supported the difficult decision to suspend worship in church for the time being whilst we wait for infection rates to fall. We will review it at the end of the month. It takes stamina and a lot of prayer to watch the news at the moment doesn't it? I'm so



glad we were able to worship in both churches at Christmas—some churches in the Deanery were not so fortunate. My new church diary has arrived today but sadly the only appointments for me to fill in are two funerals at the end of the month.

As well as putting away the Christmas decorations for another year, Clem has been planting up the Korean fir tree, the lovely white Christmas rose, and the hyacinths and paperwhites that have been filling the sitting room with their fragrance. I still have the basket of plants that Sue and Jane gave me to enjoy—a white Kalanchoe, a white

More New Year News from Austen Way.

My dear friends,

As I am writing this, we are entering another lockdown to try and halt this vicious disease. As we face this together, we can only rely on our God and to trust totally in him.

Which reminded Beryl and myself of another reflection by Eddie Askew from his book “ Love is like a Wild Bird”. This one is based on Psalm 13 verses 5 -6 and is all about trust. Which is so important in this time that we are facing, trust in our government but more importantly trust in our Lord.

Psalm 13: 5 – 6

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.

Eddie Askew writes: I went through the nature reserve the other day. It was cold and the trees seemed to huddle together for warmth. As I walked I heard a snatch of bird song. Then a flicker of movement in a bush grabbed my attention. I stood still and waited. Another movement and a flash of red. Just a robin.

He watched me, head tilted, alert, ready to fly. But slowly, I felt for a piece of bread crust in my pocket. Then, even more slowly, with no sudden movement, I stretched my arm out with the bread in my open hand. And waited. The robin hopped onto a nearer branch and watched. I waited some more. We both, the robin and I, concentrated on the bread. He hopped nearer, just out of reach. The he committed

cyclamen and a small palm, also some tiny double tete a tete daffodils a friend gave me for Christmas have just come into bloom . They are such a cheerful presence.. I thought it worth repeating the words of the Bishop of London that I quoted in my email. She said 'There is hope. The vaccination programme is underway and, as Christians we have a deeper hope in God that comforts us beyond fear itself. As we have been remembering this Christmas season, even in the midst of our darkest fears, that hope brings light.'

Writing that has reminded me that Dennis gets his COVID vaccination on Monday morning so there's something else to put in the new diary as he will need me with him. It's only the third time he will have left home since the first lockdown in March. Just getting used to wearing proper shoes instead of slippers is going to be a challenge!

This comes with my love and prayers for you all, Joy

Westfield Church and Guestling Church

Services on Sundays in both churches and Wednesdays in Westfield are suspended until the end of January when we will review the situation.

Thought of the day from Guestling Bradshaw School's latest Newsletter: Today we considered how difficult the month of January can be: Darkness. Freezing, damp weather. The glow of Christmas long faded. The challenges that Covid-19 has brought and to top it off, another National Lockdown! It really does paint a dismal picture! We then talked about positive thinking. Noticing the good things, being optimistic. Daytime will now very gradually get longer. The shortest day of the year has long gone. Spring is on it's way!

of temptation in one of two ways. Some respond as the devil wanted Jesus to do, by presuming on God's protection and acting recklessly. However, I suspect most of us are more like the Israelites in the desert, we doubt that God really cares for us and so we quarrel with others and criticise our leaders.

The third temptation, verses 8 to 11. An alternative God.

Now the devil shows his hand. What he really wants is to persuade Jesus to worship and follow him and he is prepared to pay a very high price to achieve this. Jesus dismisses him and his offer. *Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'*

We are not to be deceived however good the world looks at times. There is no other God, no other way for human beings to live in harmony with each other, with God and with his creation. He is our maker and God and the only one that we must follow and worship.

The temptation is over and verse 11 describes Jesus experiencing the very care and compassion that the devil tempted him to doubt as God's angels are sent to minister to his needs. So often we give up before this point because we don't see through the lies that the devil puts into our minds. *God is asking too much, he doesn't care, you can have a great time without him.* Hopefully considering Jesus' experience may help us to see straight as he did.

Love Cathy

Baptism of Christ Sunday 10 January 2021

Collect

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling
as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Westfield and Guestling

Lectionary Readings

Genesis 1:1-5 Mark 1:3-11

BCP Readings First Sunday after the Epiphany

Romans 12:1-5 Luke 2:41-52

Online services: <http://www.westfieldchurch.co.uk/online-services-for-westfield-church/>

Guestling <https://www.westfieldchurch.co.uk/online-services-for-guestling-church/>

Prayer in a time of COVID

You call us to speak to you in prayer— even when the places we would usually go to are not available. Help us to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray. Today we especially pray for those who are living in fear – give them your strength. For those who have not yet realised the urgency of the situation – protect them, and all of us from harm.

Today I especially want to pray for

In the name of Jesus. Amen

CV19 Homegroup

Dear Everyone,

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, the Garden Route Children's Trust of which I am a trustee, is running an online fundraiser. Participants set themselves a challenge to travel (walk, run, swim, cycle, whatever you like) a certain distance throughout January. The charity benefits from the entry donations and sponsorships and the participants benefit from the exercise! It seemed a good idea as I ate my way through the Christmas chocolates, but faced with a bleak, wet and windswept January day, my resolve was tested! Two things get me going each day; the encouragement of a small group of friends who are also doing the challenge and keep in touch through a Whatsapp group, and the fact that I have committed to the task publicly!

Most of us are familiar with the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness at the start of his ministry. The temptation comes immediately after God's public affirmation of Jesus as God's Son. Now Jesus embarks on his ministry but first he has to win the mind battle with Satan who is determined to deflect Jesus from his chosen path.

Matthew chapter 4 verses 1 to 11.

My Scripture Union notes stress that these temptations were specific to Jesus and his forthcoming ministry and that is true, but Jesus must have told his disciples about his experience with the intention of recording it for us, his followers. There is much here that Jesus wants us to learn too. Here is just a starter.

The first temptation, verses 1 to 4. An unreasonable God.

Jesus has been fasting as he prayed so, obviously, he was hungry. The devil exploited his normal human need suggesting that Jesus could prove his deity by turning stones into bread. The devil knows our susceptibilities all too well. He will always imply that God is somehow short-changing us or making unreasonable demands. God is not looking after you properly, use your power to supply what God has failed to provide, God shouldn't expect you to go through this. Jesus saw straight through it. *Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.* Just at that moment, Jesus knew that he needed to hear God's word much more than he needed bread.

The second temptation vv.5 -7. A God who doesn't care

Does God really care? Doubt is the devil's next tactic. Do something dramatic to prove God is all he says he is. The bible calls this *testing God* and Jesus is quick to respond with a quotation from **Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 16**; *Do not put the Lord your God to the test.* If you look back to this quotation, it references an incident at a place called Massah described in **Exodus chapter 17 verses 1 to 7**. The people of Israel were travelling through the desert and had run out of water. They quarrelled with Moses, their God-appointed leader, accusing him (and, by implication, God) of bringing them out in the desert to die. Moses turned to God in prayer and God responded with a miracle providing water from a rock, but the place was named Massah, *testing*, because the people tested God saying, *'Is the Lord among us or not?'* The people did not trust God to provide for them. They thought, because they could see no solution to their problem, that God did not really care for them. Christians fall for this type