



St Hilda's
Ashford

St Hilda's News



Contents

- Be Hong-Kong Ready
- Bible Reading is increasing mental wellbeing
- Christian Holidays – Bookings increase
- Growing in Love
- The Prime Minister visits a London Church to discuss the vaccine uptake
- St Hilda's Parish News
- **Our thoughts and prayers** – Those from this weeks notices

If you would like help or to speak to a member of the ministry team please contact:

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01784 254237
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We are looking for more contributions from the St Hilda's community, if you would like to contribute, please either call, email or send an article to the Parish Office.

Be Hong Kong-ready, Church is urged

Thousands of Hong Kong residents are expected to emigrate to the UK



The Revd Harry Ching and the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, at St Martin-in-the-Fields, with a banner to welcome those arriving from Hong Kong

ANGLICAN churches are being asked to sign up to be “Hong Kong-ready churches”, as thousands of Hong Kong residents move to the UK.

Five hundred churches around the country have signed up to the campaign so far, making a commitment to welcoming Christians from Hong Kong into their church community.

Up to 300,000 Hong Kong residents hold British National Overseas passports, and 130,000 are expected to emigrate after the Government issued a special visa to allow them to live and work in the UK. Many are expected to gravitate to areas with existing Chinese communities.

A British-Chinese newly ordained curate in Bristol diocese, the Revd Mark Nam, backs the welcoming project, which is being run by Dr Krish Kandiah. Mr Nam said: “Clearly, the Church has not always been welcoming, as we saw, to the *Windrush* generation. This campaign is about readying the Church for this really significant arrival, and the response so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

“Even in those areas where there is not a single Chinese person in the congregation yet, we hope people will join in and improve their welcome — because, if you do not, you may

never have any Chinese Christians in your congregation. It's about being ready in our hearts. We need to learn from history."

He said that churches were asked to consider training leaders, including youth leaders, to ensure that the younger generation were welcomed and looked after, since many of those arriving were families.

Anecdotally, he said, about 8000 Hong Kongers were believed to have already made their way to Britain in the past few weeks.

The Assistant Vicar for International Ministry at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, the Revd Harry Ching, said that up to ten per cent of new arrivals from Hong Kong were likely to be Christians. He is working with Chinese pastors in the UK to co-ordinate a welcoming and supportive response.

"This is a golden opportunity for churches to express Christian hospitality. We need to make sure our churches respond with cultural sensitivity and also recognise that many of those arriving will be wounded people, who no longer see Hong Kong as the place they once knew."

Reading the Bible is increasing 'mental wellbeing' during the pandemic

More of us are reading the Bible during the pandemic, resulting in better mental wellbeing and hope in God.

That's according to a new survey for Bible Society, carried out by Christian Research.

Forty-two per cent reported reading the Bible has led to an increased sense of hope in God during the crisis, rising to 49 per cent among 45 to 54-year-olds. Some 28 per cent said that reading the Bible had increased their confidence in the future, whilst 63 per cent said that it had enabled their confidence to remain the same, rather than dipping.

Dr Andrew Ollerton, author of [**The Bible Course**](#) and [**The Bible: A Story that makes sense of life**](#) told Premier the findings are encouraging:

"We'd like to think that the Bible makes a difference when the chips are down, but the pandemic has road tested it once more and found it, it works. You know, there is a statistical meaningful impact that the Bible is having on people's lives raising their confidence, for the future and hope."

Twenty-three per cent of those surveyed said that the Bible had increased their mental wellbeing, including 47 per cent of 24 to 34-year-olds. Thirty-three per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds reported that reading the Bible had helped them feel less lonely.

"Loneliness is part of what this pandemic has exacerbated. I would say that's another pre-existing problem, much deeper ingrained in our culture that isn't working so well and the pandemic's exacerbated it through restrictions. But the Bible has offset that feeling of loneliness, I suppose people feeling that a certain presence of God is mediated to them through engaging with Scripture and 16 to 24 year olds, that's pretty young," he said.

The survey also found that people are reading the Bible regularly during the pandemic. The biggest rise was found among 25 to 34-year-olds, where more than half reported reading the Bible more often.

There's a range of ways that Christians are choosing to consume their biblical content. Hard copies of the bible are still very popular, but there's also a move towards increased digital engagement.

"I think when it comes to the Bible, we're pretty persistent on wanting print ... yet there's also new types of engagement. There are so many Bible apps and reading plans that people are engaging with. But also I was interested that 30 per cent are now listening to the Bible. That's an increase of people who, perhaps again, related to well-being just want to allow the words and the stories to almost sort of wash over them in that slightly more restful, mindful kind of way," Dr Ollerton added.

He's also hopeful that even as lockdown is lifted more Christians will keep their new habit of engaging more often with the bible.

"I actually think what the pandemic has done is pushed us back towards what should have been the case anyway, which is that we are, as God's people, as Christians, we're self-feeders. We're not just those who have to turn up to a service to be fed, we are able to feed ourselves. I think the pandemic is actually almost pushed...the responsibility in the right sense to feed ourselves.

"If these figures are showing that's increased, I really hope that continues. My sense is that it will, because we know that it takes six weeks to form a habit, [and] we've been in this new habit of living this way for a lot longer than that."

Heavenly Father,

We give thanks that more of us are finding hope and better mental well-being through reading your Holy Word.

May more come to know your teachings and the healing power of your Grace.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

Christian holiday company: 'we're the most booked up we've ever been at this stage' following PM's roadmap

A Christian holiday company has told Premier the prime minister's announcement that international travel could resume in mid-May has brought positivity and optimism to the tourism industry.

Adam Playfair, managing director of Richmond Christian Holidays, said the guidelines, although not set in stone, are a "light at the end of the tunnel".

"We have a huge number of bookings already, we're the most booked up we've ever been at this stage for summer season," Playfair said.

"So much of that is down to people deferring their holidays from last year. When we cancelled the holidays last year, everybody was offered a refund or the opportunity just to defer to the following year and so many guests said 'Look, I want the same again next year'. So, that's been a huge support," he continued.

The company offers summer holidays to Greece and winter ski holidays in France. Each day in the resorts there are times of prayer, praise and Bible-teaching available for guests.

Mr Playfair said it has been tough though: "I think for me, it parallels with that verse, Romans 5:1-5, that says when we've experienced suffering, we've experienced perseverance...and our hope is not put to shame. I think everyone is just breathing a sigh of relief," he said.

On Monday, Boris Johnson hinted that international travel could resume on 17th May at the earliest, sparking a surge in holiday bookings. UK-based holidays could be allowed from 12th April but only with the same household.

Airline EasyJet has said bookings by UK customers for the summer are more than four times higher than last week while traffic on Thomas Cook's website jumped 75 per cent.

The most popular destinations include spots in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Many tourism companies have been supported by the Government's furlough scheme and other financial resources, but these companies are expected to bounce back once restrictions are fully eased.

When asked if the pent-up demand would compensate for the lost income over the last year, Mr Playfair said it will take a while to fully recover from the economic impact of Covid on the industry. However, he thinks the support that has been provided by the Government will allow them to start operating normally soon.

"Amazingly, there is such support from so many people, in particular in the UK, that we are in a position where we really can do this bounce back. We have the best bookings that we've ever really seen. I think that there will be a lot of people taking some extra holidays this year to make up for the missed holidays last year," he said.

"It's so nice to be in this position now, in February, knowing that this summer is going to be great. We can't wait to get back out there and just experience the joy of God's creation being in the beauty of the Greek islands," he concluded.

Growing in Love

Lent 2 The Nature of God

How do we think of God who holds us in his love? How do we address God? By what imagery do we describe God? P20

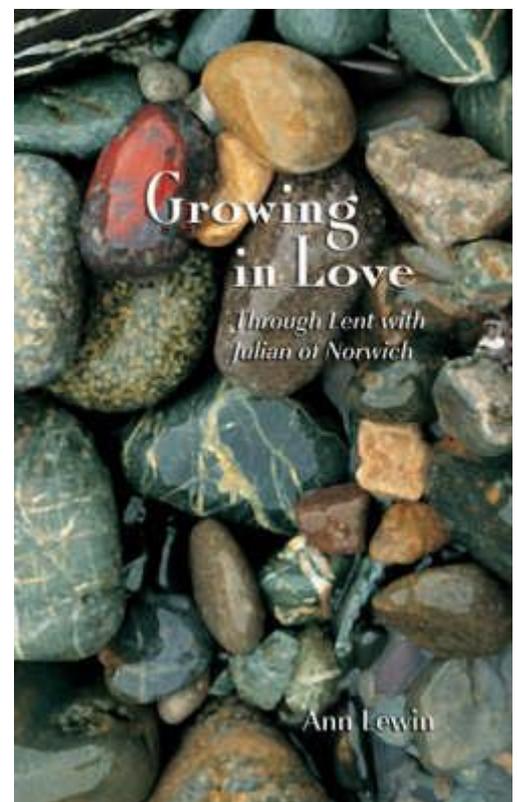
Father is most often used in Christian circles but is an image more readily associated with the New Testament. The Victorians liked the image of *The All Seeing Eye of God*. But a lot of the images we also have stem from the Writers of the Old Testament: Judge, Terrible Avenger, Provider, King. I am sure you can think of others.

We still have these images of the avenging God. Insurance companies with their reluctance to insure what they deem to be Acts Of God : natural events. And we also cry out when anything goes majorly wrong, " Why has this happened to me? What have I done to deserve this?" But this speaks of a God who has got us in this mess rather than a God whose meaning is love.

The image of God the Father who is deeply engaged with his children is revealed through Jesus. Read Luke 15 : The lost sheep, The Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. God will go to any lengths to recover the lost. Earlier in Luke 11 Jesus teaches his disciples to pray " Our Father"

But is this image helpful? Have we become too reliant on it to describe God? Julian used another parental image to describe God :

As truly as God is our Father so truly is God our Mother and he revealed that in everything and especially in these sweet words where he says: I am he , the power and goodness of



Fatherhood: I am he, the wisdom and lovingness of motherhood; I am he, the light and the grace which is all blessed love; I am he, the Trinity; I am he, the unity, I am he the great supreme goodness of every kind of thing; I am he who makes you to love; I am he who makes you to long, I am he; the endless fulfilling of all true desiresFrom this follows that as truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother. Our Father wills, our Mother works, our good Lord the Holy Spirit confirms. And therefore it is our part to love our God, in whom we have our being, reverently thanking and praising him for our Creation, mightily praying to our Mother for mercy and pity, and to our Lord the Holy Spirit for help and grace.” Lt ch 59

Julian did not use the image of Mother exclusively, she used it alongside other images of God.

For some the parental image of God as Father or Mother may be unhelpful, depending on our life experiences. So we can maybe think of other words which relate to “parenting”. Maybe we want to use gender neutrals. In other religions they refer to God as God, with no personal pronouns. Is that what works for you?

We should not compartmentalise God is my personal view. God manifests himself in so many ways as we read the Scriptures and experience God in our lives.

Why not this week reflect on what imagery you find helpful in relating to God and what is unhelpful.

Is there a new image of God that you have come across recently that speaks strongly to you? Why?

Rosalyn Young

LT long text of The Revelation of Divine Love – Julian of Norwich
 ST short text of The Revelation of Divine Love – Julian of Norwich
 Pages from **Growing in Love – Through Lent with Julian of Norwich** by Ann Lewin .
 Published by Inspire reprint 2007 isbn 1-85852-320-6

Boris Johnson visits church in London to meet leaders to discuss uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine

The Prime Minister and Conservative London Mayoral candidate, Shaun Bailey visited a multi-cultural church in South London this week to encourage people to take the vaccine.

Mr Johnson and Mr Bailey, who is a Christian, were hosted by Pastor Mike White from the Tabernacle Church - or The Tab Church - in Lewisham, along with other community leaders.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister discussed with them the issues that are contributing to low vaccine uptake, ways to increase trust in the community and how best to combat misinformation, especially online.

Johnson said: "The most important thing now is for everybody to take advantage of this life-saving vaccination programme.

"We have got to work with people's reservations in order to turn it around. Thank you to all the community leaders who have shown their support, and for backing the U.K. vaccine programme."



Pastor Sola Fola-Ade, from the Liberty Church in East London attended the event and said: "As a medical doctor by training, I have a responsibility to protect not just my members but the population as a whole.

"While people have questions regarding the efficacy and safety of the vaccine, we must be careful about misinformation and look at the facts. We should make decisions based on facts and not on myths"

Father,

We thank you that politicians are prepared to work with churches and communicate with church leaders.

We thank you that churches have been given more freedom in most of the UK this lockdown - we also thank you that churches will be open for services soon in Scotland, if all goes to plan.

Thank you that the virus is decreasing.

Help us to be obedient and follow the instructions to help it reduce faster so we can get back into church more quickly.

Amen.

LENT

WAYS TO MARK IT DURING LOCKDOWN

BY TAKING UP...

BY GIVING UP...

DID YOU
BORROW
MY BOOK?



A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE



ONE OF THE
THINGS WE
HAVE TO GIVE
UP ANYWAY



THE USUAL



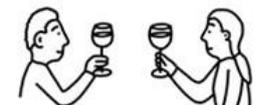
READING A
LENT BOOK



A CREATIVE
ENDEAVOUR



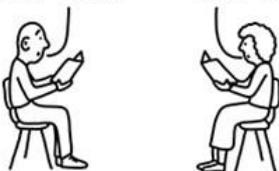
READING
BADLY RESEARCHED
ARTICLES ABOUT
THE CHURCH



NOTHING – THESE ARE
DIFFICULT TIMES

I THINK IT'S
PRONOUNCED
'LIVE LENT'

NO, I'M
SURE IT'S
'LIVE LENT'



DAILY ACTIONS
FROM A BOOKLET



A MUSICAL
INSTRUMENT



JUST
GENERALLY
GIVING UP

St Hilda's Parish News

Mothers' Union World Day of Prayer – Friday 5th March

All are welcome to join in the Mother's Union World Day of Prayer service which has been prepared by the women of Vanuatu. This will be a zoom service at 2.30pm.

- Click – Join a Meeting
- Enter the Meeting id – **814 9304 6367**
- Enter password – **296552** or
- Phone in and follow the instructions– **0203 481 5240, 0203 901 7895, 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237**

If you have any Parish News you would like to share, then please send them into the Parish Office.

Canaan Ministries are open for any of your Lent needs. Just simply phone or email them and they will look after you.

They sell a vast and diverse number of products; it is difficult to keep everything they sell on their website. They would like to thank you all for your much-needed continued support.

In addition, please join the (Canaan) Facebook group, as it will be the best way for them to keep everyone up to date in this fast-changing situation that we find ourselves in!

Any other information can be found on their website www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/

Hosea 12:9

But as for you, return to your God,
hold fast to love and justice,
and wait continually for your
God.

Crossroads

The January/February final edition is now available on our website.

This weeks services

Sunday Eucharist – 28th February @ 9.30am

These services can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda's Ashford), and Twitter.

There is no service on Wednesday 3rd March.

Mothers' Union World Day of Prayer – 5th March @ 2.30pm via Zoom

Please see our website (www.sthilda.org) for updates and the weekly service sheet.

Tea and Chat after Sunday Service

We would like to invite you to join us for a virtual Tea and Chat after the service on **Sunday 28th February 2021 at 11.15am**. See below on how to join.

The meeting is hosted by Zoom.

- Download the Zoom app – www.zoom.us
- Click – Join a Meeting
- Enter the Meeting id – **998 8263 1544**
- Enter password – **437120**



Please hold in your prayers and thoughts this week those who are affected by the Corona Virus as well as the family and friends of those below.

The Sick

James Bedford	Jim Hennessey	Elizabeth Savill-Burgess	Chick Wilson
Michael Browne	Jean Iddiols	Delphine Scrivener	Peter Wilson
Robb Clarke	Jane Johnson	Riley Shaw	Jo Wood
Rebecca Cohen	Pat Kyle	Anne Shenton	Erin
Ann Considine	Libby Mills	Elsie Stone	George
Michael Dixon	Raymond Nation	Roy Stone	Joey
Peter Garner	June Prentice	Sandra Swain	Nic
Eileen Gilbert	John Radford	Rev. Peter Taylor	

The Recently Departed

Carol Davies

Prayer

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your
Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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