



St Hilda's
Ashford

St Hilda's News



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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.

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

- Parish Office Tel 01784 253525
 Email
 office@sthilda.org
- Father Joseph can be contacted on
01784 254237
www.sthilda.org

Return to public Worship at St Hilda's

We are pleased to be able to welcome people back to public worship services in St Hilda's from Mothering Sunday 14th March.

There will also be a Wednesday morning Eucharist on 17th March at 9.45am.

Places will be limited to maintain social distancing and masks will have to be worn in Church. There will be no junior church, however, children are very welcome to join in the main services in St Hilda's.

Pandemic brings nearly five million people to volunteer for first time

Talk/Together report surveys public's positive response to the crisis

NEARLY five million people volunteered for the first time in their lives last year, a wide-ranging report on community spirit in the UK has found.

Of the estimated 12.4 million people who volunteered during the pandemic, 4.6 million people were volunteering for the first time.

Of these, 770,000 were aged between 18 and 24 years old; 360,000 had a disability or long-term illness; and 740,000 lived in the poorest fifth of neighbourhoods in the UK —

all groups of people who were previously less likely to volunteer, it says.

The report, *Our Chance to Reconnect*, was published on Monday by the Talk/Together project, whose steering group is chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is based on conversations with 160,000 people in the UK at different periods from March 2020 to January 2021. This includes a largely online survey of 78,790 people conducted by Together; five surveys of 10,485 people undertaken by ICM; and information from the further 68,534 people who took part in surveys, online events, and other research activities run by partner organisations.

There were also 41 guided online discussions with 281 members of the public between May 2020 and January, and 26 stakeholder discussions with 218 people from religious and civil-society organisations, local government, businesses, and universities.

The report points to "unifying moments" during the crisis: it estimates that about 27.1 million people watched the Prime Minister address the nation on 23 March 2020, and that by the end of the Clap for Carers campaign in May, 69 per cent of the population had taken



Volunteers from the Step to Hope charity carry food parcels into the grounds of the Parish Church of St Cuthbert in Edinburgh, last May, to distribute to the community

part.

Last May, 60 per cent of participants agreed that the “public’s response to the coronavirus crisis has shown the unity of our society more than its divides”, compared with 15 per cent who disagreed. By December, however, fewer people (50 per cent) agreed with this statement; and one quarter (27 per cent) disagreed. Only one third (35 per cent) said that they had been impressed with the general public’s response to Covid-19, compared with the 68 per cent who said that they were impressed with their friends and family.

“Covid-19 has changed the way we see and talk about our society,” the report says. The domination of Brexit in the media in 2019 had damaged confidence in community and togetherness, it continues; but, in 2020, “People found that they were not as deeply divided as they had come to believe. A shared Covid-19 narrative emerged: one that placed more emphasis on the kindness, equal worth of people, community spirit, strong neighbourhood relationships, local unity and what we have in common. This narrative has now been implanted into our collective memory of 2020, although it may evolve or change with time.”

The pandemic had also highlighted and exacerbated existing divisions, however. The report suggests that about 45 per cent of respondents said that “divisions between rich and poor” worried them most; eight per cent of people (13 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds) felt that they had not coped mentally with Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions; 55 per cent felt that social media drove people apart more than together.

While Covid-19 had brought generations closer, as people looked out for their older neighbours, older people were more vulnerable to Covid-19 and more likely to be excluded digitally. While 41 per cent of people felt that the pandemic had made their local community more united, one in eight people (13 per cent) felt that Covid-19 had made their community more divided.

Other concerns raised in the report included disparities according to faith, race, and identity; the north-south divide in England; divisions across the home nations; the loom of Scottish independence; and declining political trust.

There was also hope, however: almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of people said that they wanted society to be more connected in the future, and one third thought that Covid-19 would change how people connected with each other, because they had missed face-to-face interaction. One third were less optimistic, saying that new habits of staying apart would become embedded in long-term behaviour; and one third thought that society would simply go back to the way it was before.

Archbishop Welby writes in his foreword to the report: “Obliged to stay physically apart, it has felt harder to support those close to us. The pandemic has tested the resilience of our communities, deepening some existing divides, and creating new pressures as its impacts have been unevenly experienced.

“Yet this period of forced separation has also prompted a new appreciation of social contact with others — family, friends, neighbours, and those in our wider community. . . . Where there has been despair, there has also been hope — and that hope has come from the care we have shown each other, the possibility of stronger, kinder and more loving communities.”

The Together steering group, made up of leaders in faith, culture, sport, and business, had been formed before the pandemic, but the crisis had brought urgency to its campaign, he said. “The Talk/together project reveals a society that has been battered and shaken by recent events and is fearful of divisions to come; but equally one that is heartened by the way in which people and communities have responded. Despite everything, it is a society that feels closer than prior to the pandemic and wants to build on that sense of community in the future.”

Funding for churches confirmed in Government budget

The Church of England's representative in parliament has confirmed that some of the £300 million dedicated to 'Levelling-up' town centres will be going to churches and cathedrals. In the House of Commons, Andrew Selous MP told MPs during Church Commissioners' Questions that churches have been included as part of the Government's plan to reinvigorate high streets and community spirit.

He was prompted by a question from church-goer and Lib Dem Munira Wilson MP, who asked: "how much the Church of England administered in grants to churches for the purpose of restoration in the last financial year. "

Andrew Selous, the Second Church Estates Commissioner, answered: "The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England has administered £10 million of the Government's culture recovery funding to 68 churches and cathedrals and about £250,000 in conservation grants.

"The £300 million additional funding announced yesterday is very welcome, as is the fact that the levelling-up fund specifically includes churches and cathedrals. The national Church does not routinely fund capital works, but it does liaise closely with a wide network of funders who provide support for parish churches and cathedrals."

The budget, states: "The Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets. The prospectus will provide guidance to local areas on the process for submitting bids, the types of projects eligible for funding, and how bids will be assessed. To ensure that funding reaches the places most in need, the government has identified priority places based on an index of local need to receive capacity funding to help them co-ordinate their applications."

The Government wants to encourage the development of rural and coastal town centres, clean energy projects and cultural attractions such as museums, sports venues and heritage sites.

This was also acknowledged and appreciated by the Bishop of Birmingham, David Urquhart, Convenor of the Bishops in the House of Lords, who said: "The £300m additional funding for the Culture Recovery Fund is very welcome and will support the many small businesses and independent contractors our churches employ and support.

"I also note that the Levelling Up Fund prospectus specifically mentions cultural and heritage assets, including churches, and we look forward to churches and cathedrals particularly in areas of high deprivation taking part in this programme."

Munira Wilson question was prompted by concern for a church in her own constituency, St Michael's church in Fulwell, which is has no formal heating or lighting. The team have raised over £1.5 million, but need a further £230,000 to make the church functional.

Mr Selous responded: "I am delighted to learn about the growing congregation and all the good work happening at St Michael's Fulwell. The commissioners provide strategic development funding to the Church nationally in order to support major change projects that will make a significant difference to mission and financial strength across dioceses. In addition to the culture recovery fund, the National Lottery Heritage Fund has recently launched a new set of funding priorities to support Covid-19 recovery and is open to applications now."

Lord,

We pray that the congregations who desperately need a church building or church repairs get them. Please provide funds and help to those churches who need a home or work done to function.

We pray that ultimately, wherever a church meets, that its people are enthusiastic about you and spreading the gospel.

We pray for a wise use of money by trustees.

Amen.

Faith leaders urge people to 'check before you share' posts about vaccine

Shareable videos of an imam, a pastor and clinicians have been created with the aim of dispelling misinformation about the coronavirus vaccine.

A series of clips and images have been put together by the Government with the support of social media giants including Facebook and Twitter, in a bid to address concerns about low vaccine uptake among ethnic minority communities.

Trusted community figures feature in the material, urging people to be mindful of misinformation and “check before you share”.

The campaign is particularly aimed at countering the spread of misleading and false details via private messaging apps such as WhatsApp, where it is harder to detect.

It comes after Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said anti-vaccination messages are “very, very cleverly, hyper super-forensically targeted at different communities” with false claims about fertility “proving to be sadly quite potent”.

The campaign is the first to be designed by the Government specifically for private instant messaging services, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) said.

Reverend Alton Bell, senior pastor at the Wembley Family Church, said: “As a faith leader and scientist in the black community, I’m lending my voice to this campaign because it is absolutely vital people get the facts about the vaccine, not rumours which could do them harm if they believe them.

“My message is simple: be aware of false information online and check before you share.”

Qari Asim, a senior imam at the Makkah Mosque in Leeds and chairman of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, who also took part, said: “It’s natural that people might have questions about vaccines, but we’re seeing instances where they’ve relied on unfounded theories or fake news to make a decision to delay taking the vaccine.

“We want people to be aware of the false information that is being circulated on these platforms and make informed choices based on the information from the health authorities and faith leaders.”

The campaign carries three tips for people to follow, including checking where the information comes from, looking closely to see whether it seems trustworthy, and urging people not to share it if they remain unsure about what is claimed.

Champions are also helping dispel myths around the vaccination process, using Facebook and WhatsApp groups to hold Q&As to help drive take-up of the vaccine.

Digital and Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said: “We want to harness the power of social media to tackle false information and encourage take-up of life-saving vaccines among ethnic minorities.

“Our new toolkit and campaign will help people access reliable and factual information on vaccines and builds on the good work platforms are already doing to promote trusted quality information.”

Growing in Love

Lent 4 Sin

"...he taught me that I should contemplate the glorious atonement, for this atoning is more pleasing to the blessed divinity and more honourable for man's salvation than ever Adam's sin was harmful." LT Ch 29

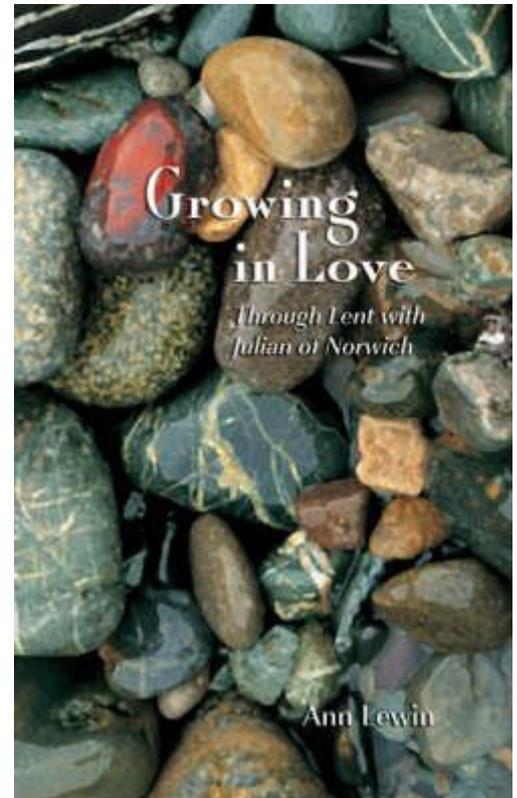
According to Julian, God enfolds every part of us in unconditional love: the holy and good and the parts we don't like and the parts we would rather keep hidden in our nature. The Bible tells us in Genesis that we are made in the image of God and God was pleased with everything he had made: including us! But sin marred the image of human beings. However God's saving act of God in Christ dying on the cross for us offers us atonement. Atonement = At-one-ment.

God has dealt with sin through Jesus Christ. Sin does not remove from God's presence, but we can put up barriers when between us and God because we do not feel worthy of God's love. Often is it not a deliberate act, and we are more likely to fall in to it as result of apathy or carelessness

"It seemed to me that it was necessary to see and to know that we are sinners and commit many evil deeds which we ought to forsake, and leave many good deeds undone which we ought to do so we deserve pain, blame and wrath. And despite all this, I saw truly that our Lord was never angry, and never will be. Because he is God, he is good, he is truth, he is love, he is peace; and his power, his wisdom, his charity, and his unity do not allow him to be angry." LT Ch 46

"She saw that God leads us by his Holy Spirit to desire mercy, and then through contrition, compassion and true longing for God. God restores us to wholeness." P 43

When we sin it can leave us with feelings of guilt and worthlessness, which, according to Julian, fixes the attention on ourselves. But what we need to understand is that we are forgiven. A wayside pulpit had a poster: "Christians are not perfect, they are just forgiven." Hopefully this will give us a sense of thankfulness and not pride. And a fear of pride can lead us to a false sense of humility, fixed on ourselves. It can also lead to the feeling that we are not worthy of God's love. But God's love is unconditional.



“Perhaps that is how God regards our faults sometimes. For God is always more interested in our growth in love, and is quicker than we are to see our failures as part of that growth.....” p 46

If we think of God as Father/Mother, rather than just a reflection of human parenthood, it is the embodiment of perfect love, unconditional. There is nothing more, or nothing less, we can do for God to love us. As a Parent, God delights in his children thriving, and failures are an opportunity for personal growth, not to beat us up. It is not about the sin per se, but how we respond to it, what we learn from it, a lifetime's journey.

Perhaps Julian's words can help us to understand the meaning of penitence as a state of mind, of regret and sorrow for something we did, and penance, something done to repair such action, both achieved through God's strength, not ours.

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

St Hilda's Parish News

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

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll will close for revision Saturday 27 March 2021. If you consider St Hilda's to be your regular place of worship why not complete an Electoral Roll Application and come on our Roll. Forms are available from the Parish Office, either call on 01784 253525 or request by email on sthilda28@gmail.com

Please complete and return these forms either by post or email no later than Saturday 27th March 2021.

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/

Proverbs 21:26

She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on
her tongue.

This weeks services

Sunday Eucharist – 14th March @ 9.30am

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

Wednesday Eucharist – 17th March @ 9.45am

Tickets can be booked for this week's services via the links on our website and Facebook page or by contacting the Parish Office.

Day of Service	Booking Opens	Booking Closes	Online
Sunday	Monday 9am	Saturday midday	Yes
Wednesday	Thursday 9am	Tuesday midday	No

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 14th March 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 – **990 2924 2691**
- Enter password – **245380**



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

The Recently Departed

John Radford	Peter Richardson	Beryl Loveridge	Jean Newric
Carol Davies			

Prayer

God of compassion,
 whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
 shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
 and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
 strengthen us in our daily living
 that in joy and in sorrow
 we may know the power of your presence
 to bind together and to heal;
 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