



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

Candles lit for Covid dead on Day of Reflection

Holly Wilson, whose grandmother Ada Wilson passed away during the pandemic, lights a candle in Belfast Cathedral before a remembrance service on Tuesday. The 2100 tea-lights represent the more than 2100 people who have lost their lives to Covid in Northern Ireland



THE Day of Reflection on Tuesday prompted acts of remembrance and words of lamentation, but also the expression of a desire for a

better future, as thousands of candles were lit in memory those who had died as a result of Covid-19.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, giving *Thought for the Day* on Radio 4, said that Covid had touched “everything and everyone. . . Weddings, funerals, birth celebrations, falling in love, dating, mourning, and celebrating . . . everything we do has been different.”

He acknowledged the anniversary as “a time to lament, to mourn, to sit and weep for what could have been and is not. Pause for a while today, remember what is being lost, above all who has been lost. Lament; for to do so is to honour and treasure.”

But it also posed the question of future direction: “What do we want to build as a society? Surely it is a living memorial to loss — and an expression of what we long for. Imagine it; then let us strive for a society that is just and good, that speaks of the victory of the life and hope.”

The Queen sent flowers to St Bartholomew’s Hospital, in London, where the Duke of Edinburgh recently had surgery. A message with the bouquet read: “As we look forward to a brighter future together, today we pause to reflect on the grief and loss that continues to be felt by so many people and families, and pay tribute to the immeasurable service of those who have supported us all over the last year.”

The Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, told the *York Press*: “Although there has been nothing good about the horrors and sorrows of Covid-19, they all point to the indomitable, persevering goodness of the human spirit and how we could find good things even in the midst of despair and sadness.

“They also point towards a new way of inhabiting the world beyond Covid: a way that will be better and healthier and more sustainable than the world we left behind. First, and probably most important of all, we rediscovered the fact that we belong to each other.”

Reflecting on a new appreciation of the dignity and value of people's labour, he said: "We used to measure each other's worth by the size of their salary. Now it must be the size of their heart."

He spoke, too, of the need to build a world "where everyone is properly rewarded; where everyone's contribution is valued; and where there is opportunity everyone to have work and achieve their potential.

"We all know that, in the world before Covid, many of us were too busy and too frantic. But in this past year we have caught a glimpse of, and experienced, different rhythms of life. . . We have begun to see a more sustainable way of living that will not only be good for the earth itself, it would also be good for us and for our well-being.

"Covid has brought us to our knees. Now I'm praying that we will rise up and build a better world."

Forward in Faith put out a pastoral statement reflecting on the "terrible damage" that the virus had wrought in the nation and the world. It said: "We as Christians will pray for the repose of the souls of over 125,000 people . . . each one a beloved and precious child of God, mourned by family and friends.

"We will pray for deprived urban communities, many served by society parishes, who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and those families who are coping with hunger and destitution. We will pray for the professionals in health education, social care, local government in other walks of life who have endured such a stressful and challenging year. And we will pray for our churches and for Christians who have felt again and again the desolate pain of being denied access to the sacraments of life."

Cathedrals marked the anniversary with a myriad of lights. The words "Reflect, Support and Hope" were projected in yellow on the front of Lichfield Cathedral. At Blackburn Cathedral, 4161 candles were lit in memory of those who died in Lancashire (News, 19 March). The Dean, the Very Revd Peter Howell-Jones, led the national one-minute silence, followed by the tolling of the cathedral bell.

He said: "Almost every person has been affected in one way or another during the last 12 months, and we cannot, and must not underestimate the human impact of the pandemic across our nation. . . We as a place of faith have to recognise that, and look at ways to help and support our communities as we move slowly out of lockdown towards recovery."

At Leicester Cathedral, a Memorial of Lament service was streamed: 2300 candles were lit in memory of those who had died in the city and the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The Dean, the Very Revd David Monteith, spoke of the everyone's consciousness of the levels of loss which they had experienced — not of loved ones alone, but of "normal life, income, well-being, mental health. . . The scale of it is hard to get our heads round."

Local councils throughout Britain used the occasion to thank their communities. In Gateshead, where the Millennium Bridge was lit up in yellow, the council leader, Martin Gannon, said: "Today, we remember those we've lost and reflect on the difficulties we have

all faced. . . Many people have been impacted financially, our children have missed their classrooms, and most of us have experienced feelings of anxiety and isolation.”

He thanked residents, communities, workers, and partners for pulling together to support each other and to adjust to new ways of working. “This is public service at its best,” he said.

The leader of Nottingham City Council, David Mellen, said that each of the people represented by the 600 candles placed on the steps of the Council House “have a family and friends who are missing them and grieving for them.

“But we’ve also seen, in the midst of those difficulties, people stepping up, people reaching out, and people serving their communities and risking their lives . . . looking out for neighbours, doing something extraordinary, looking out for others. And, in the dark days of Covid, we have bright lights. We want to say thank you to the people, too.”

‘Thank God for Zoom’: Faith leaders reflect on a year of the pandemic

Faith leaders have hailed the switch to online worship and communication as they recalled the “enormous challenge” they faced having to close religious buildings in the UK’s first lockdown one year ago.

Some aspects such as the option to stream weddings and funerals online for family and friends unable to attend in person will continue long after the pandemic has passed, they added.

Dame Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England’s Covid Recovery Group, told the PA news agency: “I think one of the great sorrows of the pandemic is that we haven’t been able to mark those rites of passage that we would normally have done.

“Whilst weddings and funerals have taken place, people have not been able to be physically at them and we know, particularly around funerals that has left a huge hole of grief, and I think one of my sorrows is that people thought ‘Well, at least we’ll be able to mark the one year after somebody’s death’.

“Well, actually, we’re getting to the point where we’re still in lockdown and can’t mark those events.”

She added that while streaming is a way for people from afar to join in with important rites of passage, the significance of in-person worship and celebration should not be underestimated.

She said: “We will welcome the opportunity to go back to celebrating weddings and funerals as we used to do, however I think our use of going online means that we will also



stream them so there may well be people who couldn't get to funerals at short notice, or weddings because they live a long way away.

"I do think we will continue to see live streaming of those events, however don't underestimate our need to celebrate those events in person."

Many people are still facing a "great sorrow and a burden" as they remain in lockdown for the one-year anniversary of family or friends who died at the beginning of the pandemic, the Bishop of London said.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis declared "thank God for Zoom" as he recalled the "unprecedented situation" of March 2020, describing the closure of synagogues as "one of the biggest decisions I have needed to take, absolutely".

Imam Ajmal Masroor, said the pandemic had taught people that, whatever the situation, they can always adapt.

The London-based imam recalled the efforts it took to convince some fellow imams and people within the community that the mosques would have to shut last year.

He said: "I remember some calling me all sorts of names because they were so upset and angry with me."

But he empathised with the initial reluctance because people have an "emotional attachment" to the mosques.

What people have faced has strengthened their resilience, he added.

Faith leaders sign letter backing National Day of Reflection

Prominent leaders from religious groups across the UK have signed an open letter urging the public to join them in a national remembrance day in honour of those who lost their lives as a result of coronavirus.

More than 200 other organisations have already expressed their support for the National Day of Reflection, held on Tuesday 23rd March, exactly a year since the UK was first told to stay at home.

In the letter, faith leaders recognise the importance of "the ability to grieve properly" and highlight "how high the cost will be of our inability to do that."

It continues: "While we can't turn back time, we can build opportunities to mourn as a nation. That's why this Tuesday (23 March), we are asking the nation to join us in doing two things. To take a minute to reflect by taking part in the nationwide silence at noon, and then take a moment to connect; to reach out to someone you know is grieving and who might like your support."

According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, 145,647 deaths had occurred in the UK by 26th February this year where covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who intends to observe the minute's silence at noon in private, said: "This has been an incredibly difficult year for our country. My thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones, and who have not been able to pay tribute to them in the way they would have wanted".

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford have also expressed

their support for the day of reflection.

The National Day of Reflection will see prominent buildings including churches and cathedrals lit up at 8pm across the UK and commemorative community-led activities such as virtual reflective assemblies, choirs, special services and candle lighting on doorsteps taking place. Bells will also toll at 12:01 to mark the end of the minute of silence.

Bishop of London, Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally, has encouraged people not only to reflect on the lives lost to the pandemic but to consider reaching out to connect with those who have survived and who need support and love.

"Alongside all of the pain, the pandemic has also given us something, a renewed sense of community and a sense that we are looking out for each other. Please join us in marking both of these."

Organisers hope the National Day of Reflection will become an annual event.

Church of England backs efforts to fund biggest vaccination drive in history

The Church of England is supporting the 'VaccinAid' campaign, which aims to help fund the largest vaccination drive ever.

It's led by UNICEF UK and the online fundraiser Crowdfunder, and aims gives people a practical way to show thanks for their Covid-19 job by donating to help pay for vaccines for others around the world.

VaccineAid, which is also has the backing of the NHS and celebrities, hopes to fund almost two billion Covid-19 vaccines for health workers and the most high risk and vulnerable people. The money raised will also help UNICEF provide tests and treatments to people in 190 countries through the global COVAX initiative.

The campaign launched on Monday has been developed in just a few weeks following a meeting convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury with faith leaders, the Government and charities to discuss how people in the UK could do something with the sense of gratitude many have felt.



Most Rev Justin Welby encouraged people to join in the campaign as a practical demonstration of Jesus' command to love our neighbour.

Archbishop Justin said: "The Covid-19 crisis has had a profound impact on people here and around the world, but vaccines offer the hope of a brighter future. I'm delighted that churches and other faith groups in the UK are supporting the VaccinAid campaign

"There is no better way to show our deep gratitude for the gifts of science and medicine than making sure vulnerable people around the world are also given a shot.

"At the heart of the Christian faith is Christ's call to love our neighbour: keeping one another safe from this terrible disease is part of living that out. I encourage people to donate whatever they can, so we can build a better world together."

Rt Rev Dr Michael Beasley, the Bishop of Hertford and an epidemiologist, played a key role in helping set up the campaign.

He said: "Covid-19 has affected us all - every home, family, school, business and community all around the world.

"And because of the way this virus works, we know that it won't be over for *anyone* until it's over for *everyone*. That's why I've been delighted to throw my support behind VaccinAid.

"It offers each of us the opportunity to play our individual part in bringing this world wide epidemic to an end.

"If, like me, you've had your jab, you'll know the feeling of relief, gratitude and thankfulness that happens when you've been protected from Covid.

"I'd love the whole world to experience that feeling and protection too. So let's give the world a shot!"

The campaign comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson says countries need to work together on their vaccine rollouts, warning that a third wave of coronavirus across Europe could hit the UK.

The EU's threatened to block exports of the AstraZeneca jab as it struggles with shortages. The PM spoke to European leaders, including the French president, aiming to prevent what the Government's calling "vaccine nationalism".

Bishop Michael described the controversy surrounding vaccine supply as a "sad" situation. He told Premier: "We've all got to pull together as one world to combat Covid-19. What can be perceived as argument, squabbling, or unhappiness like that, I don't think that's going to help us all get behind what really needs to happen.

"We can address Covid everywhere, because we have to do that if we're to bring this pandemic to an end. So, I think the call of all of us is to say to folks: come on, we need to cooperate together."

[See Parish News section below on how you can donate to Vaccinaid.](#)

Lord we thank you for blessing us with scientists and medical professionals that have created coronavirus vaccines.

We are so thankful that hundreds of thousands of people have been able to have their vaccine.

Lord we pray that every single person who needs one around the world will be able to get one.

We pray that we will not forget our brothers and sisters around the world who don't have easy access to vaccinations.

We pray your blessings over this campaign.

Amen.

Bishop tells struggling Londoners to text for mental health support

The Diocese of London has partnered with the mental health text support service Shout 85258, to help support those experiencing mental health challenges across the city.

The Bishop of London, Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, has formally launched 'Neighbour' as a new Diocese of London 'keyword' that people in the capital can use to message Shout when they need mental health support:

"People within the Diocese of London can now be connected to one of Shout's trained volunteers by texting the word neighbour at 85258. And you can text any time of the day or in the night and you'll be connected to a trained Shout volunteer who will chat with you by text. And they'll listen to you. And they're really to help us think more clearly, enabling us to know what steps we could now take next to feeling better, it's a confidential service. It can be used free on most mobile phone networks. So really good news.

"We know that the last year has been a difficult year that most of us at some point would have felt that our mental wellbeing has been challenged. And therefore, this is an opportunity to partner with another organisation to try and support people at what is a difficult time with mental health concerns or issues," Bishop Sarah told Premier.



"It would be great if people could pray for the service. Pray that people will spot it and also pray that people will have courage to use it. Because the first step in seeking help for your mental wellbeing is to ask for help. So I think for churches to pray that the texting service will be accessible to people, that people will be brave enough to take that first step to text the word neighbour," she added.

While Shout is for anyone, to date 65% of those who have text Shout 85258 are aged under 25 and 7% are aged 13 or under.

Those using the service can remain anonymous and the text won't show up on your phone bill.

Boris Johnson records message for Christians, praising churches for bringing teachings of Jesus to life

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has thanked churches for their role during lockdown and acknowledged the 'selfless stoicism' Christians have shown while church has been online.

The Prime Minister, who will be speaking briefly at the online Christian festival Spring Harvest Home said, "I want to say a great big thank you because over the past year or so I have seen over and over again the teachings of Jesus Christ brought to life by people like yourselves: men and women, young and old, right across the UK."

Johnson continues, "I've lost count of the number of Church leaders and congregations from all denominations, that have stepped up to support not only one another, but also to support the whole local community, people of all faiths and none."

The Prime Minister also recognised the sacrifice many Christians have made over the past year: "For many months you have been unable to come together for worship and prayer as you would normally do. I know that has been a huge burden for many Christians, but it is a burden you have borne with selfless stoicism without complaint and by adapting to online worship and meetings."

The Prime Minister concluded, "While this has not been the Easter any of us would have liked, and Spring Harvest is obviously not happening in its usual bustling way, we're getting there, and we're getting there because of people like you."

The Labour party leader Sir Keir Starmer and Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey have also recorded a video message for those attending the online festival, with their own message to Christians in the UK, which will air on Easter Monday.



After their messages are aired, Christians from different political backgrounds will join a panel hosted by Andy Flanagan from Christians in Politics on how believers can be more active in politics as part of their faith.

Phil Loose, CEO of Essential Christian, the home of Spring Harvest, responded to the Prime Minister's comments by saying, "This is an important moment for the Church, to have the recognition of the Prime Minister for the work and sacrifice they have made shows how important the church has become in modern society. We are no longer a peripheral voice, but an essential service to those in our communities. Churches up and down the land have responded fast to the needs of the nation to see our society supported and transformed which is at the very heart of Spring Harvest; equipping the church for action."



He goes on to say, "Now is the time for us as the church to support our nation's leaders as we work together to restore, renew and rebuild our communities in the wake of a devastating pandemic. At Spring Harvest we're stepping up into that need providing resources online to help equip the church to serve their communities."

Spring Harvest Home 2021 begins on Easter Sunday evening with live sung worship from Tim Hughes and Gas Street Music. There will also be teaching from Emmanuel Christian Centre's Doug Williams and Kintsugi Hope's Patrick Regan OBE, plus an evening of comedy with Tim Vine and John Archer.

Father,

We thank you that in the UK Christian festivals and conferences are allowed and that we have the freedom to listen to Christian teaching without fear of persecution.

We thank you that these party leaders have all acknowledged the difficulties the last year has brought to churches.

We pray for continued freedom to worship and for any future UK governments to let Christians preach, listen to, speak, act and worship as we are called to.

Amen.

Palm Sunday Activity

The Story of the Cross

Tell the Resurrection Story with paper. Photos and suggested words have been provided by www.missionbibleclass.org. The source I used for the paper tearing idea is <http://maryricehopkins.com/cross-with-one-tear/>.



1. Start with a sheet of plain white paper. Fold top right corner down.



2. Fold the top right corner down.



3. Fold the top left down.



4. Flip the paper over and fold in half.



5. Fold in half again, right to left



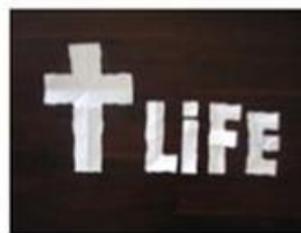
6. Tear in a straight line down the centre.



7. Unfold the paper on the left to form a cross.



8. Unfold all the scraps of paper and place together to form the word: LIFE.



Editor's note – we had fun trying this out, give it a go. Thank you to Rosalyn for sharing.

Chrism Eucharist 2021

Every year at the Chrism Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, there is an invitation issued to all bishops, clergy and LLMs to our Mother Church, St Paul's Cathedral, to renew their ordination and licensing promises and their commitment to the Good News of Jesus Christ.



At this service, oils are blessed for use across the Diocese: the oil for the sick, anointing with the healing presence of Christ; the oil of baptism, anointing with the victory of Christ over sin and death to those He calls by name; the oil of chrism for anointing all who are baptized and confirmed with the sweet fragrance of Christ's gospel.

Arrangements for this year

Maundy Thursday, 1st April 2021

10.30 am

Although gathering at the Cathedral this year will again not be possible, we are pleased to say that everyone will be able to join the London College of Bishops, online at youtu.be/CO377HrcSSo. There will also be a service sheet available on the [St Paul's website](#). Clergy and LLMs will be able to reaffirm their promises with the Bishops online. Please do share these links with members of your congregations – all are welcome.

Every Deanery will be represented at the service by their Area Dean (or representative) who will be receiving the blessed oils for the parishes in each Deanery. They will then arrange for distribution or collection.

The Bishop of London hopes you will join her as all parishes unite across the Diocese in celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

St Hilda's Parish News

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.

vaccinaid.org

With reference to the article on page 8, details of how you donate to vaccinaid. An extract from the website –

'The pandemic hit us hard. But we've come back punching. And with vaccines rolling out, we're beginning to win the fight against COVID-19.

But we can't stop there. Now the rest of the world needs our help. And fast.

Play your part and help UNICEF deliver 2 billion vaccines around the world by the end of this year. Because we'll only ever be safe, if we're all safe.'



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 also offer a delivery service.

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

Psalm 118:26

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

This weeks services

Palm Sunday – 28th March @ 9.30am

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

Wednesday Eucharist – 31st 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	Livestream
Sunday	Monday 9am	Saturday midday	Yes
Wednesday	Thursday 9am	Tuesday midday	No

Please see the back page for Holy Week services.

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 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 – **941 6709 1313**
- Enter password – **097906**

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

The Recently Departed

Michael Orchard	Daphne Leader	John Radford	Peter Richardson
Beryl Loveridge	Jean Newrick		

Prayer

Most merciful God,
 who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
 delivered and saved the world:
 grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
 we may triumph in the power of his victory;
 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

A graphic featuring three black crosses of varying heights silhouetted against a dramatic sunset sky with orange and yellow clouds. The crosses are positioned on a dark horizon line. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold font.

Palm Sunday
9.30am Parish Eucharist

Maundy Thursday
7pm Eucharist

Good Friday
1pm Private Prayer
2pm Liturgy

Easter Eve
10pm Easter Vigil

Easter Day
9.30am Parish Eucharist

Attendance at all services must be pre-booked via our website sthilda.org, our Facebook page or by contacting the parish office 01784 253525 / office@sthilda.org

All services are livestreamed.

Booking for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil is now open via the website, Facebook or the Parish Office.