

## All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



### Pastoral Letter #35

11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Church Family,

**The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.**

**Psalm 19: 1-4**

It felt very strange on Sunday not being able to worship together in church, after three months of being back, and particularly on Remembrance Sunday. But I know that there are many of you who haven't been able to worship in church since the beginning of the first lockdown in March. We miss singing together, praying together, sharing Communion, but the Bible is clear that humans are not the only part of creation able to praise God. As we can see from these words from Psalm 19, the very air around us, and the sky with its sunsets and magnificent clouds declare the goodness of God.

What we already know from Scripture, scientists are discovering today. A recent study reported that *'a regular dose of childlike wonder, achieved by taking a weekly 'awe walk', can help maintain a healthy mind'* (*The Times*, 22 September 2020). What is awe and wonder if not worship? God's created world evokes that awe in us, moves us to wonder. As Paul tells us, *'since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made'* (Romans 1:20).

In these strange times of Christians being scattered, gathering only online, could we rediscover the natural cathedral of God's creation? As the choir cannot gather to sing, perhaps we could 'listen' to the skies instead? And, here in the Fens, we are often blessed with some amazing skies at both sunrise and sunset. Looking closer to the ground, maybe as we enjoy a walk, there is so much of creation that declares the goodness of God, from the spring bulbs peeking through the soil, to the buds on the magnolia tree in the churchyard, and the beautiful colours of autumn that still remain. I wonder how you might encounter God through his creation this week.

On Monday, our Churchwardens Graham Appleby and Chris Lowe were sworn in during an online service with Archdeacon Hugh. Some of the key duties of a churchwarden are: to care and support the parish priest, being there for advice and support and providing helpful feedback; caring for the congregation and encouraging people in their faith; maintaining order in the church and churchyard; and taking care of church property. I am so grateful to Graham and Chris for standing as churchwardens, particularly Graham in this, his sixth year. Please do be thinking how you can support both Graham and Chris in their role, as well as considering whether this is something you might be willing to do next year as Graham stands down.

With the lockdown due to end on 2<sup>nd</sup> December and an expected return to regional restrictions, we are continuing to plan for Christmas, hoping that services might resume during Advent. As was the case for Holy Week, I am preparing some written resources (also available online) that people can use during Advent that can help us during this time of preparation. They will be available in the next few weeks.

Please can you pray specifically for the following who are unwell: Peter Wilbourn, Peter Tilbury, John Easterling, Janet Johnston, Phyll Greed and Bob Ward; and for the families of Patrick Barnes and Joyce Piper who have recently died.

Please continue to be in touch with one another through the telephone, email and social media. And do keep an eye on our Facebook page as we follow the Archbishops' call to make this month of lockdown a month of prayer. Our primary school – its staff, children and families - is in much need of prayer this week, having closed due to several staff members testing positive for Covid-19.

Online services will continue with the main service posted early on Sunday morning, with Evening Prayer (over Zoom) at 6pm. Whilst we are out of the church, the Zoom Coffee and Chat will revert back to **11am**.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes,

Revd Lynda Davies

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