

**All Saints' Church
Cottenham with Rampton**



**Pastoral Letter #59
9th June 2021**

Dear Church Family,

'Hello' from me this week: Alison Wedgbury, LLM/Reader for All Saints'. It's a pleasure to write this pastoral letter in the long awaited sunshine of 2021.

In this first half of June 2021, many people have returned to on-site services in the church on Sundays. At the same time, it is still difficult for a few others, for all sorts of reasons. It continues to be good to keep in touch by phone, letter, email, social media, the recorded services and Zoom. Quite rightly, we are all continuing to be cautious about our own health and that of other people.

But this month, nature in Cottenham and Rampton is being far from cautious! Nature is full of delight. Trees are in full leaf; gardens, window-boxes and roadsides are full of colour; and vegetables and fruit on allotments are flourishing. Birds are raising young (despite the efforts of cats) and tadpoles are developing into frogs. Sunrises and sunsets are beautiful, especially in the flat landscape of the Fen Edge. There are thousands of yellow buttercups in Rampton park, water-loving plants are springing up in the Cottenham moat, the Rampton moat, the cut, the pond at Cottenham Village College and around the Rampton pond.

Creation and our relationship with our environment have always been at the centre of world faiths. There's a renewed interest in the Christian Church across all traditions. We have an urgent responsibility to care for the present environment to ensure the very future of our planet. We're very conscious that Biblical stories and prayers about creation are not just for children and the chance to do imaginative craft in Junior Church. We trust in the words of Psalm 24.1, that

*'the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the compass of the world
and all who live therein'.*

On the afternoon of 30th May, at 'Worship in the Woods' in Cottenham churchyard, we experienced a local celebration of God's creation. We even had a Cottenham cuckoo accompanying us, right on cue. People of all ages - from 3 to 80+ - were able to take part at different levels of energy: holding a grandparent's hand, steering a mobility buggy, sitting on a picnic chair, skipping, standing, walking, looking up and also getting down close to the ground. We learned to love our churchyard trees and

loved to learn about how they develop. Like us they can be old and young, tall and short, wide and slim and of varying shapes and styles. They can be calm but also can be lively and noisy. They provide protection and food. Their roots start small and eventually go deep in local soil. When some of us made shapes like trees with our arms and bodies, it was not hard to feel the link between trees and humans.

A writer in the 21st century, Bob Hartman, gives us catchy poems and songs based on the Bible. Don't think these are only for young children – we are all children of God, whatever age we are. This verse about the Creation story in Genesis is a great reminder of God's encouragement to us to enjoy our world.

*And when he had finished, as most artists should,
God looked at his work. And he said, **It's all good!**
And when he had finished, as most artists do,
He rested, and then blessed that day of rest too.*

And in the 14th century, the mediaeval writer Julian of Norwich wrote in her Revelations of Divine Love:

And he showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, on the palm of my hand, round like a ball. I looked at it thoughtfully and wondered, 'What is this?' And the answer came, 'It is all that is made ... it exists, both now and for ever, because God loves it.' In short, everything owes its existence to the love of God. In this little thing, I saw three truths. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, and the third is that God sustains it'.

That assurance that God makes, loves and sustains is a wonderful promise. It applies equally to trees and to humans!

As you know from previous letters, we all look forward to the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and vaccinations for many more people of different ages. There are plans to start meeting in groups again, for Junior Church, for tea/coffee in the Church Hall after the 10.30 church service in Cottenham and for other occasions. As national and local guidance develops, so we will be able to confirm what's possible at All Saints'.

Finally, Lynda would like to remind you that as indoor visits are now permitted, she is very happy to visit anyone who would like her to do so. Just let her know by email or phone: **Rector@allsaintscottenham.org.uk** or **01954 583651**.