



roundabout



The Parish Magazine of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane with St. Luke's Church, Bromley

50p

Issue 512 May 2020

Love Conquers All

In January of this year I reflected on what our hopes and dreams might be, not just for the forthcoming year, but also for what this new decade might bring. All of that, of course, seems a long time ago and we have seen and experienced something totally unimaginable, the like of which we would only have seen by watching a disaster movie; yet this is not fiction, not a bad dream.

The past four weeks have seen a total change in our daily lives; the rhythm of life has changed in ways we never thought possible. Therefore, we hold before God all those suffering from the pain of grief, the hardships endured by so many day by day and ask for God's grace to be upon them all.

Yet not wanting to focus this letter on the negative, I am writing this with the sun shining through the window, reminding me of God's beautiful creation and prompting me to reflect on how human kindness has once again become a prominent part of daily life.

We have seen the pure dedication of all our NHS staff going far beyond all what would normally be expected of them. We have seen those who work tirelessly keeping us supplied with food and the essentials of everyday living and we thank them all for their continued hard work and effort.

We have also seen something else and that is generosity on a scale we have not seen in generations. Captain Tom Moore has become the 'Poster Boy' for this expression of love in raising in excess of 30 million pounds, which was far beyond his and his family's wildest dreams. We have also seen neighbour befriending neighbour, some of whom have never spoken before, and communities putting the needs of others before themselves, as many people continue to donate food to Bromley Foodbank (the box remains outside the vicarage).

You will not be surprised by my saying that these acts of kindness and generosity reflect much of the Christian faith. Our Easter services this year may have been totally different from years gone by, but the underlying truth of the Easter message remains the same, that through Jesus's sacrificial act of love upon the cross he shows us what love can achieve. This I believe is the template on which the best of humanity is built. This pandemic will at some stage come to an end, we will emerge from it and things may be different. Normality may look different, but I also hope and pray that, as we emerge from this, our humanity will look different as well, and the lessons we have learnt of love and generosity will remain with us.

"The Lord bless you and keep you,

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you

The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace."

Yours in Christ,

Revd Steve Spencer - Vicar



**As members of St. Augustine's with St. Luke's, we seek to follow Jesus' command
— to share God's love with our community.**

The Joys of Self Isolation

My first reaction on being told that I had to stay at home for 12 weeks was resentment. I am only 70 and I don't feel old. Once I got over that, realising it is for my own good, I relished the free time this has given me to sort out my garden and tidy my house. There are so many jobs lined up for me now.

Is there a job that you have been meaning to do for a long time and haven't got round to it? I have been asking people to share their stories. This is mine: I have a folder of recipes that I have saved from

magazines over the years. I have now organised it into some sort of order, cutting and pasting, annotating and photocopying where necessary. The end result is a ring binder to be proud of. My husband has decorated our small but cluttered study, which I'm ashamed to say hasn't seen a lick of paint for about 26 years. Amazing! What about you? Answers on a postcard....



Sue Goodger

Lockdown Outlook



Isolation at home for twelve weeks! Horrifying! No clubs, no shops, no libraries no work, no travel, no food, no toilet rolls or hand-wipes, no nothing! How will we all survive?

The days and weeks stretch endlessly before me; some gardening perhaps, a bit of cleaning and tidying up, walking round the block? All fine in themselves, but then inactivity, lethargy, boredom and falling asleep in front of the telly. Time perhaps for some serious reading.

In this time of pandemic and climatic disasters *The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace-Wells*, editor of the New York magazine, is a frighteningly well-researched study and compulsory reading for all politicians, economists, industrialists, agriculturalists and all of us who are concerned for the state of God's Earth. Not an easy read, but a necessary wake-up call, before we are again caught with our trousers down by the next unmanageable event.

After that *S.P.Q.R.* and *The Mirror and the Light* will be on the list.

But what an eye-opener it has all turned out to be, though! Time doesn't hang heavily, nor does each day drag on interminably - the hours just rush by in a helter-skelter fashion as I dash from one activity to the next. It's like that old myth about retirement being leisurely.

Each day has its own agenda; all the usual jobs, of course, but also plenty of walks as the weather has



been so good, each one providing its own pleasant surprise, such as this cherry tree on Hastings Road and the delightful birdsong we can now hear.

Although we are isolated in one spot, the whole world is suddenly within our grasp as we chat over the fence, make long phone calls, write letters and cards or fizz from WhatsApp to Zoom, by way of FaceTime and Whypay.

My U3A groups, which had all been cancelled, now take place on Zoom, as do family reunions, birthday celebrations and meetings with old friends and former colleagues.

Finally, we are all blessed by being able to keep up with St. Augustine's and St. Luke's through the Sunday services and the many links we have received to so many worthwhile items on line. A big '**well done and thank you**' to all those who work so hard to bring us this important fellowship.

Mary Beard and Hilary Mantel will have to wait after all.

Adrian King



A Gift of Hope

It was Mothering Sunday, the first Sunday without a service in our church, or indeed any church. The BBC came to my rescue with a service from an empty St. David's Cathedral in Wales. The reading was the story of Moses in the bullrushes. The lady priest was able to use this as the theme for her sermon. Family life is not easy and Mothering Sunday is not about perfect mothers. Her emphasis was on sharing God's love and forgiving ourselves when our love is not enough.

Her church had planned to give everyone a gift of hope – a sunflower seed and a pot of compost. The verse Romans 15 v13 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit'.

The service used hymns previously broadcast from St. David's on Songs of Praise – Great is thy Faithfulness and Guide me O thou Great Redeemer. I felt truly uplifted by the service and grateful that we can find new ways of worship in our homes. A big thank you to all responsible for arranging the technology so that we can worship together again on Sunday mornings.

Ann Hanrahan



Doubting Thomas

"How can they believe! They are deranged!
Our Lord is dead and buried in a tomb.
Of course it's mere delusion – yet – they've changed.
See how they laugh and joke within this room!
I'd have to feel those hands and touch his side
to credit such a tale – I must have proof
Perhaps they've seen a phantom past them glide?
Must I, alone, still doubt – remain aloof?"

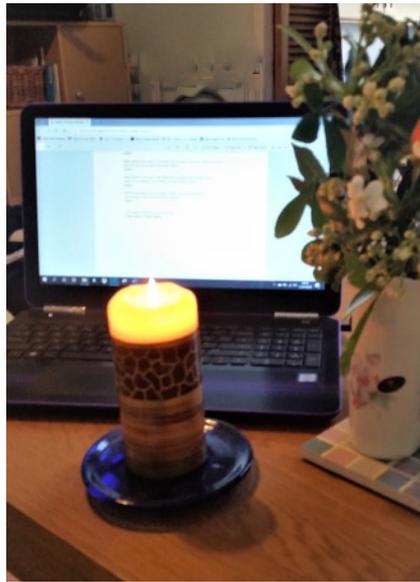
*"Poor Thomas, if only he'd been there,
he looks so downcast – struggling with his grief:
that he should be excluded is not fair –
we wish that he could share our sweet relief!
How can we touch a heart that's turned to stone?
Convince him that our Lord's forever near?
Our faith and joy must leave him more alone –
Dear Jesus, come once more among us here!"*

**"Be still, and may you all find peace!
Come Thomas, feel my side and touch my hands!
As I am here beside you, all doubt will cease,
now, go and preach my Gospel in all lands!"**
"My Lord! My God! I honour and adore!
In contrite tears my joy and sorrow blend!"
**"Take courage, though you see this flesh no more –
Lo, I am with you always 'til the end!"**

Sally Morris

Wasn't it lovely to see Eric and Rhena Clouston all the way from India via Zoom and to hear his interesting talk about Doubting Thomas? *Editor.*

A Broad(band) Church



Sunday mornings aren't quite what they used to be. Instead of gathering in the House of the Lord, we all gather around our computer screens at home to join ninety others for Morning Worship. It may not be the real thing, but we must do what we can... Karen Palmer's solution is

to put flowers and a candle beside her laptop. What a lovely idea!

Meanwhile, Helen Baker organised the 'Bits and Pieces' activities on Zoom where a variety of crosses were created, like this example



St. Nicholas, Wrea Green



To



Cheer

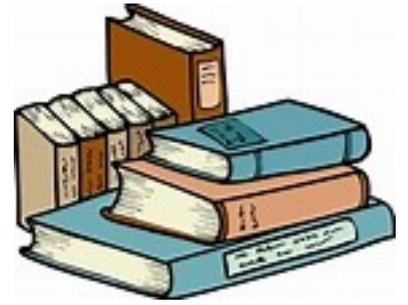


You

Up

Love in the time of Cholera . . . or reading in a time of lockdown

Apparently this season of enforced lockdown has meant more of us are reading books. Could this be a good time to explore your bookshelves and re-read an old favourite? In recent weeks, sales of *Love in the time of Cholera* by the Nobel prize winner, Gabriel García Márquez have taken off, but perhaps you'd like something new?



Here are three suggestions, all available to purchase on Amazon or on Kindle. They have one thing in common – they are all very short. Now that could mean that you read them through in a single sitting, or perhaps it's an invitation by the author to read slowly. Take a chapter at a time. Pause. Reflect. Maybe even jot down some ideas or thoughts that have come to mind. Share those thoughts with a friend. Perhaps share them with God in prayer. Then, the next day, move on to chapter two.

***The Way of the Heart* by Henri Nouwen.** A mere slip of a book yet packed with spiritual gold. The three chapters cover solitude, silence and prayer, drawing on the wisdom of the Desert Fathers, early Christians who actively sought separation from the world in their search for a closer walk with God.

***Do Nothing to Change your Life: Discovering what happens when you stop* by Stephen Cottrell.** Soon to be Archbishop of York, Cottrell takes us on an adventure of self-discovery to catch a glimpse of God. Chapter 9 is, 'A beginner's guide to sitting still'.

***All will be Well* by Julian of Norwich.** We certainly aren't the first people to have to cope with isolation so it's good to learn from our predecessors. Julian was a medieval mystic who was literally walled up in a tiny cell attached to a church in Norwich and her daily food was delivered to her doorstep by well-wishers. This little book has 30 daily readings drawn from Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love*.

If you'd like the opportunity to share ideas with others, Sheela Thomas has kindly offered to run three Book Club sessions on ***Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor**. This is a longer book but easy to read and very relevant for a season of uncertainty. The author describes it as 'spirituality that works in the night-time'. The Book Club discussions will be hosted on Zoom on Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm on 13th, 20th and 27th May. Further details are on the church website [here](#).

Alan Mitchell



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Lockdown 2020



If I was being honest with you, I would tell you that at the start of 'Lockdown' A Little Girl I Know and I were quite happy. It meant the end of having to get up at ridiculous o'clock to get ready for a long day at school, no planning for the groups I am involved in, and more time together. I was pleased to be able to look at my **To Do** list, add to it, knowing that I would have the time to start and even finish many of the jobs on it. Many big jobs I had been putting off could now be done. It would come as no surprise that one of the biggest jobs was going to involve the bedroom of A Little Girl I Know. Every morning spent doing work set by the school. Some tasks easier than others to do. As A Little Girl I Know ploughs through her work, I chip away at my **To Do** list. As we cross off one completed task another is added. The list seems never ending.

Many tears of frustration have been shed by both of us. Not just because of the work; we are missing family and friends, as I know you are too. We miss the people we come across day by day in our many and varied activities. We are mindful of those who suffer from this terrible virus and those who have lost loved ones.

I want to end by sharing with you a prayer sent to us by my Godparents in with their Easter card. I can't tell you who they are; but some will remember them from their time on the staff of the church a few years ago!

A Prayer for a Pandemic

May we, who are merely inconvenienced, remember those whose lives are at stake. May we, who have no risk factors, remember those most vulnerable.

May we, who have the luxury of working from home, remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we, who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close, remember those who have no options.

May we, who have to cancel our trips, remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we, who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market, remember those who have no margin at all.

May we, who settle in for a quarantine at home, remember those who have no home at all.

As fear grips our country, let us choose faith, hope, and love. During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.

Amen.

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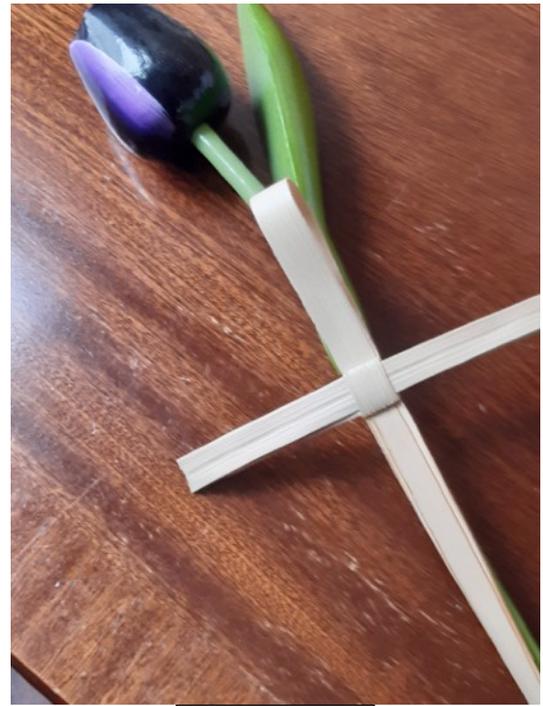
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Keep on running during lockdown

As some of you know, I belong to Zero to Hero runners. We normally run in groups according to ability and experience on a Wednesday morning, with some groups also running on Mondays, Tuesdays or Fridays. Many of us do 5km park runs on Saturday mornings too.

Thank goodness for the Government's permission to exercise daily. But it's not easy to run on your own, to motivate yourself and to work out a route where you can safely step away from people you might encounter. But one of our members had a cunning plan: the Covid—19 Relay. Runners wanting to take part were divided into three teams of 19 of roughly equal ability. Each person in the team chose a day to run in 19 days in April and to make it more interesting, had to have a baton to 'pass' on to the next person in their team. Runners recorded the distance covered in their 19 minutes and an independent arbitrator chose the best baton of the day – best baton gained an extra quarter of a mile! Three teams took part and the results were very close. The team I was in, captained by Dick Griffin, won by 0.19miles. There was some great running, some great outfits and absolutely fantastic batons. Some batons were entirely home-made; some very awkward to carry and many displayed support for key workers, friends and the Z2H running groups.

All distances and photos of batons were posted on the Zero to Hero Facebook page.



Liz's Baton

Following that, there was an individual challenge to run 2.6k or miles or any variation of 26 over the week up to 25 April, to make up for the disappointment of the marathon being postponed and to raise money for masks for the nurses. I ran just over 27k, but those who were expecting to take part in the marathon did 26 miles (no point in letting all that training go to waste) – some running round their gardens. So far over £1,600 has been raised.

Finally on Marathon Sunday, 26 April, we divided into six teams of 10, each person running for 26 minutes and recording their distance. Ages of runners ranged from 10 to 75. At the end of the day, there was only 8 minutes difference in the times recorded by the 6 teams. The time taken was round about 4 hours, and my team came third.

Now the lockdown seems set to continue – what can we do next?

Liz Carter

As members of St Augustine's with St Luke's, we seek to follow Jesus' command - to share God's love with our community.

You are welcome to worship with us:

- on Sunday mornings at 10 am via Zoom and phone.
- on Wednesday mornings 11.30

For details of how to join ring 020 8467 1351

Our church office is closed until further notice and normal church activities and room bookings are suspended.

For details about our church life please see the website:

www.st-augustines.org.uk.

Our Vicar Steve Spencer can be contacted at revsteve.spencer@btinternet.com

Bromley Foodbank donation box is outside the Vicarage for contributions.

Charities, particularly smaller ones, are finding their work particularly hard as their incomes have dropped drastically. If you support a charity, both your prayers and donations are needed more than ever.



Roundabout is your magazine and we rely on you to provide information and articles for each issue, so please send your news, views, experiences, poems, stories and photos to one of the Roundabout team,

The **June 2020** edition will be published on the church website
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