

Life Magazine March 2021

Editorial Notes

In 2001 Life Editor Peter Trenchard was looking for someone to take over the editorship. In May, an unnamed probationer Ed wrote his first editorial, or 'Ed First and Last' as it was then called. In June Peter revealed his identity, it was Bernard Sinclair. Over the years he has been assisted by various folk from Street, Walton, and surrounding area, and about 10 years ago my name appeared on the Editorial Team list, initially to provide pictures for the front cover. Eventually Bernard and I were the sole Editors and have worked together as a good team, but he now feels it is time to stand down.

He will however still be sending me his monthly 'Watch' doing his part to keep us spiritually fed, as this is not one of my talents! So on behalf of all Life magazine readers I would like to thank him for two decades of faithful editorship of Life Magazine, and send our blessings and prayers.

In March 2001, Peter Trenchard was struggling to make up 12 pages and was relying on an 'act of faith' for filling 2 empty pages before delivering the finished 12 page Life magazine to John Talbot for printing. He breathed deeply when asking the readers why his frequent requests for articles only produced about a 5% response.

Well I must say I have not been having that problem this month as it is only half a page short of 24! But of course Manna takes up four pages each month, and you will find the Bishop's letter within the Manna, written this month by Nigel Stock the Assistant Bishop of the Bath and Wells Diocese.

Returning to my first job as cover picture supplier, I have for you this month a picture taken in February in our garden of a Helleborus Orientalis, more commonly known as a Lenten Rose. For the back cover I was delighted to receive 3 pictures from Jane of the new three bedroom house in Mfuwe for Father George, and his family. The article relating to these was in the February Life Magazine.

To sum up: Please keep your articles coming, to me. Roger.

Rector's Letter

“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ” Galatians 1. 10.

Dear Friends,

We have recently held Ash Wednesday Services both online and in the Mission Church. Normally we would have offered ‘ashing’ as a sign of repentance and of turning to Christ, but of course this year is not normal. However, whether or not we have physically received ashes, the beginning of Lent reminds us that we are entering into a season of repentance and self-reflection. We may choose to mark Lent this year by giving something up as part of our spiritual discipline, such as chocolate, tv, a bad attitude or something else. Alternatively, we may choose to take something up, such as reading a particular book of the Bible, starting a regular pattern of prayer, reading a Christian book, offering encouragement to others or something else.

There is a wealth of Lent resources available, as an example, the Church of England this year are offering #Live Lent ‘God’s Story Our Story’, a booklet with daily devotions on Lenten themes. Can I encourage you to put some rhythms of life in place as you deepen your relationship with God?

As well as reflecting on our own lives and deepening our relationship with God, Lent can also be a time to look outwards and reach out perhaps in new ways. As we continue in lockdown, doing this might feel more of a challenge.

However much of a challenge, can I encourage you to persevere. Lockdown may seem long, but we are a people called to serve God, to love people and to be salt and light in our communities even and maybe especially in the tough times. Whether you give something up, take something up or both, are we a people who are seeking to please God?

With my love and prayers, Ana

PS. Remember that I am here for you. If you are looking for Lenten inspiration, struggling with lockdown or other issues or anything else, please do contact me

Charitable Giving across our benefice.

Our four churches have supported a range of local, national and international causes over the years as part of our commitment to support others in need.

A group are now getting together (on Zoom at the moment) from across the churches to talk about how we might build on this history of support and share news of those we are supporting.

Ideas and proposals will initially come back to each of our Parochial Church Councils, but watch this space for more news and information. Kevin Lawrence

Walton matters

I love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from

my enemies.

Psalm 1 18. V's 1-3. N.I.V.

As this magazine is being compiled, it is still very cold and often windy. But the signs of spring are all around us with snowdrops, catkins, daffodils and crocus making us smile. We have warmer weather to look forward to and the hope that we can begin to see a time when we will be able to meet, face to face, in our Churches again.

The vaccines are being rolled out so well and so quickly by our amazing NHS and volunteers that the most vulnerable have been vaccinated. Of course, things will not be back to normal this year but we will get used to a new normal for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, it has been lovely to catch up with each other by phone and also seeing each other on zoom. Personally, I am astonished by how much time I spend on zoom, especially as a year ago I hadn't heard of it and certainly have never used my computer or tablet for anything other than emails. All our meetings are held on zoom and social times on Skype or WhatsApp. How amazing this has been and I think we should all be proud of ourselves for our adaptability.

Our clock workings have been removed for cleaning and servicing and I was amazed by the boxes of bits being taken away. I love doing jigsaw puzzles but find it difficult to believe all the pieces will fit back together and work again. All without being colour coded or numbered.

Thank you, on behalf of many people who received a postcard and lovehearts or a chocolate for Valentine's Day. It was such a lovely idea and we do thank Ana, Diana and the Salvation Army for the thought.

Our churchyard is now the proud owner of 7 bird boxes thanks to

Patrick Doyle and Philip Daniels. We have also been asked to host an owl box which is very exciting news. We will continue to update everyone as things progress. Sandra

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World Day of Prayer

This year it is the turn of the ladies of Vanuatu to prepare the service for the 5th March, and despite the pandemic, this has been done. However having received feedback from various people who usually support this event it is felt that it would be better to postpone the service until such time as we can all meet together, rather than attempt it on zoom, which would exclude a significant group of usual attendees who don't have internet access.

Unfortunately, at the moment, the WDP HQ has no plans to put the service on the website but if any of you feel that you would like the service booklet in advance of 5th March, please let me know and I will obtain a copy for you. Also, if you wish to donate money to the many worthwhile WDP causes its supports, this can be done via the website all year round. www.wdp.org.uk (<http://www.wdp.org.uk>)

Lets hope and pray that we will be able to make plans in the spring to hold the service at a later date. Carolyn Dulborough

St Andrew's Church Bells

Did you know that two of the bells in St Andrew's Church were cast here in Compton Dundon?The treble and second were made in the village by Robert Austen 1 and his son, Robert Austen 11, who were active at their bell foundry between 1618 and 1668.Since about 1930 those and the three other bells have been "hung dead", or fixed, and chimed by being struck with hammers operated by ropes and pulleys from the floor of the tower. One person alone can ring the bells in this manner, known as clocking. However, it is clear that bells have been rung full circle at Compton Dundon since at least 1668, and probably

since 1630, creating a traditional peal of bells. How do we know this? Because the bells have recently undergone a detailed survey to check on their condition and safety and the specialist bell engineers have now produced their findings. It is clear from this report that work now needs to be done on the bells, to make them safe, to preserve them for future generations and to maximise their potential to sound as good as possible. While it is early days in the decision making and further quotes are needed, the Parochial Church Council will shortly make plans for fundraising to help meet the costs of the restoration of the bells. If it is decided to keep the current (and cheaper) system of chiming, significant costs will be incurred as the bells will anyway have to have their crown staples drilled out and replaced to minimise the risk of them cracking. But there is also the tantalising prospect of rearranging the bells to recreate a full circle of ringing bells which could be pealed from the C14th tower of St Andrew's once more! This option would be far more costly of course, but it would allow the village to hear how the bells would have sounded almost 400 years ago. Clearly there are a lot of decisions yet to be made by the Parochial Church Council, and we will keep you updated on progress with details of fundraising ideas and events (once we can gather again) to follow. A sub-committee of the Parochial Church Council has been formed to manage the way forward. So, if you have any questions or suggestions about this exciting project, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Judy Skelding judydouglasboyd@gmail.com 07770 677977

Congratulations.

Our sincere best wishes to Peter Preston on becoming a nonagenarian (90th Birthday) in February.

We wish Jan James all the very best in her new job as Priest in Charge at Coxley, Godney, Henton, and Wookey. It was a pleasure to have her, Jon and the family amongst our congregation for many years, especially as her role of Lay Reader, and her work with the children. We send our love and prayers to her and the family.

Archdeaconry Event - Prayer – Everyone, Everywhere!

In January over 800 people, from across the Diocese, signed-up to take part in the Archdeaconry event entitled “Prayer – Everyone, Everywhere!”; amongst them a number from our three Parishes. We were asked to commit some time “everyday”, for a week, to watch the daily videos, to reflect and pray, and to join an online gathering at the end of the week.

The week started with an online service led by Bishop Ruth in which we reflected on a reading from Colossians (Ch 3 v12-17). Then, from Monday to Friday, we received a short daily video in which people from across our Diocese gave their thoughts on prayer and what helped them most to pray. The daily video themes were –

- Prayer and People – looking at the opportunities, outside of Church services to pray with and for people,
- Prayer and Nature – how connecting with nature, physically or observationally, can lead us closer to God and to opportunities to pray,
- Prayer and the Digital World – seeing that there are many apps available that could help our prayer lives in a variety of ways,
- Prayer and the Arts – for some the route to prayer was through their artistic talent, whether painting, dance, pottery, embroidery, etc. and for others through looking meditatively at artistic works, and finally but by no means least
- Prayer and the Bible – inviting us to explore and use the prayers to be found in the Bible, in the Psalms, the Gospel and in Paul’s Letters.

To wrap up the week, on Saturday, we were encouraged to join the online gathering, one for each Archdeaconry where we had the opportunity to share what we had learned from the week – over 120 people from the Wells Archdeaconry attended including our Archdeacon Anne, and both Bishop Peter, and Bishop Ruth and a handful of those from our Parishes.

Personally, I was glad I had ‘attended’ as I found it helpful to hear and see how others approached prayer and it has led me to look more closely at my own prayer life and to consider what more I could do when I speak with God - to value prayer as the key to my spiritual wellbeing, to seek God’s presence and to be slow, be still and to just be me, to be committed to pray regularly (Everyday!) and to pray naturally (making it everyday - in language or in silence waiting on God).

I am grateful to those from our Parishes who having attended this event have provided the reflections that follow: -

From Pat King – Compton Dundon: “Outside church, prayer is mostly personal apart from our 'Zoom' opportunities, so it was enlightening last week to hear such a variety of takes on prayer life and to discover that it is indeed for everyone, everywhere! In the daily videos, experiences were shared of finding more time and space during lockdown to pray in all sorts of indoor and outdoor environments. 'Where to begin' was addressed with the daily themes, including interesting topics such as 'Nature' and 'The Arts.' 'The Digital World' day provided some useful new resources including prayer apps. Further ideas for prayers appeared on the Prayer Wall as many people contributed throughout the week. On Saturday what a joy to join with over 100 others across the Diocese to pray en masse and to discuss our prayer experiences in the breakout group. All in all, a wonderfully refreshing week and a testament to the power of prayer.”

From Sandra Gristock – Walton: “I certainly did join in with the Archdeaconry week and really enjoyed it. I found I was excitedly waiting for the next posting. It was so lovely to see people of all ages sharing their way of praying and it certainly gives you different ideas. It was also a peaceful, quiet time for me every morning.”

From Jill Perryman – Street: “Yes, I took part. I thought it was GREAT! Very accessible and wonderful to see people in all different stages of life talking about prayer. Since then, I have downloaded a prayer app onto my phone – never thought I’d do that!! But am finding it a great help.”

As you can see from these reflections and others in this edition of Life, we all found the Archdeaconry event positive and helpful. I had not previously mentioned the Prayer Wall, see Pat’s comment above. This was a revelation – there was such freedom expressed in the prayers that were posted.

In summary, I would say prayer is not just saying ‘Amen’ to the prayers in a Sunday service, it has to be much more than that. God longs to hear from us, to hear of our joys and our sorrows, to hear our praise and thanksgiving, in our own words and in our own way, taking prayerful inspiration wherever we find it, in stillness and in action; but God also longs to speak to us, to guide, to direct and to encourage.

It is not too late to share in the experience of this event as all the videos are available to watch on the Dioceses YouTube channel – look for those videos posted between 6th and 21st January – maybe you will like to commit to watch the five videos listed above, one each day, and reflect on your own prayer life.

Jeff Brewer

Prayer - Everyone, Everywhere....

This Diocesan event was held over a week in the middle of January...via Zoom and Facebook. To be frank I signed up with very little enthusiasm, not sure that it would be either interesting or useful. How wrong I was! Each day had a different theme such as “Prayer and Nature”, “Prayer and Art” or “Prayer and Technology”. The 5-7 minute daily videos were gripping! During that short space of time around a dozen people spoke about how they pray. They came from different parishes, in various walks of life and of a wide variety of ages - it was

wonderful! I particularly enjoyed a teenage lad saying how he prayed best when he was out on his skateboard and an older lady (possibly housebound) who prayed as she looked at the scene out of her window.

But did it make any difference to my prayer life, or was it just an interesting interlude? I can honestly say that it has made a HUGE difference! I've never been very good at intercessory prayer. There always seem to be so many different people, situations, and world events to pray for that I'm never sure where to begin or - more to the point - where to end!! To my great surprise I have downloaded a (free) App onto my phone: "Prayer Mate". You put in your own topics (or use the ones they suggest) and then list the people or things that you want

to pray for. You can decide how many things to pray for each day and, if you have something particularly pressing you, can set it so that it comes up every day. Every morning now I feel excited when I open my App and I can't wait to see who or what I'm praying for today! I can relax knowing that everything will pop up in due course. It has made a tremendous difference to the intercessions part of my prayer life and I am thankful.

Jill Perryman

PS I think you can still catch up on most of the week

Archdeaconry Event – Prayer, Everyone, Everywhere

Over 5 days in January we watched short daily videos from around the diocese of people talking about how they pray. These ranged from praying whilst knitting, painting, being outdoors to using prayer Apps on a mobile. It was encouraging to hear so many share how they connect with God, especially as there were a lot of younger men who spoke with real passion about making time to be in God's presence and how this impacts their lives. I enjoy my time after breakfast, sitting quietly with daily Bible readings and praying for the day ahead. If I am struggling, I might read a prayer from David Adams' Times & Seasons to help me get started.

I also pray throughout the day as the Holy Spirit prompts me. This might be a name that pops into my head, an object that reminds me of someone, or hearing something on the news. Recently I have been

playing the UK Blessing Song on Youtube and as I sing along I pray for God's blessing upon our families and children, and upon those working in our hospitals, crying out to God to help them. We can pray in so many ways. The important thing is that we do it! Connect with your Heavenly Father – just be still with Him, listen and He will guide your prayers.

Caroline Riall

STREET FOOD BANK

Louse Melia, who with her husband John serves at Street Salvation Army, shares the story of Street foodbank.

In March 2020 the Street Community Support group was created by local churches and others to help during the pandemic. This group organised shopping, delivery of prescriptions, a telephone befriending service and an emergency food bank for people to access if they were shielding, struggling with work or unable to buy food, set up and run by us at the Street Salvation Army. Over the past 10 months as we have gone from one lockdown to another, and with the job losses that came as businesses have struggled to stay open, the need for the food bank has grown. Taking all of this into consideration the decision was taken for the foodbank to remain open permanently.

Fast forward nearly a year and the foodbank is now feeding around 60 people a week, all referred from local agencies. People come to a food bank for many reasons, and during the referral process are asked why they need a food parcel. We then work with them to build a plan for the future. This may be in the form of benefit applications, debt advice, budgeting advice or support and advice for their current circumstances. To help with this we are starting a weekly job club after the current lockdown.

Street food bank has opened our church up to the community. People have confided in us and we have been able to pray for them. We have had many conversations with agencies about why we do what we do. We have given thanks to God when we feel we may run out of money for someone to walk in the building with £200! then sharing this exciting news with families and volunteers. God is moving in our community and we are excited to be part of that and feel privileged to see His work happening day in and day out.

We don't know where the next months or year will lead us, but we continue to place the food bank in God's hand.

Our driving force in doing what we do comes from Matthew 25, "for I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.' "The righteous will then answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these members of my family, you did it for me!'"

If you want to support this work our hall in Goswell Road, Street (BA16 0JG) is open to drop off donations of non-perishable food in a box outside.

Our prayer is that we all continue to respond to the call of our Father and do our utmost to serve others here on earth.

Louise Melia, Street Salvation Army

Reflection on the Bible Course

I have to say how much I have enjoyed the Bible course over these past few Wednesday evenings. It was aimed at all types of people – those who had little experience of the Bible and those who knew the Bible through years of reading it. Everyone had their reason to be on the course and I am sure everyone learnt something new. For me it was to be helped to read the Bible more regularly and take on board more of how it speaks to me.

The course took place over 8 sessions (on zoom of course). The presenters took us through the Bible storyline from Genesis to Revelation helping us to understand the “big picture” of God’s plan. We were introduced to different books of the Bible and shown how they all fit together to give us God’s word, the scriptures. Over the course we were able to look at some of the big questions raised about the Bible: How was it written? Is it reliable? Is it accurate? Is it relevant for today? The answer is a yes to these by the way.

Each week we were given a series of passages to read. We were asked to consider what the passages meant in their context and what they meant to us today. Then during the zoom session, we watched a video presentation with a break for refreshments in the middle. During the discussion time we broke into smaller groups to talk through some set questions from a part of the Bible. It is always good to be reading the Bible together with others – you get different perspectives and folk giving encouraging insights and comments. We were able to share how the Bible speaks to us now in our own situations.

So, what next now this course has finished? The course encouraged us to take on God’s word, to get an appetite for it, to absorb it. The Bible really does give us the soul strength and

encouragement we need to live as God would have us. We were asked to make regular Bible reading a priority. There are daily readings for the week in each lifeline or there are good Daily Bible notes to help with this (see lifeline for how to order notes). Some folk might want to take up reading the “Bible in one Year”. Anyone with a computer/smartphone can get the “BIOY” app. With it you can receive an email each day with readings from the OT, NT and usually a psalm which comes with some helpful comments. It does not have to be done in one year of course but following the scheme does eventually take you right through the Bible. You can get similar in book form for those who are less into technology.

We were encouraged to study and learn the Bible so that we might learn who God is, to know Jesus better, and recognize his voice. And, to gain wisdom, learn what is right, correct wrong thinking, and receive guidance. I would love to know and understand the Bible better. There are many parts of the Bible that I do not know so well, for example some of the less well-known Old Testament books. But I know that they are all part of God’s word and have something to say to us. We are extremely fortunate to have so many available resources today help explain the Bible to us. A study Bible or a commentary would be good to have. Tom Wright’s commentary comes recommended. We need the Bible to grow spiritually. We need to know it so that we can live the lives that God wants us to live. The course ended by challenging us not just to read the bible but to live it. “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only”.

For more details of the Bible Course see

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-bible-course/>

Tim Hindle – Mission Church Member

WATCH - *Back to the Future?*

I guess for most if not all of us *lockdown* has been a totally new experience. Some have had time on their hands as never before but with their freedom severely curtailed. Others have been working from home which can bring its own pressures and problems, not least for those with children also working from home whether at school or college. With churches closed, we have explored new ways of meeting and worshiping together, such as Zoom and WhatsApp.

But has it all been negative? Do we just long to get back to where we were: meeting face to face in our churches, as Christians have for generations. Have we learnt anything that we might carry forward into the future life of the church when Covid19 at last becomes history?

For me, the word **accessible** has taken on a new meaning. In the past I took it to be largely concerned with disabled access to church buildings. However, in more recent years, eyesight and hearing problems have brought home to me that this word **access** has a much wider meaning as I have struggled with squeaking hearing aids and the onset of cataracts. The necessity of wearing a mask has caused me to abandon both hearing aids and spectacles as everything in or on my ears seems to come off together when I try to remove my mask, however carefully I try to avoid this! Trying to hear in a socially distanced meeting when you can't see the speaker's mouth means that

I only catch at best about half of what is being said – not helpful when it's my job is to take the minutes! So, give me Zoom any day! I can see the speaker and hear what they are saying – yippee!

The issue of **accessibility** also applies – and I think this is even more important – in the opportunities we now have to take the good news of

Jesus to those outside the church, rather than trying to get them in to tell them about it. People can access church services, talks, readings, etc., without ever having to darken a church door. Do we realise how foreign to so many people our church buildings are? But social media

are not foreign to them – they are in constant use: just observe passersby next time you are in the High Street if you don't believe me.

That is where people are. We just have to learn how to go about it. Jesus didn't conduct his ministry in the synagogues of Judea and Galilee so much as on the highways and byways where people were.

As disciples of Jesus I believe we need to follow his example. His parting words to us started with "Go..." (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). *Bernard*

Manna

Mental health and faith explored

One community of churches in Bath and Wells has tried to address the uncertainty caused by the Covid pandemic, by sharing a unique course designed to raise awareness and start conversations about mental health.

St. George's, Wembdon near Bridgwater, signed up for the free online course provided by Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Faith, Grief and Covid-19 designed specifically to explore Christian engagement in the mental health conversation, expand understanding of mental health, reflect on the importance of companionship, learn about self-care, and ways that community can support mental health.

Revd Simon Taylor, Curate at St Georges in Wembdon, believes the course has encouraged people to talk about the powerlessness they feel because of the pandemic, as well as helping them address some of the challenges the crisis is posing to their lives and their faith. "It has helped us think about how our faith intersects with loss and particularly those losses around Covid. Not just bereavement, but losses relating to our normal

pattern of life, how we worship, how we play, how we work, how we study, how we physically relate to each other, to family and friends further afield.”

People took part in different ways, either in groups or individually, in one long session or over a period of time and regardless how they have taken part, Simon says “It has made a huge impact on those who have tried out the resources.

News in brief

Live prayer service

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Have you lost a loved one during the COVID pandemic? Join Bishop Ruth for an hour of prayer live on Facebook for those who have died, and those who loved them.

She will be live on Facebook www.facebook.com/bathwells at 2pm on 3 March and the service will also be streamed on the diocesan website www.bathandwells.org. Joining on Facebook will allow you to submit the names of those you mourn, so they can be remembered by name. If you would like to submit a name in advance to be remembered during the service, please email comms@bathwells.anglican.org.

Seeds of joy

Curry Mallet C of England primary is celebrating after receiving a cash boost for their school bee garden and veg plot in the Seeds of Joy competition. Although not overall winners, they received £1,000 from the Higgidy, the pie makers, thanks to support of people

across the diocese. The company, who were looking to support community garden projectst, were impressed by the school's aspirations

Fly the flag for Somerset Day

This year Somerset Day organisers are asking people to #flytheflagforsomerset on 11 May. That can be by flying the distinctive Somerset flag with its bright red dragon from a flagpole, or simply by painting Somerset flag picture to display in your front window.

Bishop Ruth, a Patron of Somerset Day, says, “On Somerset Day I share with others in giving thanks for all the amazing people whether neighbours or strangers who share such smiles and warmth and care for each other everyday in Somerset – Thank you Somerset.”

Pay loving attention

By Bishop Nigel

With the Lenten Season well under way, I wonder how it is going for you? I always anticipate Lent with a slight feeling of having to brace myself. Come on make an effort in something! If I am going to give something up don't just make it an exercise in self-improvement, how is it going to help others? If I am going to do something positive what will be its long-term effect? It is all too easy to 'over think' the whole exercise.

Once the season is underway I begin to appreciate it. But in the end it should be about paying attention to God. I am always struck by the end of the story of the temptations in the wilderness. Jesus refuses to be a cheap miracle worker to benefit

himself, and refuses to follow the route to worldly power and status. He faced temptation by stripping away all the necessities of life and knew deep hunger. At the end of this exhausting wrestle with his vocation the Gospel tells us "...suddenly angels came and waited on him." (Matthew 4:10)

Whatever Lenten discipline you are following, perhaps the #Live Lent course, or a local study group, a focussed effort to support others or a form of self-denial (or all of them!), may it bring a greater focus on God. There were those who ministered to Jesus in the Gospel stories. The angels in the wilderness, the woman who anointed him, Simon who carried his cross for example. We might not be able to do those things for him, but we can pay loving attention.

When we emerge from the austerity and effort of Lent, which has had an even more austere aspect in Lockdown, we come to the bright hope of Easter. We know in the Risen Christ the same relief that Jesus knew from the Angels. As we offer our love to Him, His love for us is always returned.

May the blessing of the Risen Christ be with you.

Nigel Stock
Assistant Bishop

Interview

Going the extra mile

Steve Gillan, Headteacher of Thurlbear CE VA Primary School shares how they have stepped up to the challenges of the pandemic.

How differently have you had to work in the pandemic?

I can honestly state I have seen our teachers adapt to unique challenges and problems like never before. From day one, we committed to doing whatever was needed for our families. We offered to be open for pupils of key workers and vulnerable pupils, through half term holidays and at weekends to allow one parent, an NHS hero with no family support, to work.

What has impressed you about your school community throughout the pandemic?

I have been at Thurlbear nearly 9 years and I knew that we would stand up and be counted when it mattered. What has impressed me most has been the level of enthusiasm, drive and community swell of support that has been sustained over a full year.

How have you (and your staff) been sustained throughout the pandemic?

Sustaining a level of teaching at this intensity is incredibly hard. Our teachers have been delivering both online, live lessons every day as well as teaching the pupils who are still in school. During this most recent lockdown, our school has 40 per cent of pupils which presents a big challenge to maintain staff safety and wellbeing. The resilience and drive of all staff is a wonder to behold.

Looking back over the last year is there any single moment that stands out for you?

I emailed the staff regarding opening for the weekends, a desperate measure as I knew I couldn't do it on my own for safeguarding reasons. I sent it out, in hope rather than expectation, and within 10 minutes, I had 30 replies from staff

volunteering. That was a tight-throat moment and quite overwhelming.

Have you got any words for parents who are worrying about the impact of the pandemic on their children's schooling?

We will all get through this and every family will have had some beautiful, golden moments at home; the kind of family experience that you simply couldn't get in school. Children are incredibly resilient and positive. They will catch up. To borrow from Proverbs: "We will do everything in our considerable power to train up our children in the way they should go!"

U.S.B. Scriptural fortifiers

'... HE IS ABLE TO HELP US WHEN WE ARE BEING TEMPTED.' Hebrews 2:18 NLT

If you're facing temptation today, here are 7 Scriptural fortifiers – use them!

- a) 'The temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure' (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- b) 'I give unto you power ... over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you' (Luke 10:19).
- c) 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet ... the grace [strength and enablement] of our Lord Jesus be with you' (Romans 16:20).
- d) 'Use every piece of God's armour so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil; so that after the battle you will still be standing firm' (Ephesians 6:13).

e) 'Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand' (Isaiah 41:10).

f) 'This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same temptations we do, yet He did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it' (Hebrews 4:15-16).

g) 'The Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials' (2 Peter 2:9).

Sheep are wise; when the wolf comes they just move closer to the shepherd. The same goes for you!