



# Keeping in Touch Lent 2021



## Vicar's Chat

I am very aware that as we come through January, heading towards February, that many people struggle with their mental health. Some churches even offer a service, crafted especially to help those who identify with their difficulties, called Blue Sunday. We have thankfully passed the shortest day of the year and yet Spring and Summer seem a very long way off. Add a long-lasting pandemic into the mix with personal contact with others still being limited, everyone feeling worn out with warnings and health scares and statistics every time they turn on the TV and it is no wonder that people are feeling less than positive. Many are finding it hard to even get out of bed in the morning, or are binge eating, or not taking care of themselves. It all seems so very hopeless. In fact, you are probably feeling miserable just reading this paragraph – it's all doom and gloom. BUT, please read on.



Our attendance at church, whether that is in person or online, does set us apart from others. Not in an elitist way, but in the fact that we gather to worship our Creator. We have a hope within us that the world does not have. We are aware that although we have all been allotted a specific time here on earth, it does not end there; as our eternal home is one in the Lord's presence. We do not, however, want to be the kind of people who are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good (as my mum used to say.) It is up to us to help both ourselves and others in various ways to lift their heads up off their pillows and focus on Jesus. Maybe this needs to be done in small steps and I would like to suggest a few things that might help and strategies to put in place.

- Decide to read an encouraging Bible verse every morning. I post these daily on the church Facebook, which are then gathered and sent by email weekly. If you are not already on our church email database, please get in touch.
- Celebrate small wins by completing a task – this releases dopamine which is a natural reward chemical, even something as small as making your bed properly each day.
- Give someone a genuine compliment or do something nice for them – this will bring oxytocin – the love hormone!
- If you can, put your wellies on and go for a walk in the woods. Nature brings its own antioxidants and ask God to open your eyes and ears to the small things.

- Find something to watch on TV which will bring you joy – especially something that will make you laugh out loud. Share this with others. Be prepared to turn off programmes that you recognise bring your mood down.
- If you can be restrained in this, eat some dark chocolate, known to release endorphins.

Above all these things, know that you are loved and held by Father God who loves you so very much. Psalm 73 says this:

Nevertheless, I am continually with You;  
 You have taken hold of my right hand.  
 You will guide me with Your counsel,  
 And afterward receive me to honour *and* glory.  
 Whom have I in heaven but You?  
 And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.  
 My flesh and my heart may fail,  
 But God is the rock *and* strength of my heart and my portion forever.

## Christmas at St Mary's

Christmas at St Mary's Church in 2020 was like no other.

The church building was open and then closed. So we found ways to bring the story and the good news to people as they visited the churchyard or came for a walk  
 And as living proof that the church is its people and not its buildings services continued online as we celebrated the incarnation of Christ.

### Walk to Bethlehem

Over 2640 people viewed the Walk to Bethlehem trail via Facebook since it was revealed on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

There were countless others who actually came and walked around to read the Christmas story and listen to the carols.

Thanks must go to all who were involved in the planning and execution of this lovely idea.



## St Mary's Hope Railings



This photo shows the Christmas cards sent to bring greetings to the church community and those beyond. They were laminated and displayed on the church railings. In lieu of postage and purchase costs of Christmas cards, donations of

£381.24 were sent in, to be split between St Mary's and Christian Aid-Charity-Gifts to enable us to buy chickens and fruit trees for developing countries. Thank you everyone for your amazing generosity allowing us to buy:-



1 nanny goat



20 cocoa saplings



2 fruit tree saplings



5 pairs of chickens



2 sheep



## The Nativity Scene

As every year the nativity characters could be found residing under the altar as a light in the darkness with the Magi being added at Epiphany.

They will remain there until after Candlemas on 31st January.

## Remembering good friends



### John Gubbins

John was a regular and reliable member of the bell-ringing band until ill health prevented him from continuing to ring. He learnt to ring in the early nineties with Jack Partington both of them long standing friends with Ian Baldwin. John was a very upbeat and enthusiastic member of the band. John's funeral service at North Mymms on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 was the first time the bells had been rung for 9 months and 1 day. John was a true gentleman who will be sadly missed by St Mary's bellringers.

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### **Harry Donnelly -**

Many of our congregation will remember Henry Donnelly (known as Harry) who died 22nd December, aged 93. He had been involved in many aspects of the Parish, notably the North Mymms Horticultural Society. He was instrumental in establishing the North Mymms Youth and Community Centre. He had in the past been a PCC member and had until recently been regularly attending services, most notably our 8am Holy Communion. He also recently funded repairs to our Bevington Organ. His funeral was held January 21st, 2pm at St Mary's and was live streamed on our YouTube

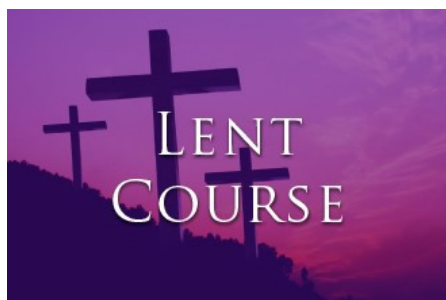
channel, so that all could follow the service safely from home including his son and family unable to travel from South Africa.

### **Mildred Crompton -**

We were sad to hear from Jo Grimes that Mildred Crompton had died. For many years Mildred was the Sacristan, a chalice bearer at the 8.00am Communion Service and a regular attender at Evensong. She was also a member of the Women's Fellowship always ready to help serve tea and coffee. Speaking to Diana Glanfield and Jean Holford they remember Mildred as a quiet, charming lady with a lovely smile.

We send our thoughts and prayers to their families and friends at this sad time.

## **Coming Up!**



### **Lent Course**

Revs Ruth and Penny will be running a Lent Course called "Connect" exploring the relationship between Christian faith and some of the most pressing issues of our time. The course invites Christians to make strong and imaginative connections between our world, our call to be disciples of Jesus and our everyday lives. It will be

run on Zoom for five Wednesday evenings 24th February, 3rd, 10th, 17th (not 24th) and 31st March at 7.30pm. The course materials can either be found online, or Ruth has copies of the course booklets for £3 that she is happy to send out.

For more details visit the St Mary's Church website



## Snowdrop Sunday

This event will be held on Sunday **14th February at 3.00pm** via Zoom and will last for around three quarters of an hour. It will be an uplifting event, looking forward to Spring, with pictures of snowdrops from the area around St Mary's, and music played on our newly restored Bevington organ and other spring themed music.

There will be a little quiz, so do your research in advance to find the most outrageously named variety of snowdrop!

Additionally, if you want to see the snowdrops around the church, the children from St Mary's School in Welham Green have been busy drawing pictures of snowdrops, which will be displayed on the railings outside the church.

There is a special Zoom link for this event which can be found on the St Mary's Church website. The Zoom meeting ID is 836 0849 2751 and the Passcode is Snowdrops.

### What do snowdrops signify?

The white of the snowdrop symbolises innocence and purity. It is the first flower to bloom at the end of winter and the hope that Spring is on its way.

Legend has it that Eve was once sitting in a snow storm, weeping in despair over the cold that had entered the world after her and Adam had been expelled from the Garden of Eden. She was visited by an angel who transformed some of the snowflakes into snowdrops to give her hope that Winter changes into Spring.

Due to the fact that they are so pure and have three petals, they also came to represent the Holy Trinity and Christians first brought snowdrop bulbs from Rome to Britain and planted them around churches. Due to this, snowdrops became known as the "church flower".

An old rhyme says: "The snowdrop, in the purest white array, first rears her head on Candlemas Day" Snowdrops are also sometimes called Candlemas Bells,



## Feathers of Courage



St Mary's School vision is  
**"Overflowing with  
Thankfulness Inspiration  
and Joy"**

This runs as a thread through all aspects of school life and is linked to a series of twelve values each of which are explored for half a term.

The value for the first half of the Spring Term is **Courage**. Thank you to all the children who contributed their unique feather to form this display of the 'Wings of Courage'. I think these 'wings' reflect the collective effort of children, parents and our incredible team of dedicated staff to weather the lockdown storm.

### Funerals

Brian Root  
John Gubbins  
Harry Donnelly  
Aileen Watkins  
Julie Griffiths

We remember their families and friends in our prayers.

### Burial of Ashes

Brian Root

### Contact us

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