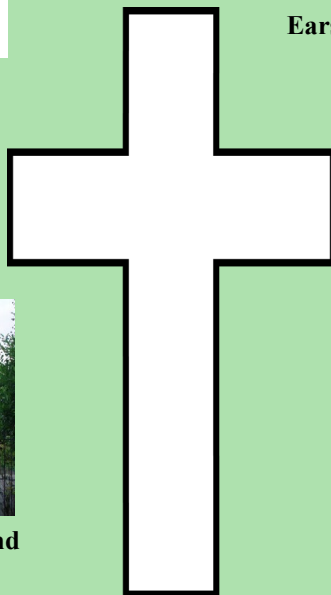




St. Alban's Earsdon



Earsdon Methodist



CHURCH VIEWS

**April
2020**

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St. John's Backworth



Immaculate Heart of Mary

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

April 2020

Dear All,

I'm writing this on the first day of the government's stricter coronavirus rules on social isolation. Last night the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, urged us all to stay at home wherever possible. So I take this opportunity to write this editorial, looking back in my diary to piece together the story so far.

The first email advice from Bishop Christine to Anglican churches about the coronavirus arrived in my inbox on Valentine's Day – February 14th 2020. At that stage the virus had not been declared a pandemic, and the advice on communion concerned *hygiene*. There was no thought of suspending the common cup. Parishioners with coughs and sneezes should receive communion in one kind only.

By March 3rd there was still no advice to suspend the common cup. The government's Chief Medical Officer assessed the risk to individuals from COVID-19 as 'low' but recognised that 'we are facing a new and virulent virus for which we currently have no treatment'.

The next email arrived on March 6th. Bishop Christine here acknowledges that 'COVID-19 is an increasing worry for many people'. She 'strongly recommends that sharing of the peace is not done through direct physical contact' and that 'the Sacrament be offered in one kind only through the sharing of the bread'. These changes were observed during worship at St John's Backworth and St Alban's Earsdon on Sunday March 8th, a date that now looks in the diary as a distant land viewed from afar.

'Recommendation' became 'policy' on Tuesday March 10th. Recognising 'the continued increase of COVID-19 cases in the United Kingdom' Archbishop Justin Welby advised that communion should be offered in one kind only, and that handshaking during the peace should be suspended, along with the laying on of hands at the blessing.

Necessity is the mother of invention. The evening of Tuesday March 10th saw a reduced Deanery Synod meet at Holy Saviour's Tynemouth. Revd Julie Mooney, vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Battle Hill, showed us all how to say 'peace be with you' in sign language. It was very moving to introduce this non-physical sharing of the peace during worship at St John's and St Alban's on Sunday March 15th. I had the privilege of climbing into the pulpit to show everyone the actions. I will long remember the sight of people picking up the actions before turning to their neighbours, smilingly to wish them peace.

By March 13th it was becoming clear that the church nationally might be beginning to face unprecedented challenges. Bishop Christine wrote to us all urging us to put in place Parish Plans for how our life might continue during the pandemic. Aware of the many people who might put themselves into a situation of self-isolation, Bishop Christine drew our attention to online resources to sustain us in faith and practice. Those online platforms have come into their own, with friends and family keeping in touch through Skype and a boom in online shopping. Here at Earsdon and Backworth, email address groups have been established, enabling the quick dissemination of news, and the distributing of spirituality resources such as daily Morning Prayer.

Sunday March 15th will become a historic date in the life of the church in England. We worshipped sort-of normally that day, though numbers were down. Then the following day, Sue and I were setting up the living room for the third part of our Lent course when news broke of an announcement from the Prime Minister. Boris Johnson urged us all to refrain from 'unnecessary social contact'. A hurried consultation... a round of breathless phone calls... and our Lent course 'Generous Living' was suspended. We'd had two of an anticipated series of five.

On Tuesday March 17th at 11.15am Bishop Christine wrote 'I suspect we are all reeling at the implications of the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday. If you're anything like me, new questions arise every hour, both about the impact on our personal lives and what this means for the way we are 'church'. By 4.46pm those implications had become more concrete. Bishop Christine circulated another letter from Archbishop Welby 'asking the Church of England... to serve all people in a new way. Public worship will have to stop for a season. Our usual pattern of Sunday services and other midweek gatherings must be put on hold.'

Continued on next page

‘Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead’ Archbishop Welby continued. ‘Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day’. That service was exemplified by the teams of people who went out from St Alban’s and delivered door to door 600 leaflets in Earsdon village and in Wellfield. The leaflets gave my phone number, and urged anyone who was self-isolating and in need of support to get in touch.

It felt historic, and not a little bewildering, to put up signs at St Alban’s and St John’s announcing that public worship was suspended. Similar feelings were to the fore when, at the request of Bishop Christine, I celebrated Holy Communion with one other person present in both St John’s and St Alban’s on Sunday March 22nd. It was striking to do this in an otherwise empty church which would usually have been full of bustling life.

The story continued to evolve quickly the next day. Monday March 23rd was to have been the first day of the St Alban’s building being open for people’s private prayer. We did open – from 11am to 1pm – but at the time of writing that is the only day on which this will happen. At 8.30pm Prime Minister Johnson addressed the nation and urged everyone to stay at home as much as possible. Along with this announcement came the news that places of worship were to be completely closed [until the pandemic has passed].

And that’s the story up to now – 5.25pm on Tuesday March 24th. What might it all mean? Here are some thoughts about what it might all mean for the planet, for the church, and for us as individuals.

There are ways in which **the planet** is having a period of rest. Aeroplanes are grounded, people are travelling much less, there is much less industry, and so satellite images are revealing significant drops in carbon dioxide emissions. If we come through this pandemic, we will need to be wise about making good decisions for the future. Our hand has been forced by COVID-19 – let’s not miss our opportunities to create a better future.

The church is rediscovering that the church is always *people first*. A ‘church’ is not a building. A church is, and always has been, a community of people grouped around the call of Jesus.

Lovely though our buildings are, with all their memories and associations, we must never get hung up on the buildings themselves. *We* are the church, and it's lovely how electronic means of keeping in touch are really coming to the fore.

And for us as **individuals**? We will all have our own responses to living through the coronavirus crisis. For me, this is about humility. We are so used to human ingenuity being able to solve everything. We are having a sobering reminder that this is not necessarily the case. And, in humility, I become more aware of my inevitable mortality. I know I must die some day. For me, such a thought is never morbid: on the contrary, this knowledge jolts me awake to be alive and grateful in every moment.

Stay safe, as the saying currently goes, and we'll see where the story has got to by the time of the May edition of 'Church Views'.

Yours with love,

Revd Tim Mayfield

Vicar – St Alban's Earsdon and St John's Backworth

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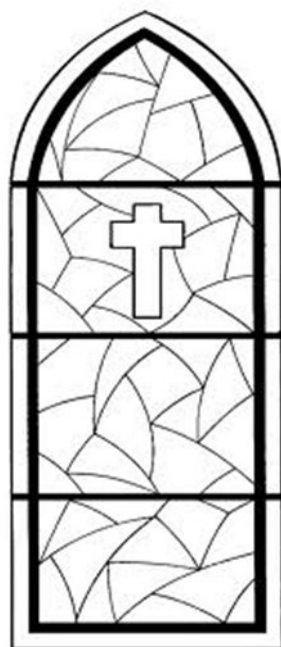
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Forthcoming events

The Parish of Earsdon and Backworth organises a number of social events throughout the year to raise funds and encourage fellowship.

Earsdon and Backworth Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union – The committee of St Alban's and St John's have suspended all MU Meetings until September.

Christine, Angela, Sandy, Anne and Liz would like to send their Members (and the wider congregation) love and prayers at this difficult time.

KEEP WELL.

Earsdon and Wellfield Women's Institute:

~~17th April 2020, Annual and Agenda Meeting.~~

~~Competition: Fruit Baskets.~~

Sadly, this too is cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Please do consider using the services of our advertisers who loyally support our church magazine. If you know anyone who would be interested in taking out an advertisement, please

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From Sylvia Turnbull :

Very many thanks to Pam Tomlinson for the excellent photographs that you took when a few of us celebrated our 80th birthday! Two of these wonderful pictures were in last month's magazine, and one is on St Alban's Facebook page.

I'd also like to thank Cathryn Richardson for another brilliant photograph showing Alan Storey standing with me, both celebrating our 80th. This was also in last month's magazine.

And from Albert Griffiths :

Hi All, I think a fair few of our St Alban's family know of me by now, and my Giving & Helping for Lent. As there are only a few days left of Lent, I would urge anyone who has any small jobs or errands they need doing to contact me as soon as possible, so I can do as much as I can before the 9th of April.

This being said, and in light of the difficult times ahead of us, especially concerning our elderly and more vulnerable parishioners, the 'Call Ali G' service will continue as an errand service indefinitely!

Whether it be shopping you need, or you have hospital appointments to attend etc., Call Me! So if you're not able to get out and about because you're self-isolating, and you have no-one who can help, Please Do CALL ME!!!

Ali G on: 07729805957

I'm Happy To Help. Thank You & God Bless.

As you are aware, our magazine this month is necessarily different, with no forthcoming events, no services, blank spaces, and as I write this, there won't even be any hard copies, maybe until we are all allowed out again. We hope to be able to upload this onto our website. Stay safe and stay well. *Jean.*

What God looks like

An infants teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. One little girl was working away furiously, and so she asked her what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."

**

Seed Packet?

A small boy was asking his mother where he came from and when he heard his mother's explanation, he replied: 'Mummy, when God planted the seed in your tummy, was there a photo of me on the packet?'

**

Lesson

Nervous Head Boy reading a Lesson in School Assembly: "Here beginneth the first Actor of the Chaps."

**

From church notice-sheets:

Baptisms: after Easter, the North and South ends of the church will be utilised. Children will be baptised at both ends.

Coming up: Theological Open House. We discuss thought-provoking topics. Your opinions are hardly welcome.

Next Sunday Mrs Brown will sing a solo at the morning service before the vicar preaches on the subject of 'Terrible experiences and how to survive them'.

Players picked for St Andrew's darts team will be pinned to the board on Thursday.

**

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Welcome to “**The Secret Life of St Alban’s and St John’s Folk**”.
This month we have been talking with Jeff Keers, from
St. Alban’s church.

1) Where were you born?

I was born in Princess Mary's Hospital in Newcastle upon Tyne.

2) What do you do during the week, when you’re not at church?

During the week when I'm not at church I like to keep fit. I like to chill at the spa and spend time with my children.

3) Surprise us with one of your hobbies, or something we may not know about you

I used to play pool for Northumberland County.

4) What are your favourite book and film?

This is easy! My favourite book is To Kill A Mocking Bird and my favourite film is Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back.

5) What’s your least favourite food?

Quite simply my least favourite food in the whole world is PRUNES!!!!!!

6) Tell us something you’ve learnt recently.

What I have learned recently is to love myself and others.

7) Do you have a favourite phrase or saying?

IF NOTHING CHANGES THEN NOTHING CHANGES.

8) Tell us something that’s on your bucket list

I've always wanted to go and watch the cricket at Cape Town in South Africa.

9) Sum up what being a Christian/being part of the church family means to you

Being part of the church family and being a Christian brings me contentment. It allows me to love myself and others and enables me to believe in someone more powerful than me. That person is God.

10) Tell us about someone who has had a big influence on your life

The person who has had the biggest influence in my life is ME. What I was like in my past and the way I treated myself and others influenced me to change the way I was. I had to look at myself and look at the way I was treating others and myself. I taught myself to move forward and to not look back. God bless.

CHURCH VIEWS FOR APRIL 2020 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

Women's World Day of Prayer

St Andrew's URC Church in Whitey Bay hosted this year's ecumenical service marking the World Day of Prayer. This year's theme, prepared by Christian women from Zimbabwe, was 'Rise, take your mat and walk'.



Those who took part in this service formed part of a great wave of prayer encircling the globe, beginning as the sun rose over Samoa and ending some 36 hours later back in the Pacific as the sun set over American Samoa. The Whitley Bay worshippers, representing many Churches, were joined with others from over 120 countries and Islands around the world.

(Thank you Ann Garland and Deirdre James)

Sunday and Weekday Masses

At the time of writing, all three churches in the parish remain closed until public gatherings are restored by the UK Government. However, in line with the ruling of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Mgr Faley will celebrate Mass in St Edward's Church in Whitley Bay every morning at 9.00am **without** parishioners, deacons or altar servers. This ensures that Mass intentions are being offered including the obligatory Masses for the People of the Parish.

Everyone can watch a video recording of the Mass on the Parish Facebook Page from 9.30am. Mass is also live-streamed from St Mary's Cathedral. Links are on the Diocesan website.

Further on streamed Masses, a comment from a friend: "I've really enjoyed being 'at Mass' in Canada and Australia."

A different Lent and Easter



We hope that as Lent gives way to Easter we will be able to appreciate once more the simple symbolism of the drapery on the Cross at the Immaculate Heart of Mary church in our Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea



The crucifix is a further example of the work of the late John Carr

Helping the elderly

An appeal comes from Whitley Bay and District Churches Together for those between 16 and 69 - with no symptoms of the virus or underlying health issues - to help the elderly and vulnerable in North Tyneside. The Whitley Bay Foodbank needs additional volunteers to ensure that essential food items reach those most in need, particularly the elderly who may be self-isolating. If you can help send details to wbydct@gmail.com, not the Foodbank direct.

The church may be closed, but the daffodils are open



Ever a joy when church grounds are brightened by signs of new life and light after a past winter, but never more so than this year.

None of the pictures on these pages were taken in breach of the Stay Home, Social Distance, or Church Closure regulations currently in force.

This was the written sermon for 22nd March, Mothering Sunday, the first Sunday that we were unable to have our usual Sunday service in St. Alban's due to the coronavirus . It is such a very relevant piece that it needs to be shared. Many, many thanks to Janet Appleby.

Today is Mothering Sunday – an ironic choice for this, the first Sunday when our ‘mother church’ is not there to offer public worship to her children! As far as I know this has never happened before! We may have moved far from the tradition which allowed domestic servants this day off, in order to go home and visit their ‘mother’ church with their families, but ‘Mother’s Day’, as it is often now called, is still a day which sees more families in church than usual. But not today, in March 2020. Today, COVID-19 (the Coronavirus) means that we are living in unprecedented times. All the old certainties have gone and the ordered routines of our lives have suddenly been swept away in a daily tsunami of dramatic changes and new fears.

We can no longer tell what tomorrow will bring. That which was ‘normal’ even a week ago seems like a distant country that will never return. All our carefully laid plans, for meetings or holidays, have been cancelled. Our diaries are as empty as the supermarket shelves. When Lent began, scarcely a month ago, we little expected our Lenten lives to look quite so barren. For some of us, as we self-isolate, our fasting has now become an abstinence from all physical human company. Others may soon be forced to fast from food itself, if loss of income, or the effect of panic buying, leaves them without the means to make a meal. We are all in uncharted territory.

Mary, too, was in uncharted territory as she stood at the foot of the cross, seeing her son Jesus hang, dying, in disgrace and agony. How different an outcome from the one promised by the angel that her son would ‘reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end’ [Luke 1:33]. Perhaps only those of us who have lost a child are able to feel anything of her torment as she has to stand helplessly watching Jesus undergo that cruellest of tortures, death by crucifixion.

We marvel at the strength of the love which Jesus then shows. For, despite his own agony, Jesus is still able to see Mary’s need and offer her a future, ‘Woman, here is your son.’

In the same breath he offers Mary to his ‘beloved disciple’ as a substitute mother. Jesus sees their mutual need and the way they can help each other. By giving them each other to care for, Jesus is helping them to cope with his death. Yes, the world as they know it is ending, but out of that disaster and defeat God is able to bring new life. Yes, it is unpredictable and unconventional, but Love always finds a way. Moreover, by forging this new, unconventional family, Jesus gives us a model for how we too can be ‘family’ to one another, by responding to need rather than birth.

This ray of hope, even in the darkest and most difficult times, is always there, provided we let God open our eyes so we can see things differently. Today, in March 2020, we can allow God to transform our trauma into an opportunity, to let God’s light in through these new cracks in our habits and assumptions. For God is always one step ahead, keen to help us to see the positive opportunities, even in the midst of painful upheaval and uncertainty.

After all, the core of our faith is precisely this: Jesus’ story of death and resurrection. Today’s gospel reading is a helpful reminder that every ending can be a new beginning. It encourages us that from every disaster a new opportunity can arise – if we let it. Jesus’ example of selfless love, even in his darkest hour, is a light that can shine in our lives, however hopeless they might seem. In March 2020, as COVID-19 engulfs our lives, this is the message I take from today’s powerful and moving gospel.

So this gospel reading helps us to see how, in fact, ‘Mothering Sunday’ is, after all, entirely suited to our particular, unprecedented times. For even if we are lucky enough to have mothers, or ourselves to be mothers, many of us are unable to be with our families on this, one of the special family days of the year. So, instead we have to find new, unconventional ways of connecting. We may be able to phone or Skype our loved ones today, but there will be those without anyone to contact – and that may include some of you. Jesus’ example reminds us that as a Church family we must also seek to ‘mother’ each other and allow ourselves to be ‘mothered’ too. Already we’ll know examples of neighbours looking out for each other, and we’ll be needing more of that in the coming days as we stretch our instinctive family bonds to include others. The time spent at home (instead of rushing about in our ‘little metal boxes’ – otherwise known as cars) may even help us get to know our neighbours (at a safe two metre distance of course). In fact, I’ve already met some that I’ve failed to even speak to before in my three years of living here!

Cont'd from previous page

For we all, whatever our age, need 'mothering'. We want someone to tell us everything is OK, especially at the moment. We long for someone to tend to our metaphorically scraped knees or to hold our trembling hands in their warm and comforting ones. God is always ready to 'mother' us in that way, and we can do this for one another, just as Mary no doubt mothered Jesus' beloved disciple. Indeed, any two of us can be a 'family', and be 'mother church' to each other, for as Jesus said, 'when two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' [Matt 18:20].

At the moment such 'gathering' will be, at best, at a distance of two metres. And it will more often be through a phone call, or via Skype or email or text, or one of the many other ways we have to communicate these days. But in fact we are blessed to have such electronic means, and we need to make good use of them in the coming days and weeks as we hold each other in prayer.

Indeed, this crisis is an opportunity to remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that the more we give, the more we will receive: 'full measure, pressed down and running over, poured into our laps' [Luke 6:38] (as Jesus also said once). In fact, there is one small action we can all join in, which the Church Leaders are calling on us to do. We can all place a lighted candle in our window at 7pm tonight as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished.

I wish you all a blessed and hopeful Mothering Sunday. Amen.

Janet Appleby 20th March 2020

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Earsdon Methodist Church

Diary for April 2020

Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus, our church will be closed until further notice. This closure affects all church services, meetings and lunch club.

Income for February 2020:

2nd	9th	16th	23rd
£130.26	£106.00	£86.44	£132.40

A message from the Circuit Superintendent Minister.

Dear friends,

A hard, but necessary letter to write today.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister advised that people should avoid gatherings and crowded places, and Matt Hancock confirmed with deepest regret and with the heaviest of heart, that this advice includes faith groups and gatherings of faith.

Today, the Methodist Church, with sadness, has recommended that worship services in Methodist Churches are suspended for the time being. And also that 'other community events like lunch clubs, after school clubs, playgroups and fellowship groups be suspended'. Also, it is recommended that all business meetings, including church council and circuit meetings should be cancelled. The Methodist Church is leaving it up to the local churches to consider whether it is possible to open up the church to enable people to come and pray quietly, with precautions around physical distancing.

Having received these recommendations, with sadness and heavy heart we are cancelling our meetings in our churches.

This does not mean that we cease to be church. The church, the body of Christ is made up of you and me.

While we might not be able to physically meet, we will continue to worship in different ways.

On Sunday mornings at 10.30am there will be live stream worship (without singing) on the North Shields and Whitley Bay Methodist Circuit page and the material will be shared with those not on Facebook via e-mail or hard copies (if you have indicated you need hard copies). Can I encourage us to join Facebook, at least for this season, please? Also, if you have internet, but are not on Facebook, we are thinking of putting the services on you tube. More to follow.

This is not the only time and only way we worship though. We worship as one body when we care for each other, when we phone, when we read, when we buy someone's shopping and take it to them.

We will continue to communicate with you - so please know, You are not alone.

Let us be the church God has called us to be at this time, sharing love in every way, praying for mercy and for protection, helping all that need help.

And do you know, while it is hard, I somehow believe that we will be stronger together, draw closer to each other and to God and be the best we can be.

Love and God's blessings,
Rev'd. Eva Walker.

St. Alban's and St. John's



Diary Page for April 2020

Sunday	5th	Services Cancelled	<u>Palm Sunday</u>
Sunday	12th	Services Cancelled	<u>Easter Sunday</u>
Sunday	19th	Services Cancelled	<u>Second Sunday of Easter</u>
Sunday	26th	Services Cancelled	<u>Third Sunday of Easter</u>

During this sad time of the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as the above, all weekday services have had to be cancelled, along with the special Holy Week and Easter services, e.g. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday etc. until further notice.



St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Readings for April 2020:

5th	12th	19th
Isaiah 50:4 -9a	Acts 10:34 -43 or Jeremiah 31:1 -6	Acts 2:14a. 22 -32 or Exodus 14:10 -end; 15:20 -21
Philippians 2:5 -11	Colossians 3:1 - 4 or Acts 10:34 - 43	1 Peter 1:3 -9 or Acts 2:14a. 22 -32
Matthew 21:1 -11	John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1 -10	John 20:19 -end

26th

Acts 2:14a. 36 -41 **or**
Zephaniah 3:14-end

1 Peter 1:17 -23 **or**
Acts 2:14a. 36 -41

Luke 24:13-35

St. John's collections for February 2020:

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Please note - all material for next month's magazine (May) will need to be in by Wed 22nd April 2020.
Thank you, *Jean*.

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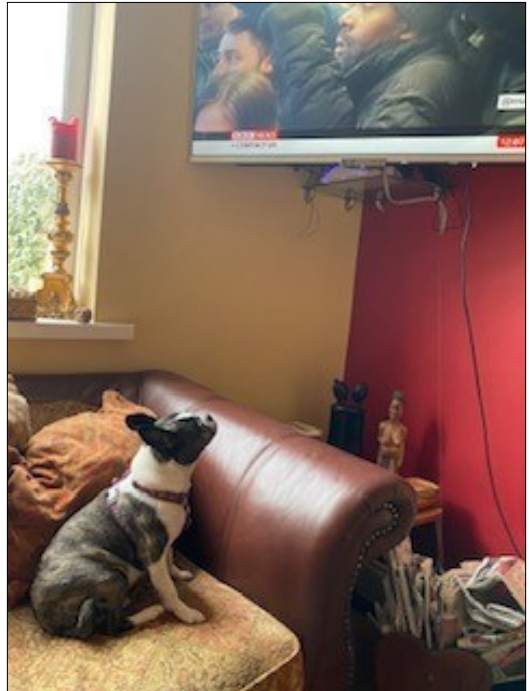
Marti's Musings 73

These certainly are strange times! I hope you are all staying safe. We went leaflet dropping to let people know our churches are here to help, it was good to know I was being useful.

I am getting a bit confused as to which day we are up to; mum's working from home and there is no choir practice or church at all! Mind you it is nice having mum around all the time. We have been watching the news to keep up with the latest updates.

Easter Sunday will not be the same but we will all keep praying with Tim's daily worship emails.

Stay safe, love and prayers
Marti xxx



* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests *
* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of *
* sending in their contribution for publication, please *
* email it to magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk *
* or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273**. *

WORDSEARCH

Wordsearch April 2020

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with his disciples, he warned them he was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink. The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and his blood, was about to be ushered in. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that this fearful cup might be removed from him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. From Easter onwards we can only approach God through his Son, Jesus Christ, not on our own merit.

Jesus
Ate
Last
Passover
Meal
Disciples
Warned
Betrayed
Bread
Blessed
Wine
Thanks
Drink
Covenant
Law
Old
New
Body
Blood
Gethsemane
Cup
Removed
Will
Easter
Approach
God



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