

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM**



THE MESSENGER

PARISH MAGAZINE JUNE 2020

St Andrew's Clergy

The Church is currently in Interregnum

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Services

**The Church is currently closed in line with HM Government guidelines.
There will be services available via internet link and these will be**

advertised on the following

Church Website <https://www.standrews-handsworth.org.uk>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StAndrews.Handsworth>

Twitter @StAndrewCE_HW

**St Andrew's WhatsApp Group – if you wish to join please contact
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St Andrew's PCC

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Elaine Powell- Church Warden

Nora Pottinger - Deputy Church Warden

Leonora Dore - Secretary

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Letter from The Clergy

In the absence of a parish priest, Fr John Austen has kindly agreed to write this page.

Pentecost

What have we learned about ourselves in the last couple of months since lockdown?

It's been a very hard time for some people – especially if you have been inside all those weeks on your own. Someone said to me that there are only so many cupboards and drawers you can sort and clean! And it's been so hard for parents and children.

But there may be positive things too. Before the traffic started increasing again, we heard more birdsong. Some people have said they have started reading more than they were doing before. Maybe there's something you have found yourself appreciating more. And perhaps we're a bit clearer about the things that are most important in our lives. Maybe we have a better idea of what we want to do or who we want to see or what we really need when we get to a "new normal".

Perhaps we realise better the place that church and faith has in our lives. Before lockdown, we could go to church on a Sunday – or leave it till next week. When we can't go to church, we sometimes get a clearer idea of why it's important to us. People have been saying to me *I miss my church* – and that can mean different things. It can mean not being able to be inside the building we know, which holds so many connections. And churches are often built in a way that helps us to lift up hearts, minds and eyes and be aware of God's presence. Think of the big crucifix that is high up near the altar in St Andrew's, or the big East window on a bright sunny morning.

But "Church" is a word which has two different meanings: it can mean a church building, or it can mean the people gathered together. And many of us have been missing the community of church. There's been lots of chat on the phone, but we miss being able to chat face to face. It's partly about meeting friends, old and new (most people don't like self-isolation!). But it's also about being among people who share a common faith, a set of beliefs, an understanding that we are all trying to be followers of Christ and can encourage each other through difficult times.

People have also said to me that they may see communion on TV – or on our Zoom services – but they really miss receiving Communion, the bread and the wine, because that's the time that they feel they really get personal with Jesus. That's the time when as well as singing hymns, praying together, reading the Bible, it's about receiving bread and wine: the Body and Blood of Christ: *this is my body given for you, this is my blood shed for you*. It's food for the spirit, food for our journey with Jesus.

One day, we'll be back in church. We may not be able to sit next to our friends – we will be having to do social distancing! And soon too, the shops will be open again – even if there are queues. We hear a lot about the *new normal*. Life isn't simply going to go back to how it was.

And that of course was the experience of the disciples that we read about in the New Testament. After the Ascension, they would never again have the physical presence of Jesus with them. They would never be able to see him, talk to him, be reassured by him.

But he said he would send them the Holy Spirit – to be their guide and comforter. And the sending of the Holy Spirit is what we celebrate at Pentecost. Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the church. Everything started from there, and the message spread like wildfire. That was the *new normal* for the disciples.

It is very tempting to dwell on the things that have been hardest these last few months, and which will continue to be hard – whether it's the loss of friends, the missing of funerals, not seeing family face to face, not going to church.

But Pentecost can be a time which helps us look to the future. God's spirit giving us fresh hope, new possibilities. Perhaps God has shown you a glimpse of gifts he has given you, and ways in which you may be able to enjoy them or share and use them. Many members of St Andrew's have enjoyed meeting on Zoom, using their phones or laptops, worshipping and praying together. There's exciting new life emerging because we can't meet in church.

Maybe there are new friendships which have happened during lockdown, or a realisation that there are people who care about us that we didn't realise before. Maybe a sense of what's important in our lives, and what isn't so important.

So we may have learned things about ourselves and our possibilities these last months. Let's ask God to help us hold on to things we have learned, and use them as we move towards a *new normal*.

Fr. John Austen

A Discernment Journey by Carl Hart

Well it all started when I was trying out different faiths to see which one really suited my churching and me, up to this point there was not really a confirmed faith, but I knew there was something calling me to come to church.

I settled into the Roman Catholic Church that was right on my doorstep, I sort of rolled out of bed and into Mass. I lived within fifty yards of the Church. It was here that I really got into the Liturgy and the sacramental symbolism of the Church, and I must also acknowledge my real first hearing of that small voice calling my name. Well actually I must confess, I was lifted from the back of the Church where I always sat, to behind the altar, that sacred space that only the Ordained were supposed to be.

Over a short period of time I felt that the Roman Catholic Church really was not for me and came to St. Andrew's Church. Oh, wow it was like coming home, instantly felt warmth, welcomed and wanted and an unbelievable feeling of joy deep, deep inside my heart and soul. I had really found my Spiritual home. The then incumbent Fr David Collyer was a huge instrument in my faith journey and discernment. It was he that encouraged me to follow and "tune" into that small voice calling my name.

Fr David then started my confirmation preparation and I was confirmed by the Bishop of Aston Rt Rev'd Michael Whinney at St Agatha's Sparkhill in 1994. I was like a sponge and wanted more and more. Fr David saw and acknowledged my calling to be very real and started the discernment process. Out of the air, I had an appointment with the Director of Ordinands to go and chat over "my calling".

I was terribly nervous, yes me nervous! We sat in the front room of the Diocesan Director of Ordinand's home in Edgbaston, where I think I said the right things, and another appointment was made. The second appointment came, and even more nerves. I didn't feel right, something inside, the voice that was calling seemed a faint whisper if I can even call it a whisper. It was God, not loud this time, but really quietly speaking making me listen with my heart, soul and mind, it was not right. He did not think it was the right time for my calling to be tested. So, I came home following my second meeting with the DDO, feeling like I let God down, and therefore not worthy to serve Him as an Ordained Minister in His Holy Church.

So, I had lots of talks with Fr David and grew more and more in faith and understanding. I read some books and attended a couple of courses.

Fast forward some years now. I was visiting a friend, who was dying in Shrewsbury Hospital. I had finished a night shift that morning went home to sleep, got up early because my friend had specifically asked for me to visit him that day. I arrived at the hospital and could not get in to see him, due to visiting times on the ITU. Oh my gosh, I had to wait for nearly four hours to get to see my dying friend, and then had to be back on duty for 8pm that evening. Well, I had just come away from the doors of ITU, when the hospital chaplain came out of nowhere and bumped into me. Rev'd Mervyn, could see my sorrow in my face and asked what had happened, and I told

him of my friend. Rev'd Mervyn said wait here in the chapel and I will see what I can do.

Rev'd Mervyn, got me into ITU to see my friend. I was able to pray with my friend and hear his words that confirmed my calling. Warren my friend said he was sorry he wasn't going to see my ordination but wished me well and we hugged, and I left.

Rev'd Mervyn was waiting for me to finish with Warren and invited me to chat in the Chaplaincy office next to the chapel. We had a cuppa and chatted like old friends and he said I must continue with my discernment with my calling to the ministry. We prayed and chatted even more, until it was getting to the time I needed to leave. We swapped numbers, email and postal addresses. Off I went home to relax and gather my thoughts around the events of the day before going off to work.

Rev'd Mervyn and I met regularly to help my discernment along, and suggested I talked it over with my Parish Priest. So, I had a very quick chat with Fr Douglas after Mass one sunny Sunday Afternoon. It was agreed to meet, that following Friday evening to discuss "my calling" further. Fr Douglas was very keen to listen to "my calling" story and has been very, very, instrumental in my discernment, and he wrote to the DDO, stating my case. Fr Douglas and I have had regular meetings around my discernment and how things are progressing.

The DDO and I had regular meetings and he passed me onto different advisors. The next step was to go and see two examining chaplains. They asked questions around the nine criteria selection topics and got me to talk through my faith journey. Following the meeting they then sent a report off to the DDO.

So, the news is great indeed! The Church of England Birmingham has discerned that I really do have a call to the Ordained Ministry and Deo Volante (God willing), I start my Theological training in October of this year.

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, may I say thank you for all the prayers and encouragement that you have given me over the years, and I hope you now understand my comments in the WhatsApp and email groups, when I have commented "it is what I am being called to do". This is God's call of me, by my name to do His work and serve His flock. He calls each of us by name to do different things for His work.

May God bless you and may you listen and respond to His call of you, for His work, wherever it is He calls you to.

Your Brother in Christ - Carl

Refugee Week - 15th-21st June

As the annual 'Refugee Week' approaches, various Christian relief agencies and campaign groups warn that coronavirus could have a catastrophic impact on the refugees whom they are trying to help.

First, the big picture: according to the UNHCR, "we are currently witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented **70.8 million** people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly **25.9 million refugees**, over half of whom are **under the age of 18.**"

Refugees are especially vulnerable, as their usual homes of makeshift tents or flimsy shelters are over-crowded and without clean water or sanitation, making social distancing and isolation impossible. Also, many refugees are already suffering under-lying health conditions and mental health issues.

As the head of the Humanitarian Division at Christian Aid, Nick Guttman, also points out: "Refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Access to medical facilities is limited and the destabilisation of the global economy is likely to have an impact on their livelihoods and the flow of humanitarian aid." He warns that it is only a "matter of time" before it reaches the countries with a high number of refugees: Bangladesh, Syria, Lebanon, Nigeria, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Tearfund has highlighted the problem of warning the one million Rohingya people, crowded in camps in Bangladesh. "There is no internet provision in the camps and the mobile network is currently suspended, so getting the message out about the dangers of the virus relies on word of mouth."

Meanwhile, Open Doors is concerned for the plight of the Pygmy people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many fled their rainforest after persecution by Islamist rebels, and are now living in camps, where they are extremely vulnerable to the virus.

Leprosy Mission has warned that India "faces a human timebomb, waiting to explode." Communities affected by leprosy, malnutrition, overcrowded living conditions and poor sanitation, make "ideal breeding ground for the spread of coronavirus. Social distancing and isolation are impossible in the densely populated areas."

c/o Parish Pump

29th June Feast of SS Peter & Paul, the two most famous apostles

29th June St Peter, 'the Rock'

The two most famous apostles are remembered this month, for they share a feast day. St Peter (d. c. 64AD), originally called Simon, was a married fisherman from Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee. He met Jesus through his brother, Andrew. Jesus gave him the name of Cephas (Peter) which means rock. Peter is always named first in the list of apostles. He was one of the three apostles who were privileged to witness the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the Agony in the Garden.

When Peter made his famous confession of faith, that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus recognised it as being the result of a revelation from the Father. He in turn told Peter that he would be the rock on which His Church would be built, that the 'gates of hell' would never prevail against it. Peter and the apostles would have the power of 'binding and losing', but Peter would be personally given 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus also forewarned Peter of his betrayal and subsequent strengthening of the other apostles. After His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter before the other apostles, and later entrusted him with the mission to feed both the lambs and the sheep of Christ's flock.

Peter played a big part in the early Church, and he is mentioned many times in the Book of Acts, where in the early chapters he organised the choice of Judas' successor, preached with stirring authority at Pentecost; and was the very first apostle to work a miracle. Peter went on to defend the apostles' right to teach at the Sanhedrin, and to condemn Ananias and Sapphira. It was Peter who first realised that Christianity was also for the Gentiles, after his meeting with Cornelius. Later he took a prominent part in the council at Jerusalem and went on to clash with St Paul at Antioch for hesitating about eating with Gentiles.

Early tradition links Peter with an apostolate and martyrdom at Rome. The New Testament does not tell us either way, but Peter being in Rome would make sense, especially as Peter's first epistle refers to 'Babylon', which was usually identified with Rome. Peter's presence in Rome is mentioned by early church fathers such as Clement of Rome and Irenaeus. Tradition also tells us that Peter suffered under Nero and was crucified head-downwards. There is

no conclusive proof either way that St Peter's relics are at the Vatican, but it is significant that Rome is the only city that ever claimed to be Peter's place of death.

St Peter was a major influence on Mark when writing his gospel, and the First Epistle of Peter was very probably his. (Many scholars believe that the Second Epistle was written at a later date.)

From very early times Peter was invoked by Christians as a universal saint. He was the heavenly door-keeper, the patron of the Church and the papacy, a saint both powerful and accessible.

In England there were important dedications to Peter from early times: monasteries such as Canterbury, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Peterborough, Lindisfarne, Whitby, Wearmouth, and especially Westminster. Cathedrals were named after him, too: York, Lichfield, Worcester and Selby. In all, it has been calculated that 1,129 pre-Reformation churches were dedicated to St Peter, and another 283 to SS Peter and Paul together.

Images of Peter are innumerable, but his portraiture remains curiously the same: a man with a square face, a bald or tonsured head, and a short square, curly beard. Not surprisingly, his chief emblem is a set of keys, sometimes along with a ship or fish.

29th June St Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

Like Peter, Paul (d. c. 65) also started life with another name: Saul. This great apostle to the Gentiles was a Jew born in Tarsus and brought up by Gamaliel as a Pharisee. He was keen to defend the god of his fathers that he became a persecutor of Christianity, and even took part in the stoning of Stephen. He hunted Christians down and imprisoned them, and it was while on his way to persecute more Christians in Damascus that he was suddenly given his vision of Christ.

It was the decisive moment of Paul's life – Paul suddenly realised that Jesus was truly the Messiah, and the Son of God, and that He was calling Paul to bring the Christian faith to the Gentiles. Paul was then healed of his temporary blindness, baptised, and retired to Arabia for about three years of prayer and solitude, before returning to Damascus.

From then on Paul seems to have lived a life full of hazard and hardship. He made many Jewish enemies, who stoned him, and wanted to kill him. Nevertheless, Paul made three great missionary journeys, first to Cyprus, then to Asia Minor and eastern Greece, and lastly to Ephesus, where he wrote 1 Corinthians, then to Macedonia and Achaia, where he wrote Romans, before returning to Jerusalem.

After stonings, beatings and imprisonment in Jerusalem he was sent to Rome for trial as a Roman citizen. On the way he was shipwrecked at Malta; when he finally reached Rome he was put under house-arrest for two years, during which time he wrote the four 'captivity' epistles. Later Paul may have revisited Ephesus and even have reached Spain. Tradition tells he was eventually martyred at Rome during the persecution of Nero, being beheaded (as a Roman citizen) at Tre Fontane and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands.

The belief that Peter and Paul died on the same day was caused by their sharing the same feast day.

Paul was not only a tireless missionary, but a great thinker. His epistles played a major part in the later development of Christian theology. Paul's key ideas include that Redemption is only through faith in Christ, who abrogated the old Law and began the era of the Spirit; that Christ is not just the Messiah, but the eternal, pre-existent Son of God, exalted after the Resurrection to God's right-hand; that the Church is the (mystical) body of Christ; that the believers live in Christ and will eventually be transformed by the final resurrection.

It is difficult to overemphasise the influence of Paul on Christian thought and history: he had a major effect on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and others. In art, Paul is depicted as small in stature, bald and bandy-legged, with a long face, long nose and eyebrows meeting over deep-set eyes. His usual emblems are a sword and a book. In England he was never as popular as St Peter, and ancient English churches dedicated to him alone number only 43. The history of the relics of Peter and Paul is not very clear. Tradition says that Peter was buried at the Vatican and Paul on the Ostian Way under his basilica. Certainly, both apostles were venerated from very early times both in the Liturgy and in private prayers, as testified by Greek and Latin graffiti in the catacombs of the early 3rd century.

c/o Parish Pump

British public turn to prayer as one in four tunes in to religious services

A quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service since the coronavirus lockdown began, and one in 20 have started praying during the crisis, according to a new survey. The findings of the poll reinforce indications of an increase in the numbers of people turning to faith for succour amid uncertainty and despair.

The Church of England has said that unexpectedly high numbers of people are tuning into online or broadcast services, and 6,000 people phoned a prayer hotline in its first 48 hours of operation. Other faiths have also reported surges in people engaging with online religious activities as places of worship have been closed during the lockdown.

The survey of more than 2,000 people, commissioned by the Christian aid agency Tearfund and carried out last weekend, found that a third of young adults aged between 18 and 34 had watched or listened to an online or broadcast religious service, compared with one in five adults over the age of 55. One in five of those who have tuned into services in the past few weeks say they have never gone to church.

Harriet Sherwood. The Guardian Newspaper 3 May 2020

c/o Parish Pump

Keep an eye out for the elderly

When did you last see your elderly neighbour? Seriously: are they okay?

During this time of social distancing, it is all too easy to assume that the elderly person you never see is simply safe indoors. But are they?

Isolation can be dangerous: it is too easy for them to have had an accident and be unable to call for help.

Why not arrange a system with them whereby you agree that you will give them a quick ring once a day, or even stand outside their house and wave? It only takes a few seconds to make sure they are still on their feet, and that all is well.

If you have several elderly neighbours, why not ask a few of your local friends to help you keep in brief touch with them each day?

c/o Parish Pump

JUNE 1940 – a month to remember

June 1940 – 80 years ago – was a dramatic month in the Second World War, and one which saw two of the most memorable speeches in English.

As the evacuation of Allied Forces from Dunkirk was completed, recently appointed Prime Minister Winston Churchill told the House of Commons on 4th June: “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

Surprisingly he did not broadcast it to the nation: it was not recorded until 1949, “for posterity.” When he spoke, the French had not surrendered, and the idea that “in God’s good time” the USA might conceivably have to ride to the aid of a ‘subjugated’ England actually depressed as many people as it invigorated.

Two weeks later, on the 18th June, with the battle in France lost, Churchill did address the country directly with a rallying call in what must indeed have seemed a very dark hour. “The Battle of Britain,” he said, “is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation.” He concluded by saying that if Britain were to last a thousand years, people would still say, “This was their finest hour.”

c/o Parish Pump

VE Day

Together the country went to war
Some came back with scars they bore
Memories that will never fade
History celebrated by what they have made
Victory for an Empire that still stands today
So we can come together
With one voice to say
Thank you! To every fallen soldier
And those who still stand
For protecting and honouring our glorious land
So let’s come together with pride in our hearts
For all our brave hero’s who have played their parts
Lord we pray and say thank you as we celebrate on this VE Day

Valerie Powell



We have experienced many losses in the last few months during this difficult time. The following pages are Tributes to our friends from St Andrew's who have recently died. Loss feels more profound at this time, as families are unable to mourn in the way they normally would. Prayers and services continue in our St Andrew's Whatsapp Group and online services. Tributes have been written for the following people.

JANICE BISSELL

ROY TAYLOR

JUNE BANNER

MAUREEN MOORE (Mary Bairstow's mother)

Roy Taylor - Eulogy that was read at his funeral

Dad. Losing your father. It's losing part of yourself. It is losing someone who has always been there, for better or for worse. It is to lose our best teacher, the one who taught us so much. It is to lose our best friend, with whom we laughed so much and did activities always as extraordinary. But above all it means losing someone who has always been there for us. It will not be easy, but since you have always taught me to be strong, I will get there.

I will get there because I know that what you most want for the family is happiness. I will do it for you, to honour you. As you always did everything for me.

I know you were definitely not perfect, but I could never have asked for a better father. You have provided me with everything a child could ask for, and even more, which has enabled me to become what I am today and I am proud of that.

I know everyone thinks they have the best father but you are wrong. Mine was the best! I'm sure everyone around you agrees with me. You were an incredible man, devoted and there for all.

You will be missed by all those who knew you. We will always keep positive memories of you, your jokes, the evenings spent by your side, your kindness, your generosity, your great soul in general.

Dad, you leave a big void in my life but know that there will always be a place for you in my heart. Even if you don't seem to be with me, that I cannot touch you, see you, or hear you. I know that you will always watch over me, as you have always done.

Dad. I miss you already. Farewell.

I love you. Jeannette Taylor and family.



Tribute to Janice Bissell—Chris Baker

As most people know, Janice Bissell a long-standing member of St. Andrew's Church, sadly passed away on 14th April 2020 from Covid-19. Janice had belonged to St. Andrew's church for many years. She was married there, and her son Alex was baptised there. Janice was a Sunday School Teacher for over 25 years mainly teaching the older group of children. She was always present on the Sunday School trips and at the parties and other activities we took part in and she even wrote some of the Nativity Plays the children performed each year.

Janice was a member of the PCC and was a very efficient secretary for a number of years and she was also a member of the Halls Management Committee. Janice always volunteered to help at Sales and Bazaars and for many years helped to organise them. She was an excellent baker and could be counted on to make cakes for these events and for parties and other events held in church and there were never any of her cakes left over.

As a Recycled Teenager Janice took part in St Andrew's Talent Show that was organised and she and some other ladies performed the Charleston in true 20's style.

In 2010 Janice moved to Walmley but such was her devotion to St. Andrew's and in spite of living a 2 minute walk from her local parish church and having to travel on two buses to get to St Andrew's; she continued to attend each week and was always one of the first people to arrive. Janice also came to Thursday Coffee Morning and other events held in church and she visited parishioners who could no longer attend church.

Janice we will miss you at St. Andrew's and all you did for the church and on a personal note I will miss sitting next to you each week at Mass. I want to thank you for your wonderful friendship and support you have given me over the years and especially making sure I went to Walsingham a place I know held a special place in your heart as it will in mine thanks to you.

Rest In Peace dear friend.

Chris Baker



Tribute to Janice Bissell – Joan Wild

Remembrance Sunday was always an extremely important occasion for Janice. In fact, one could say she was a driving force in the creation of the floral arrangements for that day. She thought it very important that as a church we remembered the suffering and sacrifice and bravery of our forebears as thanksgiving for the peace and freedom we now enjoyed. As a tribute to Janice's bravery in her battle against the Corona Virus, I would like to share some information about her forebears which I have recently discovered. I think she would be pleased for you to know about this and so understand some of the reasons Remembrance Sunday was so significant for her.

The following poem was written by Janice's **great** grandfather George Hextell, when his son, Janice's grandfather George Edwin Hextell was serving in the Royal Field Artillery in France in 1914. The poem must have meant a lot to Janice as she had it published on the internet. It begins with the dedication: "To My Son, **Shoeing Smith*** G. Hextell, now serving in the 3rd S.M.B.R.F.A - somewhere in France",

I have a son in a far distant land,
Fighting for home so dear
Having the heart of a true British boy
Never acquainted with fear;
Faithful to his country's call,
Never a slacker or shirker would be,
Doing his best as a soldier should do,
As our sailors are doing at sea.
Fearless he rose to the bugle call,
He never once dismayed,
Though shot and shell around him fell,
He never was once afraid.
On August the Fourth that fateful date
It gives us all a turn
When we think of souls that are gone away,
Never again to return.
In the midst of the cannon's deafening roar,
My boy stood firm and true,
He knew full well that his Country called him
Duty there to do;
As the British Lion will never give in,
As long as there's one man to stand,
May gunners and drivers stick to their post,
Protecting the old Motherland.
When the battle was raging and shrapnel fell,
The shells lit up the sky,
But our brave British drivers and gunners stood to their post
Ready to do or die;
Waiting for the order to come,
Never fearing for what it may be,
May Angels on high look down on my boy,
And bring him safe back to me.

Written and Composed by G Hextell ***A Shoeing Smith's job was to fit War Horses with shoes.**

This poem certainly shows how his father worried, but still tried his best to show appreciation to his son and his fellow soldiers, and to try to boost their spirits. The poem reminds me of the weekly clap for the NHS and carers who are in such positions of danger. 'May angels look down' on them too.

Just over 20 years later, in the Second World War, Janice's father, George J.E. Hextell was a Sergeant in the RAF, operating as a Flight Engineer on a Halifax Bomber. The Halifax was a four-engined heavy bomber used primarily in night operations and was usually crewed by seven airmen; a pilot, a flight engineer, a navigator, a bomb aimer, a wireless operator/air gunner, a mid-upper gunner and a rear gunner. On the night of 27th January 1942, George and his fellow airmen were on their way to the industrial town of Dusseldorf to bomb factories making steel goods such as machine tools & magnetic mines.

During their flight over Holland a tracer bullet shot right through the fuselage of their plane. Through the bullet hole George could see one of the engines on fire. He secured his parachute and the next thing he knew he was spinning in the air. The plane had exploded! He automatically pulled the ripcord and thankfully the parachute opened. He was found in a field by a Dutch farmer. The farmer took him to a priest but he regretted that they had to hand him over to the occupying Nazi forces as the farmer's whole family would be shot if they were all found out to be sheltering him. Two young girls at the scene, possibly the farmer's daughters, cut the buttons off George's uniform as souvenirs. Perhaps the family and the priest prayed for him during the rest of the War.

George was taken to the notorious Stalag V111B 344 Lamsdorf Prisoner of War camp in Silesia, now in Poland. Conditions there were inhuman and George witnessed men coming to blows over a small crust of bread. Starvation of the prisoners was the norm and George told his children that if it hadn't been for RED CROSS parcels he definitely would have died. He always donated to the RED CROSS, and food wastage was never permitted in Janice's home as she was growing up. As the War neared its end Russian troops were advancing from the East.

The Germans were determined that the Russians would not liberate the POW camps, so their prisoners were forced to walk westwards as part of the 'March of Death'. George must have been exceptional in his positive thinking as unlike many of his fellow walkers he reached France despite being so physically weak. On approaching Paris his surviving group was found by the approaching American 6th Army of General Patton. George politely declined an invitation to join the American War effort, but the Americans fed him. They re clothed him as his own clothes were in rags and they gave him new boots as his own had completely worn out. So, dressed as an American soldier, he came at last, like his father before him, 'safe back' to his family in Birmingham.

Against all these odds, it is a miracle that the world was blessed with Janice at all! But Thank God. She brought such light and joy to St Andrew's. It is difficult to know how things will be when we are allowed to return to Church. However, if we try to imitate some of Janice's qualities and activities it

- Be brave
- Be positive.
- Pray for everyone, especially those who are sick or in particular need.
- Go on a Pilgrimage (Preferably to Walsingham!)
- Remember loved ones we have lost ~ especially with flowers in Church.
- Be as happy as possible.
- Be as friendly as possible.
- Help Charities (Janice always collected stamps for the Leprosy Mission and ran for the Breast Cancer Appeal).
- Show appreciation for those whose sacrifices for one reason or another may not be recognised: branches of the Armed Forces on which we rely for our protection, and others whose efforts we may take for granted ~ Medical and Care Workers and all key workers during the Pandemic.
- Sing and enjoy music.
- Support St Andrew's and each other.
- Live life to the full.

Giving thanks for Janice:

*'Give thanks for those whose love is pure,
a sparkling precious stone:
They show by what they say and do
an inward beauty warm and true,
for God's concerns they own -
His love through them is known.'* (from Hymn 217)



The photographs were taken on the 70th Anniversary of VE Day when Janice was inspecting Peter Rose's medals which he won while serving in the Merchant Navy in WW2, and on Remembrance Sunday 2018.

Thanks are due to Chris and Carol Hextell for the information about Janice's father's startling War experiences. **JOAN WILD**

Tribute to Janice Bissell

Hazel Kench - Friend from The Well Being Community Choir

You may have noticed during the service for Janice that there were a few names on Zoom that you didn't recognise. They were from the choir that Janice loved to sing with! I help to run the choir that Janice joined and during our chats we found out that Janice's best friend at senior school was my best friend in infant and junior school. This meant we had lots in common and there was a bond between us.

I was born and raised in Handsworth until I was 21. I went to Rookery Road Infant and Junior school and then Handsworth Wood Girls school. I met my husband at The Plaza Ballroom also in Rookery Road and I was married at Rookery Road Methodist Church in 1968 and I remember having a family party when I was 5 in a hall by the island just down from the church. Sadly my husband died in 2018 after 50 years of marriage. So my roots are everywhere in Handsworth. So Janice and I had a lot in common. I am so glad that Janice, myself and our mutual friend Janet, who now lives in Stafford, met up and had lunch together in Birmingham City Centre.

Thank you for the lovely service that you had for Janice. It helped me to deal with her loss. Hopefully the choir will sing at her memorial service when all this silliness is over.

Best wishes

Hazel Kench

June Banner: Our special 'Friday Friend'.

We in the flower arranging group: Jean, Audrey and Joan, were lucky to have had the pleasure of June's company every Friday for a number of years.

As we arranged the flowers, and while Fr Henley and Gloria carried out various tasks and Pauline cleaned the church, so June worked hard on the brasses and made the whole church gleam.

Of course we had to have a tea break, during which the world was put to rights. Friday became a social occasion to which we all looked forward. June was always entertaining, with her mischievous sense of humour and individual and forthright opinions. She was gentle and kind and caring ~ and very generous, always making sure there was a variety of biscuits for all tastes to keep up our strength.

Every week she made sure she had a serious look at the flowers and gave her studied opinion with accompanying encouragement and support. She loved flowers and it was on 19th April, 'Primrose Day' that she left us.

She cared about us all in the church, especially the children, and was always interested in 'fair play' and did her best to ensure that credit was given where credit was due. She was considerate to almost a fault and was always determined never to inconvenience anyone.

She was so independent! Jean often had to work hard to encourage her to accept a lift from her even though they lived very near to one another and had been good friends for decades. Her sudden passing has come as a great shock to Jean especially as they had been chatting by telephone only a day or two before and had become very close as this current crisis took hold.

June's passing has brought profound sadness to us all. June's warm smile and gentle nature with her cumulative acts of kindness and varied and abundant services to St Andrew's over many years have made a deep impact on our lives in the Church.

Although she was quiet and unassuming, June's deep Faith shone like her brasses. She will be sorely missed.

Joan Wild, Jean Wildman and Audrey Robinson



Too much Martha and not enough Mary

I am sure I am not the only person prone to self-examination at this time ... I have heard several radio programmes probing character traits to provide insight on survival techniques in these difficult times.

I am not good at quiet reflection ... my excuse is that my Christian faith should be reflected in actions. It must be my genes I tell myself... I am just so like my mum. I have vivid recollections of my Dad, an Anglican vicar, sitting in his study just sitting and thinking while my mum would be busy decorating the hall or mending the radio or simply feeding the 10 or more clergy that often turned up for meals.

So when my mum died recently in the middle of lock-down, after a long illness, was my response to sit and meditate on her life... Sadly, no, I threw myself into planning Sunday School for the next day glad to have an excuse to work...

There are several downsides to this Martha..esque approach to life . For one I spent the first few weeks of lock-down agonising about whether I could or should do anything more than my usual one day working in the NHS. I was frustrated with my the seemingly selfish approach which meant focusing on home life with the boys (both with special education needs) just to get them through 'Schollage'. All waking hours at the moment seem to be completely devoted to just 'keeping them focused'... To assuage my guilt I was glad of the extended cycle to Good Hope and happy to do some extra evenings and weekend work talking to people on the telephone.

Another concern is that I am sure that I annoy lots of people with my constant need to do something ... both at home and in our various virtual communities. Maybe that's why Andrew escapes to the garden and the boys to watch television so often

So are there any 'upsides' ... Well we have actually done some amazingly uplifting and fruitful things... We camped in our garden to raise money for Sifa Fireside a homeless charity . We had a brilliant experience and I almost convinced Aaron that 'the dark' is not such a scary place..



Was such practical Christian endeavour rewarded with an overwhelming sense of peace and calm ... I am afraid not as shortly after my mum died my Dad caught an infection and became rapidly very confused. My younger sister raced over from Bakewell to Sheffield and soon realised that she would need to carry on being the 'carer' in a second home. At a distance she sounded exhausted and my poor Dad couldn't even manage to take an interest in one of his favourite hymns. My boys sensing my anxiety in 'Schollage' that week were angry and distracted. There were tears and shouting and when I did try praying I just ended up feeling guilty....

Fortunately, salvation came when it was announced that the lock-down rules were changing and we were able to stay out all day. I had really wanted to support Christian Aid this year but couldn't think of anything to do. One of Thomas's Humanities tasks had been to visit 'Places of Worship' during a lock-down walk. So having a whole day ahead meant we could plan to cycle around Handsworth...The Saturday arrived and the weather was lovely... Thomas even managed to get up early so we set off at 9 am. Toilets were my biggest concern so we included return trips so I could visit the loo and Aaron could take part in his online dance.

The day really was so enlightening. We found small churches that I did not even know existed in Handsworth and had some lovely conversations outside the various temples we visited. One of Aaron's (Muslim) friends from school stopped us and took a picture of the link so he could donate...It was such a good day that I hope we can do it again with more people next year ... Hopefully raising more money..... If you would like to contribute.. <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/marybairstowandboys> And in all this I have reached a sort of acceptance ... I don't think I will change but then never will the steadfast love of God !

MARY BAIRSTOW

Christian Aid

As Christian Aid could not be followed as usual this year some people have chosen alternative activities to raise money. Aaron Bairstow has written the following article.

I want to tell you about our Christian Aid cycle to different places of worship. We went to over 30 different places of worship. It was difficult, but we managed it in the end. We have raised £375 pounds on our just giving link, but we are hoping to raise more. Thank you if you have helped us. You can still sponsor us at the following link <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MaryBairstowandBoys>

Aaron Bairstow



Church Mission Society's concern for Africa

In Africa, the lockdown is almost a disaster in itself, especially for people who live day to day. The fear is that it will explode in countries with few healthcare resources." So says Stephen Burgess, CMS regional manager for Africa.

"And this is alongside situations with refugees/displaced people, a locust invasion, drought in one part, floods in another, Ebola resurfacing in DR Congo, just adds to the crisis for the most vulnerable."

CMS's network partner in the region, CMS-Africa, is reporting that Christians are "in the frontline in prayer and offering practical help" in the crisis.

This includes pastors in Kenya raising cash for food and issuing shopping vouchers for desperate people. One local partner has been supporting 50 families who normally harvest flowers in Limuru. Meanwhile, in DR Congo, Christians known to CMS are helping 400 destitute families with food, clothing, mattresses, soap and water. More at: <https://churchmissionsociety.org>

c/o Parish Pump

Mothers' Union offers range of resources

The Mothers' Union has made a very practical response to the coronavirus.

As their website explains, "We know that our work and experience in re-building communities and supporting family life is going to be more important than ever once the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Our members will be some of the first in line to support those around them."

In the meantime, MU has drawn together a range of resources to "help nurture our members and their friends and neighbours through this challenging time." The resources will "help combat feelings of loneliness, to nourish faith and to help you continue to feel connected to your friends and community."

These include: rainbows, prayer cards, prayer resources, puzzles resources, and Bible study resources. More info at: <https://www.mothersunion.org>

c/o Parish Pump

A prophet for our time of testing - Isaiah

The Scriptures stress the importance of desert experiences as essential preparation for times of spiritual renewal. The desert is the place of weariness, dryness and weakness which we all go through at times. The 35th chapter of Isaiah helps us to understand such experiences, and reminds us of God's purpose in uncertain times.

A Desert Place

In a desert season we are forced to see things as they really are. It could be a time of physical illness or depression; stress or anxiety; questioning or change. It is always a season of deep refining through repentance. The desert offers us no places to hide; rather we are confronted with our sins, hurts and weaknesses. We are called to repent of our desire for control and acknowledge our total dependence on God.

A Desert Renewal

God promises to lead His people out of spiritual, emotional and physical weariness into a place of personal renewal. There will be water in the desert and crocuses bursting into bloom. These are signs of what God wants to do in His people; to enable them to be strong and trust in the new things He is doing in their lives.

A Desert Road

In the desert we cannot escape from the reality of God's judgment and holiness. The road back to God is described as a *Way of Holiness*, for it demands both repentance and a holy lifestyle. However, there is also the promise of laughter, joy and gladness as God's people return to Zion, the home of God's presence and love.

c/o Parish Pump

Looking for Hope Amongst the Clutter

In this strange lock down season, because of the coronavirus pandemic, I've noticed a change in the type of pictures posted on social media. In place of the look-here-at-me selfies are snapshots of buds opening to display the colours of spring.

Such hopeful images counterbalance gloomy statistics in the news media. There are also more memory pictures – this is what I was doing on this day years ago with people I love – I wish we could be together now. While we're not allowed to make the kind of memories depicted in those pictures, we find comfort in memories we already have.

One thing I've done with this unexpected free time is to organize printed photographs into albums. The photos and the albums have been there for a while, waiting for me to get a round tuit. You remember the old joke? Imagine people finding their round tuits in cupboards and drawers all over the country. How would you use yours? To sow seeds that had not been planted? To read the book gathering dust on a shelf?

What else needs tackling? Now may be an ideal time to face the daunting corner where clutter lurks. Daunting because of what you may disturb among age-old piles of unsorted belongings. Looking squarely at the past may be an unwelcome prospect. It makes us face uncomfortable questions. Projects we may never finish, equipment we cannot use any more, objects of attachment from people we've lost. Isn't that like what we're doing as a nation in these unprecedented times? Issues we have been avoiding are suddenly highlighted through unfamiliar circumstances.

There is much talk about how we're looking forward to getting back to normal on the other side of this international crisis. Some people say they hope things will have changed, that normal will not look the same as it used to, because we have learned valuable lessons about what really matters in life. It's up to us whether or not we rise to the challenge, to reorganize society more fairly, to care more for the environment.

By myself I cannot change the world, but I'm determined to look after the little space that is in my care, not to let it be overwhelmed with needless clutter. Be brave. Use this negative time to make a positive change in your small corner. If you choose to sort it out, I guarantee that amidst all the mess you will find at least one thing, however small, to bring you joy – even if it's just a clean and tidy corner.

c/o Parish Pump

BIBLE QUIZ - taken from freepubquiz.co.uk Answers at the back of the magazine.

1. What is the last word in the Old Testament?
2. By which previous name was Paul of Tarsus known as?
3. Whose wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back?
4. In the bible, who is said to have lived on a diet of locusts and wild honey?
5. How many years did Noah live for after the flood?
6. There are only three angels named in the bible, Michael and Lucifer are two, name the other?
7. The book of Esther is unique because it does not mention which word?
8. The Bible was written in three languages - Hebrew, Koine Greek and which other language?
9. Who made the first translation of the Bible into English in 1382?
10. Name the longest book of the Bible with 150 chapters?
11. In what city was Jesus born?
12. Who took the place of Judas in the twelve disciples?
13. Who was the older brother of Moses?
14. What kind of wood was Noah's ark built from?
15. Who, following Moses' death, became the leader of the children of Israel?

WORDSEARCH JUNE 2020

Coronavirus has turned our world upside down. But God is still there, and we can call on Him, as Psalm 91 (vs 1-6) reminds us...

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

³ Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Wordsearch Clues

Dwells shelter most high shadow almighty Refuge fortress trust
save snare deadly Pestilence cover feathers wings faithfulness
shield rampart fear terror night arrow plague destroys



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

We have sadly lost friends from St Andrew's. Tributes have been included in this month's edition of the magazine. There have been many lives lost in general, over the past few months, and St Andrew's Church will continue to pray for those who have died, those who have lost loved ones, and those recovering from covid-19 and other illnesses. Prayers are also with those who continue to support and care for those who are ill. This month I have included a Bible Quiz. Feedback is always welcomed as well as new ideas. Please continue to send articles to the magazine via parishmagazine949@gmail.com.

Thank you. Eileen Lawrence

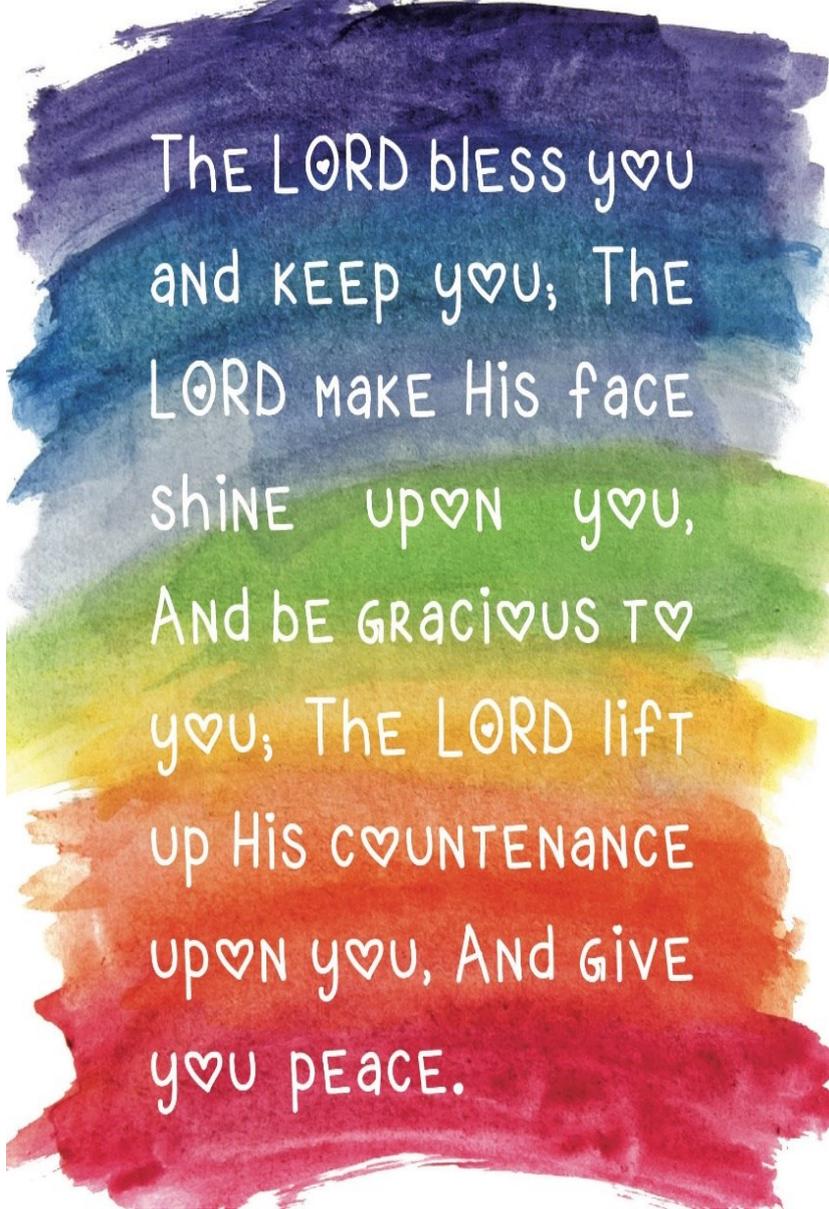
**A prayer following the death
of George Floyd**

God of justice and mercy,
you made us in your image
and know each one of us by name:
give comfort to those who in George Floyd have lost a loved one,
and from this tragedy renew our determination
to work for a world where all human life is honoured equally.
Where we would oppress, bring us to repentance;
where we would stir up hatred, move us to love;
where we know injustice, move us to act;
and where we live in fear, bring us to freedom;
that by your grace going before us
we may be formed into the people you would have us be
in a world where all may flourish.
In Jesus' Name we pray.
Amen.

 **BIRMINGHAM
CATHEDRAL**
The Cathedral Church of Saint Philip

Answers to Bible Quiz. 1.Curse 2.Saul 3.Lot's 4.John the Baptist 5.350 years 6.Gabriel 7. The word 'God 8.Aramaic 9.John Wycliffe 10.Psalms 11.Bethlehem 12.Matthias 13.Aaron 14. Gopher Wood 15.Joshua

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM



THE LORD bless you
and KEEP you; THE
LORD MAKE HIS face
SHINE UPON you,
AND BE GRACIOUS TO
you; THE LORD lift
up HIS COUNTENANCE
UPON you, AND GIVE
you PEACE.

NUMBERS 6. 24 - 26 (NKJV)