

A candle in...

THE

WINDOW

News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames



Despite our social distancing, we are trying to be the church.



The Editors

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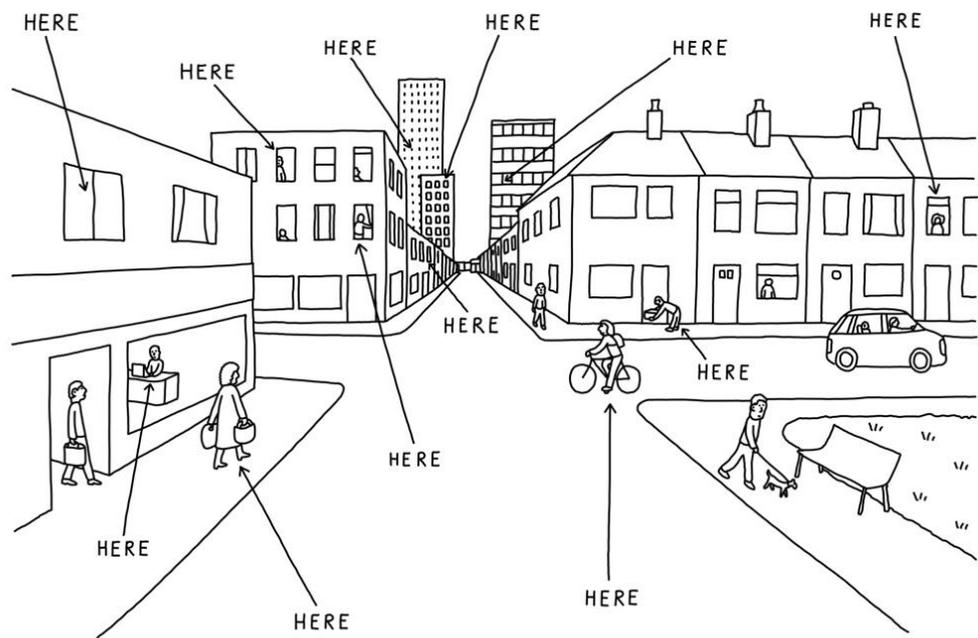


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WHERE THE CHURCH IS



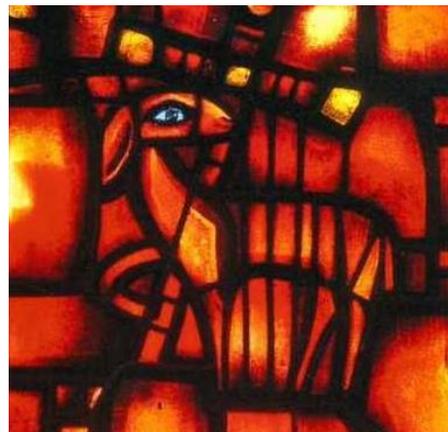
Easter 2020

by Paul Smith

He too was isolated and alone in His Holy Week:
in the garden, waiting
on the cross, dying,
in the tomb, sleeping.
Until the great surprise of Easter when resurrection light burst in,
penetrating, shattering the stone,
releasing Him, unbinding Him, setting Him free!
His pain has gained our freedom too, and set *us* free
through the power of the cross:
(the tree of life, supposedly of grief and loss).
So, we are united with Him *and* with each other,
even though apart, because nothing can separate us from His love:
'love as strong as death'.
In this strong love we will meet again:
joining voices, joining hands, in one holy embrace,
our isolation, our aloneness,
just like His, gloriously freed.
And we will celebrate: His wounds, His death, His rising,
like never before!
For in Him, the Risen One, we will, we *must* live differently:
More hopefully,
More gratefully,
More joyfully,
Released from our captivity.

I wrote this poem on the eve of Palm Sunday 2020 having reached the point where the effects of isolation and aloneness as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic suddenly became acutely difficult in so many ways. As Holy Week begins I offer it to you all who feel the pain, confusion, and fear of this time.

This Holy Week and Easter will be like no other we have known: out of our churches, away from each other, our friends and family And yet, we know that in the end, all will be well. This is because the Passion and Death of Jesus on the cross leads only to resurrection, new life, and Easter Joy. The poem is simply called Easter 2020.



The Easter Window at Taizé
Vitrail de Paques
Église de la Réconciliation

Pastoral Care

Revd Canon Charles Mashedor

‘The churches are closed but the Church is open!’ What a wonderful saying. How often we have had to try and explain that there is a difference between the Church and the buildings where the Church meets and are also called churches. Of course we will all be missing the wonderful chance week by week to meet together for worship and spend time together.

I can only speak with clarity for St Helen’s. As it became apparent that we would be having to close the church, we realised the need to keep in touch with as many people as possible especially those who live alone, and were either of a ‘certain age’ or had underlying health issues. In the two weeks earlier we had requested people to tell us if they would like to be contacted regularly by a friendly voice; the offer is still on the website.

There was a meeting of some members of the Pastoral Team and we went through lists and divided up those who were willing to be the contact person with those with whom we would keep in touch. There were offers of willingness also to undertake some shopping, which I know have been very helpful.

The list has grown a little. I am very grateful to all who have been willing to help. I know too that, myself included, some of us have also phoned or emailed people not on our own ‘list’.

Thanks to other group emails I have picked up on certain members of our Church who were ill and have given a pastoral call. I have worked on the assumption that calls from a few people are better than none. As far as I am concerned, Felicity and I have been praying daily for various people. I would thank the people, whom I have phoned, for their ‘welcome’.

I know that similar things have been happening in our other two Churches, St Michael’s and St Nic’s. As you will know the clergy have also been recording ‘services’ so we can keep in touch with you all. This time will pass and we shall meet again!

A hymn for such times as these:

:

In our homes, we meet to worship,
far away from sacred space.
By the Spirit, Christ is with us,
making this a holy place.
In these days of social distance,
we are called to meet apart.
Still we pray for one another,
hold each other in our heart.

If this time indeed is holy,
we must keep it truly so.
Even in our isolation,
God’s rich blessings overflow.
We avoid the world’s distractions,
set our minds on things above:
Patience, kindness, goodness, mercy,
faith, joy, peace, abiding love.

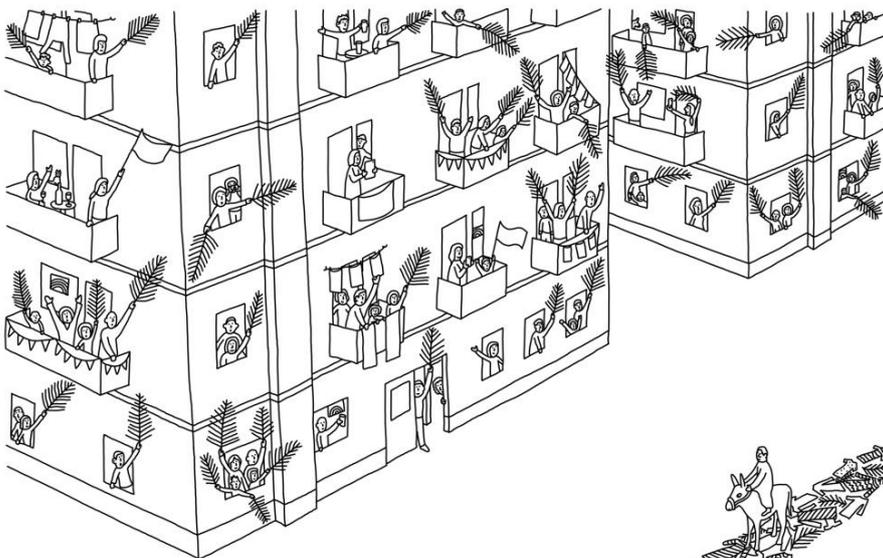
*Words by R G Huff 2020.
Suggested tune Hyfrydol.
(Alleluia Sing to Jesus)*

Contributed by Eluned Hallas

Palm Sunday



The Bishop with the only Donkey he could find on Palm Sunday!



CartoonChurch.com

THE DONKEY G.K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

*Poem suggested by Susan Gee
Cartoon by Dave Walker of CartoonChurch.com
Pictures from David Bevington, Sue Pemberton,
Linda Hobbs, Rob and Rosalind Rutherford,
Judith and Michael Hosking*

The Mother's Union

The members of the Mother's Union are keeping in contact by phone with some of those who would otherwise be isolated.

Within the branch we have a long established prayer partner scheme, and we encourage everyone to keep in touch with their prayer partner. MU is putting out lots of helpful support material which is being relayed to the membership. The diocesan president, Maureen Weston, who is a member of Abingdon MU and worships at Christ Church, asks for prayer support for herself and the diocesan trustees and all at Mary Sumner House, who are continuing with MU business, but are feeling stressed and challenged by the workload and coping with new technology.

A personal Perspective:

Susan Scott

Was it only 30 days ago that David and I returned from 3 nights in Dorset to the realisation that the government was really ramping up preparations for the country to deal with the coronavirus emergency? From the small decisions on, for example not serving coffee after the Sunday service, to suddenly the Archbishops ordering the closure of church buildings and the cessation of all public worship including baptisms and weddings. All this in about 5 days. Both of us, being over 70, were among the first people to be advised by the authorities to self-isolate so we are in our 4th week now. Our son has taken over the shopping, and having always kept a good store cupboard there was no need to stock up with provisions as we witnessed some of the apparent panic buying. Tricky wasn't it? If people think they are about to have to isolate for up to 14 days, wasn't it prudent to make sure they could feed their families during this time however unedifying some of the scenes shown on television were? Thanks must go to the supermarkets and their staff for restoring some order to proceedings and keeping the shelves supplied with the necessities of life.

How fortunate David and I are to have each other and how different it must be for folk living on their own. During the first week of our lock down I started telephoning or emailing folk in my address book I knew were over 70 and already being advised to stay at home. From this small initiative has grown my informal "Corona Network" with nearly 70 members of St Helen's being circulated with a range of information and news, and giving them the chance to keep in touch with each other. The Pastoral Care team led by Charles (Mashed) has been doing a sterling job on regularly telephoning those not on the internet. I don't think we have ever contacted or spoken to so many folk and I believe we will emerge from this experience with enhanced relationships.

While we are facing this frightening situation which has affected so many including, at the moment, the Prime Minister, some of our number are also facing ongoing health problems which have needed hospitalisation, life-saving treatments, bereavements and the inability to help family members who have fallen ill. Our clergy and the church at large, have tried to maintain a sense of normality and stability in our spiritual lives by ensuring opportunities for worship using the wonder of modern technology. Radio has also played its part by broadcasting services which has been especially welcomed by those who do not have access to modern IT. This period of time offers us all a chance to reflect on the changes to our corporate life, both in society and as members of the church. Has being a Christian made a difference to how we have coped? How relevant are our beliefs and practices at times such as these? There is no doubt that many people have acted in a really "Christian" way without being signed up to a particular denomination or indeed faith. I personally believe and hope that out of tragedy will come some positive changes from which we will all benefit.

Being Junior Church

Sue Pemberton on behalf of the Junior Church team at St Helens

When the news came through that services could no longer be held in Church, the Junior Church leaders immediately started thinking about how we could keep in touch with our families. It became clear that families were under pressure coping with working at home and home schooling/child care. It was felt that live interactive sessions using technology such as Zoom would only add to the pressure and families would rather have resources to use in their own time. We therefore decided to set up a private group on Facebook where leaders could post material, families could post pictures and descriptions of what they had done, and everyone could keep in touch.

We were all set up and ready to go on the first Sunday of lockdown – Mothering Sunday. Rachel posted material explaining the concept of having a Mother Church and the children produced female family trees of relatives with their Mother Church. We also publicised the rainbow initiative and some lovely rainbow pictures appeared on Facebook. On the following Sunday Mel gave options of looking at the story of Lazarus which reminds us that Jesus is with us however hard the situation or celebrating God’s creation of Spring. The children also started making Easter gardens in their windows. On Palm Sunday Sue posted the Palm Sunday story and invited the children to make palm leaves and have their own Palm Sunday parade at home. The picture from Eliza shows the Jarvis family Palm Sunday parade. The Brown family also provide a video of one of our favourite songs each week, clearly a family of polished performers! We are currently finalising material for Maundy Thursday – Easter Sunday.

We have a subscription to ROOTS for our resources and we are very grateful that they are allowing subscribers to circulate and make use of their materials in any way they wish provided copyright is acknowledged. ROOTS is also making a selection of material available free to anyone from their website <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/> You may wish to share this with family and friends. Trinity Learning normally organises the ‘Experience Easter’ event for schools at Trinity Church. This year they have produced an adapted script “Experience Easter at Home” which is freely available to everyone at <https://trinitylearningabingdon.wordpress.com/2020/03/24/experience-easter-at-home/> We have publicised this to families via the Facebook site.

Just as St Helen’s as a whole is striving to ‘be church’ when we are physically separated, so Junior Church is working to support families and remain connected. Most leaders are juggling working from home and home schooling/childcare so thanks are due for finding time to do this additional task. It’s also great that parents are engaging and helping their children to continue being Junior Church.



A Palm Sunday procession in a Junior Church household!

Silent Reflections at St Michael and all Angels

Silent Reflections, the monthly gathering in St Michael's Church for silent prayer, including the opportunity of walking the labyrinth, cannot continue in the church at this time. However, that does not prevent any of us, whether or not we come to St Michael's to share in the silence, from taking time in our homes and gardens to be silent with God. Each month there is a topic to help our reflection, and printed materials to reflect on in the silence or later, at home.

This month, the reflection topic was the Stations of the Cross, using the sonnet sequence by Malcolm Guite. A leaflet with Malcolm Guite's sonnets attached to photographs of St Michael's Stations of the Cross is available from St Michael's website:

https://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/stations_of_the_cross_2020.pdf

If you would like the resources for the following months emailed to you, please contact Sue Sheppy at susan.sheppy@btinternet.com

Update from Faith Forum

Those of you at the last Faith Forum will remember that we heard about the Dorothy Springer Trust. Peter Penfold has been in constant touch with friends and others in Sierra Leone and writes.... As you know, so far Africa seems to have been spared the worst of the corona virus, though there are now worrying signs coming out of South Africa.

Sierra Leone has had 2 cases so far and one death in neighbouring Burkino Faso. The SL government has declared a 72 hour lock down though how they will implement this, especially in rural areas I have no idea. Having gone through the ebola crisis, one imagines that the population will have a better appreciation of the risks involved and the precautions to take, but as ebola showed, the health facilities in the country are woefully inadequate. For example there are only 2 ventilators in the whole of the country. (That puts the UK's so called scarcity into context!) Last time 10% of the entire doctor force died from ebola and countless nurses and midwives.

As regards our charity, the Dorothy Springer Trust, Abs Dumbuya, the CEO with whom I am in constant touch, has with the agreement of Rob Lea, DST's Chairman who visited us recently, agreed to postpone training for now. There will be certain ongoing running costs for the office and staff which hopefully we can keep going.

As with ebola, it is PWDs (people with disabilities) who will face extra problems with the corona virus. If you use crutches, as Abs does, you don't just have to wash your hands but constantly wash the handles of the crutches. For the blind who have to rely on touch with friends and strangers, are at high risk. And so on. Abs is presently compiling a handout for PWDs in the country on the risks and precautions for COVID 19. I have offered to help him.

Coffee after Church!

Can you really have coffee after church without coffee and without biscuits??

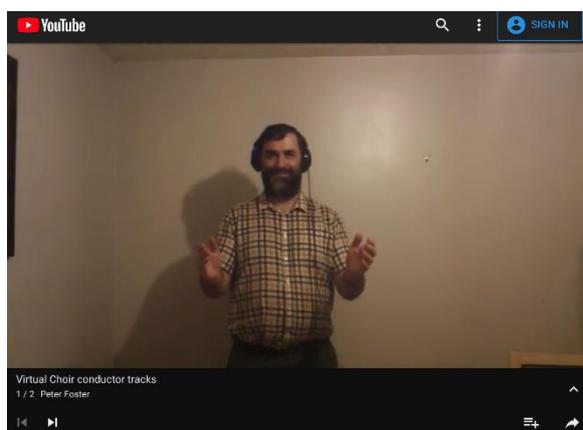
It turns out you can! Well you can if you bring your own and are prepared to Zoom! It was lovely to see faces and to share concerns and things to be thankful for. If you would like to join in, email Rosalind at rosalind.rutherford81@gmail.com and she will send you instructions.



A Virtual Choir

Dr Peter Foster, Director of Music at St Helen's Church

Holy week is usually a busy one for church musicians, but for some reason, with the church under lockdown and all our worship taking place at a distance using online resources, it seems even busier this year. Perhaps this is because, in a normal year, we follow well-established habits, so there are patterns for what needs to be done. Working out what to do as we go along requires a lot more effort! Like everyone else, back on March 15th (which now seems several months ago) the choir was starting to think seriously about what precautions we needed to take in order to reduce the risks of contracting or passing on infection - did we need to change our usual seating arrangements? Did we need hand sanitiser in the choir vestry? Should some of the more vulnerable choir members have a few weeks off? The Archbishops' announcement of the suspension of public worship radically and abruptly changed this conversation: the important questions are now, how can we continue to use music as a vehicle for the St. Helen's choir and congregation to express our worship, and how can the choir keep in contact and maintain our relationships with each other. Like everything else under lockdown, the answers to both questions seem to be (a) we're working it out as we go along, and (b) through the internet. There is now a choir blog page, which contains a small selection of music for each Sunday or feast day - usually a hymn and an organ piece (you can find it via the church website). In the early part of lockdown I was still able to get into church and record music on the organ. The diocese's rules on access have now been made stricter, and I am about to run out of pre-recorded material, so as lockdown progresses you will start to hear other sound sources accompanying the hymns on the blog. The choir has followed the national trend and has collectively discovered Zoom: what started out as a tool for business meetings has expanded into education, music, online fitness classes and virtual parties. We have so far had two Zoom rehearsals. Singing over the internet is challenging. Choir members are used to being rebuked by their conductor for imperfect ensemble, but when everyone's internet connection brings a different amount of delay into the process, even he was rendered temporarily speechless. However, we have made our first foray into the realm of the 'virtual choir', as pioneered by Eric Whitacre and others. This has involved a technological learning curve for all of us: choir members each record themselves singing their own part, then send in the recordings to be edited together. Hopefully the results will help us celebrate the great message of Easter in suitable manner. Coming soon to a webpage near you!



Rob Rutherford adds: present circumstances are forcing us all to be creative in various ways. By the time you read this we will know if this initiative has been successful (it is very challenging!!) but here is Peter Foster conducting the backing track for the virtual choir to sing from!

Bishop Henry's Celebration

Bishop Henry Scriven

I was asked to celebrate at the 11.15 service of Holy Communion on 8th March at St Nicolas' Church. And it just so happened that it was exactly the 25th anniversary of my consecration as a bishop. So Catherine, my wife, got to work and invited our neighbours and friends; then she thought she would try and get the Bishop in Europe who invited me to be his Suffragan and the Archbishop of Canterbury who presided at the consecration. John Hind was later Bishop of Chichester; he and Janet retired to Emsworth and one of their sons lives in Kennington. They were able to come and so was the former Archbishop, George Carey, and his wife, Eileen, who live near Newbury.

It was a normal 11.15 St Nic's service, but afterwards, even though it was Lent, we had a bit of a party. Both guest bishops spoke and George Carey recalled the day when he interviewed Catherine for a place at St John's College, Nottingham. He was later her tutor and preached at our wedding in 1975. We are so grateful to the church and many friends who made it such a joyous occasion. Apparently it is not often that St Nic's has three bishops in church, one a former Archbishop of Canterbury. In retrospect, of course, we got it in just in time before lockdown!



At Sixes and Sevens

Rod Hunt

As we are all at sixes and seven during the pandemic here is a quiz where each clue involves the number 6 (or sixes, sixth) and number 7 (or sevens, seventh). E.G 7 E convenience stores in US & Canada - 7-Eleven. In two clues Lines from songs appear in quotation marks. Words like a, the, for, to, and, of, on etc are in lower case.

6 o t B	bend over for it	.....
7 U	thirst quenching	.....
7 D o t W	a long time in politics	.....
K f 6	struck or hit forcibly	.....
7 B f 7 B	marital, fraternal 1954 musical	.....
6 D W	5th – 10th June 1967	.....
S W a t 7 D	maiden with vertically challenged friends	.....
7 A o M	life expressed ‘in a nutshell’	.....
H 6 P l	by Shakespeare	.....
‘7 f t 7 T W t H’	from a campfire song - oh	.....
t 7 W o t A W	no tourists in those days	.....
6 S	extrasensory	.....
7 H	euphoric state – complete happiness	.....
6 M B	village in Cambs	.....
7 H o R	Aventine is one	.....
6 o O H a D o t O	blame shared equally	.....
7-L B	footwear for giant steps	.....
t I o t 6 H	film starring Ingrid Bergman	.....
7 D S	guard against them	.....
7 H V	strive to achieve them	.....
6-P	cans, usually!	.....
7 Y I	symptom of jaded wedlock	.....
6 C	comprising Ulster	.....
D o t 7 V	fatal striptease	.....
7 L A a S	medieval classical education curriculum	.....
6 N C	rugby tournament	.....
H K 7	another rugby tournament	.....
‘6 G a-L’	fecund birds as a Christmas gift?	.....
7 S o R	early hit from Queen	.....
t 7 S	sail ‘em	.....
7 P o W	Lengthy tome by T .E. L	.....
A 7	small 1940s 7hp saloon	.....
‘6 G B H o t W’	from a camp-fire song	.....

7 A o M	sheltering a stranger is one	.....
T M 7	film (Mexican village defended from bandits)	.....
7 G C	Revelations Ch 1 v 12 (King James version)	.....
6 F C	educational establishment	.....
D A	strict religious sect	.....
F 6	strong breeze	.....
G 6	from 1936 – 1952	.....
7 S	Pleiades	.....
6 F U	A grave situation!	.....
7 D	Area linking Covent Garden with Soho	.....
t 6 W of H E	Two lost their heads	.....
7 C S	classic poker game	.....
7 M B	Long stretch of coral sand in Grand Cayman	.....
6 L	Methuselah and also Imperial (by volume)	.....

See the next edition for the answers!



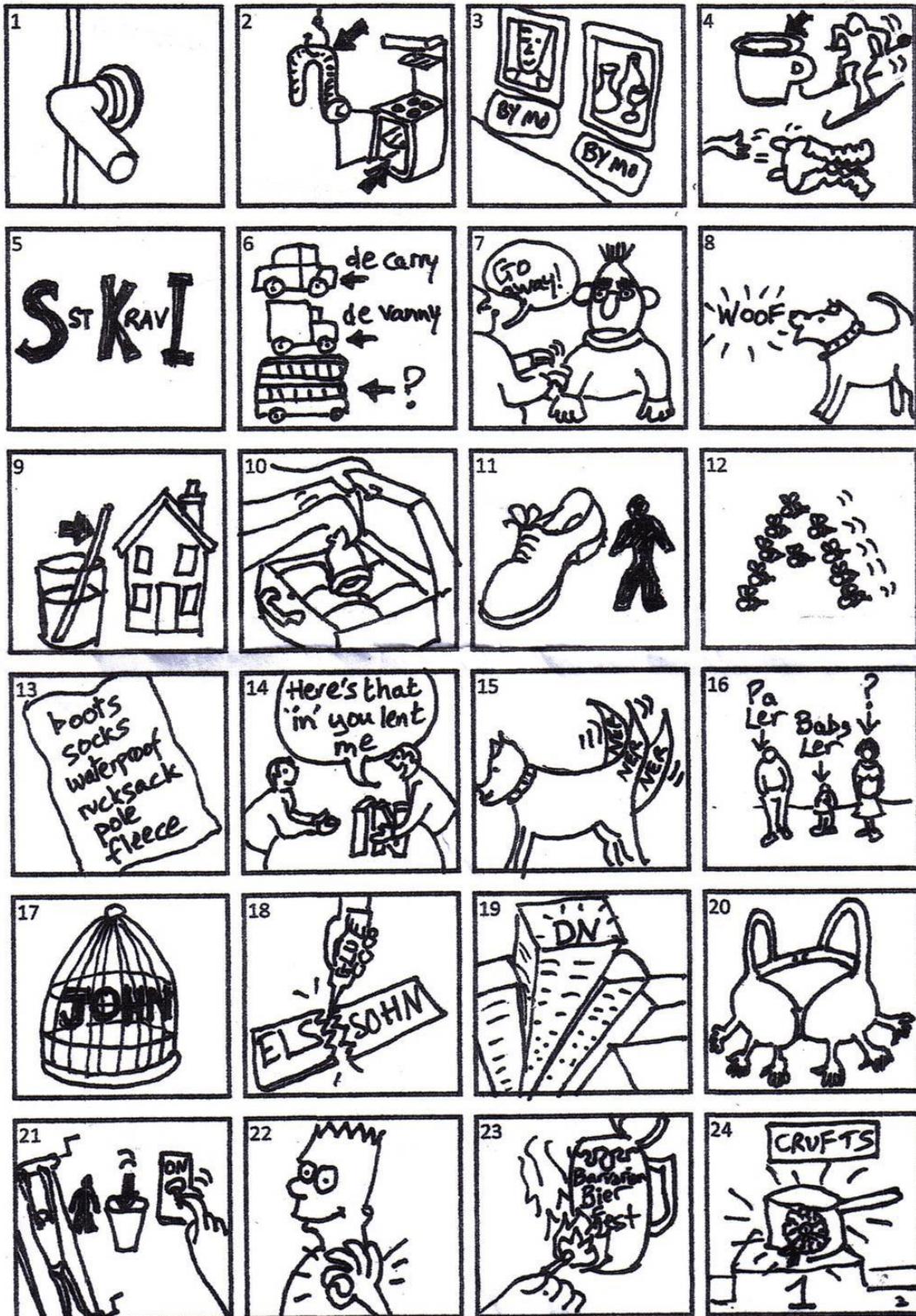
Here, because there is space, is an Easter Egg to print off and colour in!

Toddlers!

St Helen's Baby and Toddler Group is using its facebook page to keep in touch with families, mainly by posting a craft every Monday (in term time) as inspiration for parents at home with children.

Find it through facebook or click <https://m.facebook.com/StHelensToddlers/>

Spot the Composer



This arrived via Rob's brother who was sent it by someone in his choir who got it from the ramblers... So thanks to whoever devised it! Answers on the back page.

A Paschal Candle for 2020

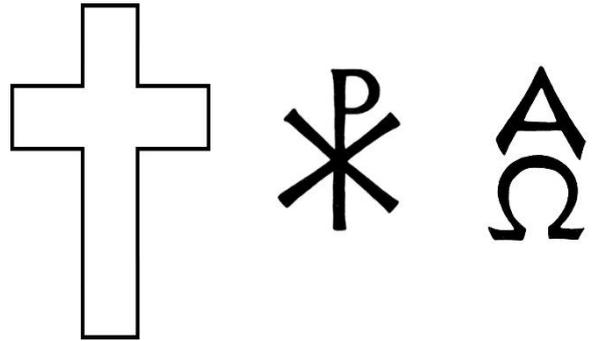
Rosalind Rutherford

The paschal candle is the central symbol of Easter and our resurrection hope. A new one is lit as part of our keeping of Easter. In Abingdon the traditions differ a bit from church to church. At St Helen's and St Michael's it is normally first lit on Holy Saturday in the evening whereas at St Nicolas the congregation celebrate the 'Service of Light' on Easter Sunday. In fact at the Easter Eve Service at St Michael's, two Paschal Candles are blessed - the other being for Trinity Methodist / URC.

Lighting the Paschal Candle is a sign of our faith in the hope and resurrection light of Christ.

As we celebrate Easter this year in our own homes, we might want to make our own paschal candle, just as we made our own Palm Sunday cross. We can be as creative as we like, but if we want to use the traditional symbolism of a paschal candle, our candle should include these symbols:

A cross or a Chi Ro Symbol. (This symbol has been used by Christians even longer than the cross and is the first two letters of the word "Christ" in Greek)



The Greek letters Alpha and Omega. They are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and symbolise that Christ is from the beginning to the end of everything

The year – this year it is **2020**

If you search for pictures of paschal candles on line, you may get more ideas, or you may think of other Easter symbols to include.

How to decorate a paschal candle

First you need to find a candle. Paschal candles in church are a natural colour so white or cream is best, but not essential. If you can find a long candle, this will be better, but if all you have is a pillar candle or even a nightlight, then use what you can find.

The easiest way to decorate your candle is to use Sharpies. You can just draw the design straight onto your candle.

If you want to try a more detailed or complicated design, then you can find lots of ideas on the Internet.

A candle decorated using Sharpies



If you only have a night light, you could decorate it by decorating a label or white paper and sticking it on the metal container

Useful Weblinks:

To take part in the Diocesan services led by the Bishops and to find live streams from other churches:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

Parish Resources: for worship and for reading

http://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P_resources.html

The Abingdon Blog with its thought for the day starting, experimentally, next week:

<https://www.abingdonblog.co.uk/>

You might already have had notification of this, but if not, do spread the word - we want this to be as widely shared as possible, and for lots and lots of choirs and individuals to join us to sing Evensong on Easter Day. All the materials are available to download to prepare and participate. You can, of course, join just as 'congregation' for the YouTube live stream. We've had lots of signups already!

<https://www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/the-big-easter-evensong/>

Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings after Easter etc

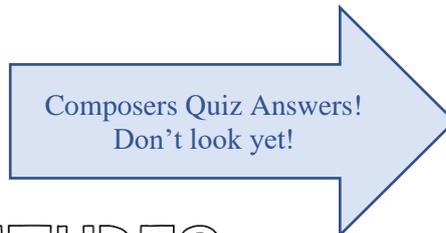
<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

Remember the foodbank! You can drop off food at Christ Church (Northcourt Road) on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm. Their immediate need is tinned meat, vegetables, long-life milk, fruit squash or juice, jam and sugar.

Alternatively you can donate money here:

<https://cca.churchsuite.co.uk/donate> Choose 'Foodbank' from the first drop-down menu.

And finally, a poignant word from Dave Walker and Jayne Manfredi, not of this parish:



- Handel 1.
- Beethoven 2.
- Mozart 3.
- Rimsky Korsakov 4.
- Stravinsky 5.
- Debussy 6.
- Schubert 7.
- Bach 8.
- Strauss 9.
- Pachelbel 10.
- Schumann 11.
- Bizet 12.
- Liszt 13.
- Borodin 14.
- Wagner 15.
- Mahler 16.
- John Cage 17.
- Mendelssohn 18.
- Haydn 19.
- Brahms 20.
- Rachmaninov 21.
- Bartok 22.
- Bernstein 23.
- Chopin 24.

BEATITUDES

FOR A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAY INDOORS

FOR THEY HAVE PROTECTED OTHERS

BLESSED ARE THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED

FOR THEIR NEED OF GOD IS GREAT

BLESSED ARE THE CORNER SHOPKEEPERS

FOR THEY ARE THE PURVEYORS OF SCARCE THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE DELIVERY DRIVERS AND THE POSTAL WORKERS

FOR THEY ARE THE BRINGERS OF ESSENTIAL THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE HOSPITAL WORKERS; THE AMBULANCE CREWS, THE DOCTORS, THE NURSES, THE CARE ASSISTANTS, AND THE CLEANERS

FOR THEY STAND BETWEEN US AND THE GRAVE, AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS SURELY THEIRS

BLESSED ARE THE CHECKOUT WORKERS

FOR THEY HAVE PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE IN THE FACE OF OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION

BLESSED ARE THE REFUSE COLLECTORS

FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD DESPITE THE MOUNTAINS OF WASTE

BLESSED ARE THE TEACHERS

FOR THEY REMAIN STEADFAST AND CONSTANT IN DISTURBING TIMES

BLESSED ARE THE CHURCH WORKERS; THE DEACONS, PRIESTS AND BISHOPS

FOR THEY ARE A COMFORTING PRESENCE IN A HURTING WORLD AS THEY CONTINUE TO SIGNPOST TOWARDS GOD

BLESSED ARE THE SINGLE PARENTS,

FOR THEY ARE COPING ALONE WITH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND THERE IS NO RESPITE

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALONE.

FOR THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD AND WITH HIM THEY WILL NEVER BE LONELY

BLESSED ARE THE BEREAVED.

FOR WHOM THE WORST HAS ALREADY HAPPENED, THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ISOLATED WITH THEIR ABUSERS

FOR ONE DAY - WE PRAY - THEY WILL KNOW SAFETY

BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS; ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY

MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN