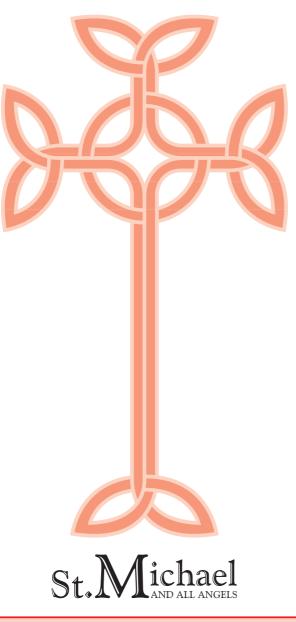
THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE PARISH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



SEPTEMBER 2020

60p

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

MINISTRY TEAM

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Curate

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We enjoy and benefit from the ministry of a number of retired clergy at St Michael's.

Readers

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Angela Slater (Secretary) Tel: (0191) 584 2036

Mr. Alastair Bradley (Treasurer) Tel: (0191) 584 1455

Organist & Director of Music

Mr. George Peebles Tel: (0191) 584 1628

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Mr. David Turnbull Tel: (0191) 584 1954

Safeguarding

Mr. Kevin Bond (Safeguarding Officer) Tel: 07931 937171

Mrs. Kathleen Close (DBS Officer) Tel: (0191) 584 0353

Space4

76 Newbottle Street Next to Houghton Library Twitter @space4 Facebook houghtonspace4 Tel: (0191) 512 0676

Church Website

Our website contains information on most aspects of church life. www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk

The Friends of Houghton Parish Church Trust

Contact: Mr. George Peebles, Membership Secretary on (0191) 584 1628 for information and application forms.

Toddler Group Contact: Sheila Partridge Tel: (0191) 584 7308

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and RangersContact:Sheila Wynne, Tel: (0191) 512 1331Beavers, Cubs and ScoutsContact:Steve Gibson, Tel: 07507 161366Website:www.1sthoughtonscouts.org.uk

REGULAR SERVICES

Our pattern of Service for the coming weeks:

Sunday	10 am	Service of Holy Communion (streamed live) from St Michael's
Sunday	11am	Service of the Word via Zoom & Dial-in with Young Church
Sunday	9pm	Reflection via Facebook
Tuesday	7pm	Service of the Word with Reflection via Facebook
Thursday	10am	Service of the Word via Zoom & Dail-in

We have limited seating capacity in church and need details of people attending in advance. If you would like to be part of the congregation on future Sundays (ie. from the 16th Aug) and are able to attend then please book in for this by ringing the parish office on 0770 7043395 between 10 and 2 on a Tuesday or Thursday. We will be allocating seating on a first come first served basis. If there is no space on a particular week we will allocated seating for future weeks to people who have been unable to attend because of lack of availability. We will be live-streaming this service on Facebook to try to reach as wide a group in the community as possible. It is now strongly advised that anyone attending the service in Church should wear a face mask.

Contact Information

Our website and facebook page contain details of how to join others online for prayer, worship, study, and community life. We will send regular updates via our church distribution list – please call us or email us if you know someone who would like to receive our email updates.

Find us online at:

website: www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk

facebook: https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelshls

ABOUT SIGNPOST

You can contact us through our 'remote' church office on **0770 7043395** between 10am & 2pm on a Tuesday & Thursday or you can email us at **stmichaels.hls@gmail.com**. Please let us know if you would like us to be in touch with you by telephone. For urgent issues contact Rev'd John Barron on **0191 584 7657**.

If you'd like your child to be a part of Young Church 'closed' zoom meeting contact Clare our Young Church leader at **stmichaels.youngchurch@ btinternet.com** so she can let you know how to join in.

'Dial-in' Church!

Especially for those without internet access we hold a Service of the Word via a telephone conference. The way of accessing the service is to dial **020 3481 5240**, put in the meeting code **584 584 0191** followed by the # and if prompted for a further id just enter #. (The cost is that of a standard call from your phone provider).

Space4

Our Space4 Community Project continues their services 'remotely' through their Facebook page; https://www.facebook.com/HoughtonSpace4/ with lots going on throughout the week and at these set times:

Monday	2-3pm	Women's Group
Tuesday	11-12noon	'Crafty Chat'
Wednesday	12:30-1:30pm	Parents Group 'Kiddy Chat'
Thursday	11-12noon	Men's Hour
Friday	2-3pm	'Eat your Cake & Chat'
Saturday	3-4pm	'Saturday Chat'

Our Foodbank is continuing on a Tuesday and Friday, supporting people who are socially isolated as well as those struggling with food poverty. Please message the Space4 Facebook page if you need a food parcel.

Sign-Post is the magazine of the Parish Church of St. Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring. In addition to providing information about the life of the church, it also aims to reflect the interests of the broader community and to provide a source of local news and a forum in which matters of common concern can be raised. The Editors welcome comments and suggestions, and invite contributions. Items to be included in Sign-Post should be submitted to the Editors by 10th of the month (end of 1st week of the month for memorials) to ensure inclusion in the next issue. It should be noted, however, that the Editors cannot guarantee to publish material and wish to point out that items included do not necessarily reflect their views nor those of the Parochial Church Council. Editors: Malcolm Foster, Tel: (0191) 584 2486. Distribution: Joan Bond, Tel: (0191) 584 1031.

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Rector's Letter

A few years when my daughters were in their mid-teens they kept telling me that they were going to have a tattoo just as soon as they were 18. Don't get me wrong, I don't have anything against tattoos but because I thought this was less about wanting a tattoo and more about trying to push boundaries I discouraged them from doing that. Later on, as the boundaries kept being pushed, I

changed my strategy and said that if they were going to get a tattoo then so was I! The tattoo I would have on the top of my arm I told them were the letters **ROM XII.II**. Let me explain – ROM XII.II is shorthand for Romans 12:2: in other words, a reference to Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 12 verse 2. Perhaps the prospect of their dad using his upper arm as a prompt to start conversations about a Bible passage put them off from having a tattoo for a few years – the delaying strategy had been successful!

Now, I want to reiterate that I'm really not against tattoos – I think there are some beautiful ones about – BUT I haven't quite got round to having my own tattoo. In truth, I'm a bit too afraid of needles to have one – I just about

manage to write a shopping list on the back of my hand but that's about as far as I manage to go. That said, the verse from Romans 12:2 is one of my favourite passages from scripture – in the translation I carry around in my head it is 'do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds'. I think this is an awesome statement that Paul makes: do not conform to the world's way, be transformed by the renewal of your minds. Worthy of anyone's upper arm I'd say.

The world constantly tries to make us to conform to what it considers to be apt. The world does that all day long in all the images and sounds we receive from advertisers and media and politicians. The world pushes us to conform; and so often we do conform, even when we know it's the wrong thing to do. But we don't have to conform to the ways of the world – especially when we know it's the wrong thing to do. Do not conform Paul writes – this is an exhortation but it's also a promise, that through Christ, we don't have to conform to the world.

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, Paul goes on. The renewal of mind here means something different to just learning a set of facts or following a set of rules or even from having a particular moral code. It's much more about changing our whole way of thinking: it's about seeking to discern the will of God, it's about trying to work out what God's will is for our lives. We do that through prayer, we do that through reading the Bible, we do that through reflecting on how to live out Christ's teaching in our lives. We do that best as part of a community of faith, trying together as brothers and sisters in Christ to work out God's will for our lives.

Whatever we are facing in our lives at present – whatever joys, whatever challenges, whatever decisions we need to take, seeking God's will for our lives will be the best way to live our lives. That is an incredibly important message for us to hear and an incredibly important message for us to share. Perhaps I should include in my personal prayer whether to have that tattoo as that conversation starter about that important message!

With my continued prayers and very best wishes.

Mental health and Covid-19

It is important to be as kind and patient as possible with other people this autumn. Covid-19 has turned many millions of lives upside-down, and the resulting distress, anxiety, fear, grief and economic meltdown means that now widespread mental illness is inevitable. So says the new president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Dr Adrian James warns of 'multiple layers' to the fallout from the pandemic, both for people with pre-existing mental health conditions and also for those who have never suffered before. NHS front-line staff will need support, while those who have had a serious case of Covid-19 may suffer anything from post-traumatic stress disorder to a full-blown psychosis.

Dr James says: "There will be very significant mental illness consequences of Covid, and we need to be ready."

Meanwhile, up to one in five Britons may have contemplated self-harming during lockdown, according to some separate research by University College London.

Churches and young people in lockdown

Recent research by the Allchurches Trust has found that lockdown had one good result: it was "a major driver for churches to embrace digital opportunities and engage with families online."

The research found that in recent months, more than half of churches (55 per cent) have been able to engage children and young people through regular online worship; 46 per cent have run family focused online activities for children and parents; and 31 per cent have run online activities and challenges for young people. Similar numbers have reached out by phone and e-mail.

A spokesman for the Trust said: "What's heartening are the many examples of churches that have quickly adapted to launch online activities... when physical youth work was not an option." The churches have been "creative in meeting the needs of the families and young people they work with" and "reaching others they may not previously have been able to engage."

Around £1.4 million pounds has now been given to more than 140 projects across the UK and Ireland since Allchurches Trust's Growing Lives programme launched in May 2019. It is aimed at enabling churches and Christian charities to help young people reach their potential. More at: https://www.allchurches.co.uk

Feel the tug

Have you ever wondered how you can be certain about who and what God really is? One Christian put it this way: "I'm reminded of the story of the little boy who was out flying a kite. The wind was brisk and large billowing clouds were blowing across the sky. The kite went up and up until it was entirely hidden by the clouds. Then a man came by and asked the little boy what he was doing, staring up at an empty sky. "I'm flying my kite," he replied. The man replied: "What kite? How can you be sure it is still there? You can't see a thing."

The little boy agreed that he could see nothing, "but every little while I feel a tug, so I know for sure that it is still up there and is connected to me!"

When it comes to God, you don't need to take anyone else's word for it. You can find Him for yourself by inviting Jesus Christ into your life. Then you too will know by the warm wonderful tug on your heartstrings that though you can't see Him, He is up there, and that He lives in you. You are connected.

One Day at a Time

Keeping a diary isn't something I usually do, but during lockdown I did. Now if you were to read it, you'd soon be bored. A typical extract reads:- Day 1. Shower; had breakfast; went for a walk; had lunch; tidied up; had dinner and watched T.V. Even my favourite radio soap, "The Archers" was not broadcasting normally.

It's amazing how the weeks run into each other and how one day seemed almost identical to the next. No church on a Sunday was a real miss, but the 'Zoom' services were really good - not a replacement for the 'real thing' however.

Keeping a diary can remind us that actually one day wasn't the same as another. I'd forgotten that we wouldn't have managed to do some much needed decorating had it not been for lockdown, or dig up an old tree stump in the garden thanks to a kind neighbour offering to help.

One of the entries in my diary reads:- "A squirrel landed on the window sill and seemed to stare into our living room for a long time." How bizarre, I think that I might have forgotten this if I hadn't been writing it down.

Anne Frank and Zlata's diaries were two of my favourite children's books that I enjoyed reading to my class when I used to teach. At least during lockdown we didn't have to hide in an attic like Anne did during the second world war for fear of her life, and neither were once friendly neighbours in a civil war with each other like they were in Sarajevo where Zlata lived.

Something that did lift my spirits during this difficult time (and always has) was 'music'. It can take you to places that no other media can. If you are feeling low, I would recommend that you play one of your favourite pieces of music and I can almost guarantee that within a very short time you will feel better. Music in church has been a huge miss but fortunately George, along with members of the choir have recorded pieces so our 'Zoom' congregations can continue to enjoy hymns and organ music. A big thanks to all who contributed to this.

Thinking back to the 70's one of my favourite songs recorded by James Taylor (but written by Carole King) is "You've got a friend." By comparison to many other popular songs of the era it had a most positive theme – and one that stands the test of time. The 'friend' in the title could be applied to someone you know or have known in person, in the past or here and now. Alternatively the theme could be interpreted as the comfort and friendship found in religious faith.

For Christians, of course that 'friend' is Jesus in whom we can rely on in good and bad times. Carole King was quoted as saying:- "The song was as close to pure inspiration as I've ever experienced. The song wrote itself. It was written by something outside myself, through me."

Whether or not she'd had a religious experience we don't know - perhaps nobody really asked her. What I do know is that having a faith keeps us going through thick and thin. If you are unfamiliar with this song I recommend having a listen and seeing what you can find in it at a personal level.

Anne Clappison





Castles & Coasts Housing Association provides affordable homes for people over the age of 55. We have a range of sheltered accommodation across the North East including Ryhope, Shiney Row, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring and Sunderland offering a safe and secure environment to live whilst maintaining their independence. Our schemes offer:

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THANK YOU

Who would have thought as we prepared for Mothering Sunday towards the end of March that perhaps life would not be quite as normal for some time. Now more than five months later, as we tiptoe back carefully into opening our beloved St Michael's church building once more, I hope you will feel able to join with me in saying a few well earned thank yous.

To Rector John, who has worked tirelessly throughout, so that our church remains an oasis of care for us at this difficult time. THANK YOU

To the Ministry Team, retired clergy, Curate, Pastoral Assistants and Readers who together with the Rector have administered to our spiritual needs by creating services on-line and in the Signpost together with valuable information, contributions and prayers. THANK YOU

To the P.C.C and in particular the Churchwardens and Standing Committee who have met weekly by Zoom with the Rector to help with decision making. THANK YOU

To our Musical Director and 'mini choir' especially Nikki, who have mastered technology so that we can continue to enjoy music. You will know from the August Signpost how much has been involved in creating the Hymns and Anthems. THANK YOU

To our Vergers, furniture removers and cleaning team who earlier prepared the church for reopening and who continue to do so, allowing it to be a safe space for us. THANK YOU

To the Young Church team who have remained in contact with our young people and are still magically providing their works of art for the 11 o'clock Sunday Service. THANK YOU

To our smiley voiced Administrator who despite working from home has been available throughout on Tuesdays and Thursdays for any enquiries and to coordinate the administrative side, including the church magazine. THANK YOU To the Signpost editorial team who collate, produce and send out the magazine each month and to those who contribute to it in any way. THANK YOU

To all members of our church family who are part of the telephone 'cascade' (lots of people ringing lots of other people). Also to those leaders unable to meet in person with their groups, but who are remaining connected in some way. THANK YOU

To the Space4 Team who have continued throughout, working out of the Kepier to provide the Food Bank and to work with the local authority and various agencies to process the many and varied needs of the local community. THANK YOU

To the Kepier Management Team and in particular the Manager who has kept the building open throughout for access whenever required. THANK YOU

To the team keeping a watchful eye on the Almshouses. THANK YOU

To those having to clean the church walkway after our feathered friends have done their worst (it is, however, quite reassuring to hear the rooks accompanying the church bells at the beginning of each service). THANK YOU

The difficulty with lists is that someone may be forgotten, if so, I am very sorry, however please feel included along with everyone else. THANK YOU

Lastly, to those outside our immediate church family, locally and nationally who are working in any way to care for us and bring relief. THANK YOU

As I write this, some are still shielding, but by the time you read it we may have all had to become a little more adventurous. Rector John will have returned from his well earned break, maybe others too, St Michael's Church will still be St Michael's Church even with its changes and I will have had to put on a mask and become very brave. THANK YOU

Anne Goodman

Churches warned to prepare for 'tidal wave of poverty'

Church leaders are being urged to be ready to respond to the lasting impact of the pandemic on the country's poorest people.

The effect on urban, suburban and rural communities is likely to be severe with many thousands of jobs being lost and livelihoods threatened. The poorest in society may find themselves hardest hit.

Churches are being encouraged to respond to the devastating impact of the pandemic and to build on the numerous social projects already in place.

The Trussell Trust that supports around 1200 UK foodbanks is warning of a 'tidal wave of poverty' poised to engulf the country.

Chief Executive Emma Revie has called on church leaders to talk to their congregations about justice and compassion and to work to address the root causes of poverty.

Speaking at a Bible Society webinar she encouraged church leaders "increasingly to talk to their congregations about God's concern for justice and compassion to characterise the structures of our society: the way our benefit system works, the way our economy functions, people's employment conditions and wage levels.

Emma Revie said that the Trussell Trust was "very clear that food banks are not a solution to poverty" and the charity wanted "to see people experiencing fulness of life and not being trapped by poverty."

She praised the vital role played by churches in running foodbanks and encouraged congregations "That when we pray for our foodbanks, that we would also allow ourselves room to lament the injustices that make them necessary in the first place and seek wisdom about how we might be part of bringing about change.

"Because if we don't concern ourselves with these things, the tidal wave of poverty is going to be too high and too powerful for us to respond to and we will see many more people being swept into destitution in the UK."

At the webinar 'Mission during lockdown and beyond,' the Bible Society published research showing that church leaders are expecting increased demand for food banks, poverty relief, mental health work, bereavement support, relationship counselling, as well as courses such as Alpha that introduce people to the Christian faith.

The insights resonate with responses to the impact of the pandemic from other church leaders. The Bishop of Tonbridge, Simon Burton-Jones, warned a Church of England webinar that the pandemic would cause growth in the 'precariat', the numbers of people on zero-hours contracts or juggling several jobs to survive.

The bishop also forecast an increase in tension between the generations, with the future particularly bleak for many young people who have lost their jobs, and those living in insecure rented accommodation.

A SPECIAL PLACE 4 South Side of Chancel and Vestries

Before the vestry door is what looks like a vault/tomb with the wall built over the top of it. That is indeed what it is. It is the last resting place of Margery Bellasis, an Elizabethan lady who was a friend and supporter of Bernard Gilpin. She lived in Morton House. This can be found on a lane that runs from the cenotaph in Fence Houses to the Chilton



Country Pub/Hotel. There is a historic brass plaque mounted on the wall behind the Gilpin Tomb showing her with her eight sons and four daughters dressed in Elizabethan clothing with ruffles around their necks. She lived for 90 years. Luckily for her, her husband died young, aged 32 years, he was Richard Bellasis of Henknowle. I will mention more about Margery when recording the Gilpin Transept.

Just a brief look into the Vestry through the door on the left. The door leads into what is now the Choir Vestry with a second door into the Clergy Vestry, passing through the Clergy Vestry to a steep staircase leading up to a room above which is now the Parish Office. The Clergy Vestry and the room above were built in 1483 with money left by the Rector Henry Gillow as a

Chantry Chapel for a guild in honour of God and the Holy Trinity. The upper room was accommodation for a Curate who was paid to pray for the souls of the departed by wealthy patrons of the guild.

At a later date this was joined to the Church with the addition of the Choir Vestry. In the Clergy Vestry, under the east window there is a wooden sill. The north side of the sill lifts up to reveal a picina which is still working. It is a small sink that was used to pour out holy water with the outlet feeding directly into the earth.

There is an interesting window in the Choir Vestry which is of St Cuthbert holding King Oswald's head. They are both interred in Durham Cathedral.

Back into the Chancel, high up on the south wall, are eight Lancet windows, these were restored recently as they are south facing and in a sun trap created by the Vestry roof. The heat of the sun over the last 50/100/150 years caused the lead to expand and buckle the glass.

A Lancet window is an arched window with a point at the top, so resembling a lance which gives them their name. They are often used high up in medieval Cathedrals and Churches to bring light in from above.

Our windows are a wonderful example of how stained glass windows were used as a teaching aid. They are depicting Holy Week and ending in Ascension. They start at the foot washing, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Empty Tomb, the Risen Christ and ending with Christ ascending to Heaven. There is a dispute between the second and fourth windows. The windows are said to have been taken out for safe keeping during WW2 and when refitted were installed the wrong way round. They are both

garden scenes, one depicts Jesus praying with the Disciples falling asleep, the other at Gethsemane before the betrayal. Have a look and you decide [a Bible maybe useful].

The screen and pulpit, I am not sure of the age of these, but I would assume they date from around the re-ordering of 1860. The screen is in memory of Thomas William Usherwood Robinson, 1826-1888. He was the owner of the brewery in Houghton



and is buried in the old Houghton Cut Cemetery even though he was a major objector to its opening. A wealthy man and Churchwarden, his home was Hardwick Hall near Sedgefield, now a Hotel and Country Park.

The pulpit has four carved figures around it, these are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Gospel writers. Just for your interest, if you go to Rothbury, their Church pulpit has four northern Saints around it, Aiden, Cuthbert, Oswald, and yes, Gilpin [because of the steel gauntlet incident he is revered in Rothbury]. The brass lectern on the pulpit is in memory of George Gregson.

David Turnbull

Space4 News

We were delighted last month to appoint Jade Turnbull to the new role of Space4 Foodbank Coordinator. Jade has been a volunteer with Space4 for a number of years and now takes on this new role looking after our (sadly increasingly busy) foodbank operation. She, along with our Assistant Manager Colin and our dedicated team of volunteers, are doing a great job as we seek to appoint a new Space4 manager (we hope) in the not too distant future.

Supporting our foodbank

Our foodbank volunteer drivers are pivotal in our being able to provide much needed food parcels to people struggling with having enough to eat. We are on the lookout for volunteer drivers to deliver food parcels in the DH5 and DH4 areas for the foodbank. This will involve delivery of no more than 6 parcels per session, on as many sessions as you can offer in a month working as part of a rota of drivers on a Tuesday and Friday morning. Drivers need to ensure their vehicle has adequate insurance. We can reimburse mileage at 45p a mile.

If you're able to help, please contact us in the parish office (email stmichaels.hls@gmail.com or call 0770 7043395 between 10am & 2pm on a Tuesday & Thursday).

Thank you

All in the month of September

It was:

400 years ago, on 6th September 1620, that 102 English Puritans (now known as the Pilgrims) set sail aboard the Mayflower from Plymouth, for a new life in America. After a perilous journey they landed in what is now Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November. They had intended landing in Virginia, but were unable to reach it because of heavy seas.

150 years ago, on 20th September 1870 that Rome was captured. Italian forces defeated the Papal States and captured the city of Rome at the end of the wars of Italian Unification. The Papal States were dissolved. Rome was annexed, and it became the capital of Italy in 1871.

125 years ago, on 28th September 1895 that Louis Pasteur died. This French biologist, microbiologist and chemist was one of the main founders of the field of medical microbiology. Best known for originating the pasteurization of foodstuffs to eliminate micro-organisms that cause disease. Pasteur saved the French beer, wine and silk industries and developed vaccines against anthrax and rabies.

65 years ago, on 22nd September 1955 that Britain's first independent television channel, ITV, was launched. It ended the BBC's monopoly. Regional franchises were rolled out across the whole country by 1965.

60 years ago, on 27th September 1960 that Sylvia Pankhurst, suffragette leader, died.

50 years ago, on 19th September 1970 that the first Glastonbury Festival was held, at Worthy Farm near Pilton, Somerset. About 1,500 people attended (compared to 135,000 today). It became an annual event from 1981 and is now the world's largest greenfield festival. The first festival was billed as the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival.

40 years ago, on 22nd September 1980 that the Solidarity movement was created in Poland, with Lech Walesa as its leader. It was the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc.

25 years ago, on 3rd September 1995 that the auction site eBay was founded (as AuctionWeb).

20 years ago, on 17th September 2000 that Paula Yates, TV presenter (The Tube, The Big Breakfast) died of a heroin overdose, aged 41. Wife of the musician Bob Geldof, she was also noted for her relationship with the musician Michael Hutchence. She was the daughter of Hughie Green, host of the talent show Opportunity Knocks, though she did not discover this until late in life.

15 years ago, on 24th September 2005 that the IRA decommissioned its last remaining weapons in front of independent inspectors.

What's in your hand?

September is usually the time when we get back to our normal routines after the summer break. With the current coronavirus pandemic, it's very different this year! However, it is still a good time to consider how God can use us to make a real difference in our workplace, school, family, friends and community. He equips us with everything we need to make His love known.

When God gave Moses the job of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, He asked the question, 'What is in your hand?' (Exodus 4:2). Moses was holding his staff, which represented his livelihood (what he was good at); his resources (his flock represented his wealth) and his security (which God was asking him to lay down). God asks the same question of us: What has God given you? Our gifts, temperament, experience, relationships, mind, education can be used in the work God has given us to do. How will we use them to make a difference in the places where He calls us to serve Him?

John Ortberg, in his book It All Goes Back in the Box, speaks of Johnny, a 19-year-old with Downs syndrome. He worked at a supermarket checkout putting people's items into bags. To encourage his customers, he decided to put a thought for the day into the bags. Every night his dad would help him to prepare the slips of paper and he would put the thoughts into the bags saying, 'I hope it helps you have a good day. Thanks for coming here.' A month later the store manager noticed that Johnny's line at the checkout was three times longer than anyone else's! People wanted Johnny's thought for the day. He wasn't just filling bags with groceries, he was filling lives with hope!

What has God given you that will help and encourage others?



Dian and Brian Scott would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, phone calls and messages of support received during and after Brian's recent hospitalisation.

They really do mean a lot to us both and are much appreciated.



Word from The Lemon Grove

'Man proposes, God disposes', said Thomas a'Kempis in the fifteenth century.

When at New Year I made my plans for 2020 I anticipated spending August in the temperate climate of Blighty. The disruption to travel caused by Covid-19 has meant that instead I have remained in Cyprus where the temperature has been in the mid-thirties each day, with no rain since March. I woke last Saturday to the smell of smoke and hurried downstairs to check the kitchen. When it was clear the source of the smell was not inside I looked out of the back windows to see a pall of smoke drifting over from the countryside to the north. All day planes and helicopters were flying overhead carrying water to dump on the fires which were burning in the fields and orchards in the foothills of the Troodos mountains. Rumours circulated that the fires were the work of arsonists although the most common cause is a dropped cigarette butt. The fires appeared to have been put out but on Sunday morning the planes were still flying over but clearly getting nearer. The Facebook page for South Paramali advised the packing of a grab-bag in case of a need to evacuate at short notice. Fortunately the bags were not needed as the fires were extinguished before nightfall but they had reached Avdimou, the next village from Paramali and only about 5 kilometres away.

Due to the temperatures I try if possible to avoid driving over to the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area on the eastern side of the island as the humidity is much higher over there so it seems much hotter. I was however required to travel there recently on two occasions. The first was to deal with a remand application in respect of two Russians who had been arrested in the early hours of the morning after their car which was parked on a quiet road near the Sovereign Base prison. A search revealed wraps of crystal meth and cannabis alongside a British passport in the name of Viannos Viannou, three mobile phones and documents relating to a car of the same make but with a different registration number. The female passenger was found to have served a sentence at the prison for smuggling into it drugs and a mobile phone. They are now occupying separate cells inside the prison.

The second visit was to deal with a group of six Turkish Cypriots from Pyla. This village is half in the UN Green Line and half in the Dhekelia Sovereign

Base Area. Unusually in Cyprus today it is inhabited by both Greek and Turkish Cypriots and of course many of the Turkish Cypriots have families and jobs in the occupied area in the North. This means they travel frequently though the nearby crossing point. The closure of the crossing point under the Covid-19 lockdown caused them some difficulties and the men of the community were called on by the Mukhtar to demonstrate outside the crossing. This is wholly inside the Sovereign Base Area and demonstrations require a permit from the Area Officer.

Normally this would be granted. In the lockdown it was however felt inappropriate but the demonstration went ahead anyway. Largely it was peaceful and the six men who appeared before all pleaded guilty to participating in a demonstration for which no permit had been granted and breach of the Covid-19 regulations. They were all men of good character, in their sixties and seventies, most of whom had fathers who had served with the British army in WW11. They all expressed pride in living within a UK Overseas Territory and being part of the Commonwealth, producing medals and honours to back that up. I fined them for the breach of the Regulations and imposed conditional discharges for the demonstration offence, telling them that there was plenty of space in the prison if they did it again.

The following week I took part in a webinar hosted by the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association on the subject of 'The impact of Covid-19 on the Rule of Law.' It was fascinating, sitting in my study in Cyprus, to listen to judges from South Africa, Canada, Kenya, Singapore and Scotland, talk about the impact of the coronavirus on their work, and lives, and to realise how similar that impact was whichever country they lived in. It also brought home to me again how much the Commonwealth – a voluntary organisation covering one third of the world's population – is valued outside of the UK. And I was also struck how judges the world over had had their holiday plans interrupted.

Thomas a'Kempis based his dictum on the words of Proverbs, 19, v21:-

'The human mind may devise many plans,

But it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established,'

Covid-19 was not part of God's plan: it came into the world because of man's actions. But perhaps something of God's purpose for the world can be seen in the selflessness and sense of community and social justice which has, overall, been society's response to the disease.

Roger Elsey

Is there ANYTHING GOOD that has come out of CORONAVIRUS?

I guess we are all feeling that Coronavirus has gone on for too long now, that are lives have become too disrupted and too restricted... a week or two we wouldn't have minded, a bit of peace in our busy lives we would have welcomed, but for twenty four weeks and with no end in sight, its just too much to ask!

Many of us are fortunate in that our incomes have remained as they were, we are not facing redundancy and difficulties with rent payments or with bankruptcy through collapsed business. I am not forgetting those who have lost loved ones or whose loved ones have had treatment suspended because of the virus and for whom life has become very difficult.

Those who live alone are understandably finding difficulty in remaining positive, particularly those who have no family nearby or who are entirely on their own. All normal networks



of support have been suspended. So is there anything that we can say has been a good result from being in lockdown? I am not pretending Coronavirus has been good for us, but from it some good things have developed.

For families who function well they have probably drawn closer together by doing family activities together that were probably previously neglected. Families have dug out their board games, have organised family zooms, on line quizzes and outings.

I have frequently met family groups out walking and cycling that would have been unusual to encounter previously. The photo here is my family enjoying the Castle Eden walkway. The dog had already run 5 miles.

Speaking personally, I know my two granddaughters have grown closer together and discovered adventurous ways to pass their time, including building dens and designing treasure hunts. As lockdown eased and we were permitted to meet outside, families visited in the garden and later inside the home. The reunion of the wider family was very heart warming and emotional. One lady declared to me she now had more bubbles than an Aero.

National and internationally the earth has benefitted from a reduction in the consumption of resources and a reduction in pollution levels during this period although this alone will not avert an ecological disaster if politicians fail to take measures to avoid passing the point of no return, a point at which we are already perilously and complacently close.

Being a member of a church community has made an enormous difference in this difficult period. Rector John has spared no effort in making services accessible. We now have a host of opportunities to share in worship with zoom services on Thursdays and Sundays, facebook services on Sundays and Tuesdays and worship in church on Sunday morning. The zoom services can be accessed by any phone by dialing 0203 481 5240 when prompted enter the access code 584 584 0191 then #, and if asked for an ID press # again. Our services are therefore accessible to everyone and more than that, the viewing numbers far exceed the numbers we have ever experienced in church. The church based telephone network has kept in touch with everyone who was on our electoral role plus others we came to know about. We hope nobody has been overlooked. Please ring me (07757927048) if you know someone who would appreciate a call from us. I am also aware of additional networks between groups of friends from church, all of which builds community.

St Michael's has come together in different ways too. The bookclub continues with 16 regular members and provides us with interesting reading throughout the weeks and a social get together on Monday evenings via zoom. Our first two books: 'Eleanor Oliphant' and 'A Man called Ove', provided thought provoking reading on how we make unconscious judgements about others without knowing their story, the books were entertaining and easy reading. Our third book 'The



Beekeeper of Aleppo' tears at the heart and should be made compulsory reading for all. Beautifully written, it recounts the journey of Nuri and Alfa as they leave their home in Aleppo to find safety, having already lost their young .son to the war in Syria. The tissue box is a necessary accompaniment. Please do join us, our get togethers are hilarious as well as insightful. Even if you do not have the means to join on Zoom, read the books, the questions have been posted in Signpost for you to consider.

And finally, last but not least are the church based cycling groups. The men's group has been long established with their long distance rides on weekends away, but now it takes the form of regular weekly rides locally. As you now know we also have a ladies' group, at present just the terrible trio as can be seen in the photograph. All these small groups provide important social support in a safe and non-serious way. Do join us, all you need are two wheels, a chain and a liking for coffee.

In these difficult times it helps to look for the positives and to remember Emmanuel, God with us, always.

Margaret Lee



Everything you needed to know about Rainton Festival in Sunderland last weekend

Big North East names and family favourites were heading to the festival this year.

A Sunderland festival was delivering fun for all ages in August, with comedy, live music and family-friendly entertainment on the line-up.

As part of its Rainton Festival, Rainton Arena, at Houghton-le-Spring, had planned a packed series of socially distanced events, making the most of its huge outdoor space.

Those heading to the venue this Friday could enjoy music from British soul and funk duo Smoove and Turrell, who have performed to fans around the world, with support from fellow North East groups The Midnight Drive and Vandebilt.

The arena was home to the Family Fest on the Saturday featuring Jojo Siwa and Taylor Swift tribute acts, along with Channy Thompson and Jessie Dale from The Voice Kids.

Later that day it hosted Rainton Live Music Festival, with live performances from Geoff Mull, Will Jennison, He Knows, She Knows with support acts.

On Sunday, families enjoyed an afternoon of fun with Trolls, Toons and the RugRat Ravers, then in the evening tribute act 10CCLO played 10cc and ELO's greatest hits, with support from cover band Central Park.

The following weekend welcomed a string of music stars, kicking off with KISS FM's DJ AJ King on 28 August, joined by DJ Pied Piper performing Do You Really Like It, Joe Sensation, who has toured with Sean Paul, The Game, Snoop Dogg and more, along with support guest DJ C-Jayy

On August, 29 the festival hosted Dance Icons: Summer Social, featuring live performances from dance and trance stars Tall Paul, Dave Pearce, Angie Brown, Kelly Llorenna and local supports, Daz Flatman, Aidan Davis and Neil Hargreaves.

Festival-goers also enjoyed a host of food and drink stalls on site, bar facilities, funfair rides and a range of other entertainment on the outdoor stage.

Jay Johal, who owns the arena, says he was confident the festival had something for everyone. Jay said: "Venues have had to adapt this summer and we are lucky to have such a huge space which gave us the freedom to create a really exciting event without compromising anyone's safety."

"Not only were there some fantastic performers lined up to take to the stage across the rest of the month, but we also made sure that there was plenty to do across the whole site."

Supermarket giant Morrisons announces Dalton Park opening four years after site mothballed

Four years after Morrisons mothballed its supermarket plans the firm has confirmed when it will open.

Morrisons left customers fuming when it mothballed its plans for a store at Dalton Park Outlet Destination back in 2016, two years after first getting keys to the site.

MPs criticised the firm for refusing to commit to a date to get a new supermarket on the site up and running, calling for the grocery juggernaut to sub-let the site, highlighting how popular it would be with shoppers in surrounding areas, but the plans were in limbo – until now.

Bosses at the shopping outlet and the supermarket itself have now confirmed a brand new store will open before the year is out, also creating 150 jobs as it provides essential community services. The news follows the opening of a Morrisons petrol station earlier this summer at the entrance to the scheme.

Jerry Hatch, centre manager at Dalton Park, said: "We are delighted to confirm that Morrisons will be opening a store at Dalton Park before Christmas this year.

"A lot of hard work has been carried out behind the scenes in recent months and the announcement today is testament to the efforts of several parties.

"The new Morrisons store will create significant job opportunities, which would be fantastic in normal times, so to be able to announce this during the current climate is very uplifting.

"We look forward to seeing this project being delivered and the benefits it will bring to our community."

A spokeswoman for Morrisons added: "Following the successful launch of our petrol station, we now plan to open the Morrisons Dalton Park store by the end of this year.

"Specialist teams are working to transform the unit into a new look Morrisons store and recruitment for around 90 new colleagues will start shortly.

"We would like to thank the community for their continued patience and look forward to welcoming them to the store."

'Big Conversation' launched on clergy care and wellbeing

Churches and clergy across the country are to join in a nationwide discussion, the 'Big Conversation', aimed at improving the care and wellbeing of ministers.

It follows the recent welcome of the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing at General Synod. Now General Synod has asked that the whole church reflect on the questions it poses over the next two years. Hence, the 'Big Conversation'.

The Covenant commits all parts of the Church, as well as individual clergy, to sharing responsibility for the welfare of ministers and their households.

Recommendations include promoting awareness of stress and the dangers of burnout as part of training for ordained ministry. Also, there will be new resources for licensing and induction services that highlight the care and wellbeing of clergy. The Group also recommended more pastoral supervision for clergy through coaching or mentoring.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler, who headed the Working Group, said: "The care and wellbeing of the clergy is crucial to the health of the Church at worship, in mission, and in pastoral care."

Bishop calls for targeted sanctions to protect Uighurs

A new system of targeted sanctions could be used against the perpetrators of "gross human rights abuses" on the Uighur people in China, a bishop has told the House of Lords.

The Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff, also urged the Government to consider the use of sanctions specifically to protect freedom of religion or belief around the world.

He was speaking during a recent debate on the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020. The legislation brings the UK into line with the other nations' approaches towards a 'Magnitsky-style' sanctions regime, which allows for sanctions against named individuals rather than simply states.

At present freedom of religion or belief is not included on the list of specific grounds on which the sanctions regime can be applied.

Urging the Government to reconsider this, Bishop James said: "Given that freedom of religion or belief is a foreign policy priority, I find it slightly surprising that this right is not explicitly included in the scope of the regulations in relation to sanctions."

He added: Like others, I am particularly concerned about gross human rights abuses in China, especially against Uighurs. As one of my episcopal colleagues noted last week in a letter to the Foreign Secretary, 'The images that we have seen in recent days and the reports emanating from the region are harrowing and require a clear and unequivocal response'."

Saint ^{for} September

MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

St Michael is an archangel, whose name means 'who is like unto God?' He makes various appearances throughout the Bible, from the book of Daniel to the Book of Revelation. In Daniel, he is 'one of the princes' of the heavenly host, and the special guardian of Israel. In Revelation, he is the principal fighter of the heavenly battle against the devil.

From early times, St Michael's cult was strong in the British Isles. Churches at Malmesbury (Wiltshire), Clive (Gloucestershire) and Stanmer (East Sussex) were dedicated to him. Bede mentions him. St Michael's Mount in Cornwall was believed to commemorate a vision there in the 8th century. By the end of the Middle Ages, St Michael had 686 English churches dedicated to him.

In art St Michael is often depicted as slaying the dragon, as in the 14th century East Anglican Psalters, or in Epstein's famous sculpture at Coventry cathedral. Or he is found (in medieval art) as weighing souls, as at Chaldon (Surrey), Swalcliffe (Oxon.), Eaton Bishop (Hereford and Worcester), and Martham in Suffolk. St Michael's most famous shrine in western Europe is Mont-Saint-Michel, where a Benedictine abbey was founded in the 10th century.

The 'All Angels' bit of this feast-day was added in 1969 when Gabriel and Raphael were included in with St Michael.



Saint Michael (an ancient Celtic poem)

Saint Michael, angel of the sea, Lord of the horses he, Saint Michael, of the angels king, Of war, of shepherding; On steed he flies across the skies; The first-fruits of the harvest corn, The first-fruits of the flock-lambs born,

Are his, he meets the soul forlorn. The saints and angels watch o'erhead, Their wings and prayers o'erspread: The righteous ones in heaven wait, St Peter at the gate; In might arrayed they shield and aid; Be with us e'er, archangel powers, Be with us, angels, life's long hours.

Ordination on St Michael's Day

This year on 27th September our Curate John D'Silva will be ordained Deacon in Durham Cathedral at 10 am in the morning - part of a group of 12 Curates across the Diocese being ordained in a different (but we expect very special) ordination services in line with covid restrictions.

We will share details of how we can access that service on-line when we receive them. John (& Rector John) will be returning to St Michaels to help lead a service of Holy Communion at 4pm that day to celebrate our Patronal Festival with our newly ordained Curate!

Celebrating 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower

If we find it difficult to cross the Atlantic just now, it was even worse 400 years this month. On 6th September 1620, 102 determined Puritans climbed on board the Mayflower and set sail from Plymouth. They had 30 crew to steer them across 3000 miles of open, perilous ocean.

Those Puritans, or 'Pilgrim fathers', could never have dreamed that their journey would become one of the most influential in world history. Their courage and purpose for the voyage would help shape the very history and culture of the USA.

The Pilgrim fathers themselves were in search of religious freedom and a new life. Years before they had rejected the Church of England, due to its Roman Catholic past, and in 1608 they had moved to Holland, where they could worship freely. But life was very hard there, and so the New World beckoned to them.

They had originally intended to use two ships, but the Speedwell sprang a leak shortly after sailing, and so they crowded as many as possible into the Mayflower. After a long and difficult 10 weeks at sea, they reached America, but could not reach their intended destination, Virginia, because of heavy seas. They finally landed in Provincetown Harbor, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November.

That presented the next great challenge: the bitter, harsh winter of Massachusetts. Half of the Pilgrims perished that first winter, of hunger and cold. Without the help of the local Indigenous peoples to teach them food-gathering and other survival skills, all of the colony would probably have perished.

After months of hard work, by the 'Fall' of 1621 the tiny colony had its first harvest. They celebrated this great achievement with their new Indigenous friends. It became Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims had been convinced that God wanted them to go to the New World. They wrote: "We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us, and that He will graciously prosper our endeavours according to the simplicity of our hearts therein."

The Mayflower was one of the earliest pilgrim vessels, and so became a cultural icon in the history of the United States. This year, until coronavirus put a stop to things, many celebrations in the USA, England and the Netherlands had been planned.

Happy Birthday, Glastonbury Festival

Glastonbury Festival. The name conjures up images of world-famous bands and singers making loud music before enthusiastic crowds who are up to their knees in mud.

The statistics for the famous Pyramid stage are impressive: standing 25 metres tall, it has 292 audio speakers and 8.5 km of cables for video and audio. It has 354 microphones and 3743 lightbulbs. The festival uses about 27 megawatts of power, enough to power the city of Bath.

It all began 50 years ago this month, on 19th September 1970, when a farmer, Michael Eavis, opened his farm, Worthy Farm near Pilton in Somerset, for a festival. He called it the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival and about 1,500 people turned up. It was a success, soon had changed its name, and by 1981 it had become an annual event.

Glastonbury was born out of the hippie ethic and free festival movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is now the world's largest greenfield festival, attracting about 135,000 each year.

Here are some highlights:

By 1985 the festival had grown too large for Worthy Farm, but neighbouring Cockmill Farm was purchased.

1989 saw impromptu, unofficial sound systems spring up around the festival site. They would play loud, electronic acid house music 'round the clock.

1994 saw Channel 4's 4 Goes to Glastonbury bring televised coverage of the festival.

1996 saw the release of Glastonbury the Movie.

In 1997 major sponsorship arrived from The Guardian and the BBC, but also heavy rain which turned the entire site into a muddy bog.

1998 brought more severe floods and storms, but that year attendance broke the 100,000 mark.

1999 was a hot dry year, much to the relief of organisers and festival goers.

2000 saw an estimated 250,000 people attend the festival (only 100,000 tickets were sold) due to gate-crashers.

In 2003 the issue of 150,000 tickets sold out within one day.

By 2005, the enclosed area of the festival was over 900 acres. 150,000 people attended more than 385 live performances, but heavy thunderstorms saw several stages struck by lightning, and flash floods of four feet deep.

2007 brought so much torrential rain that everything was covered in mud. When cars took more than nine hours to exit the saturated fields, violence erupted.

2008 saw biodegradable tent pegs and biotractors running on waste vegetable oil.

In 2010 Michael Eavis joined headline artist Stevie Wonder to sing 'Happy Birthday', for the festival's 40th year. The weather was kind: three days of abundant sunshine made it the first rain-free festival since 2002, and the hottest since the festival began.

The 2015 festival made good use of the hundreds of pairs of wellington boots discarded by festival goers – they were donated to the migrant camp at Calais.

In 2017 the BBC renewed its exclusive national rights to broadcast the event until 2022.

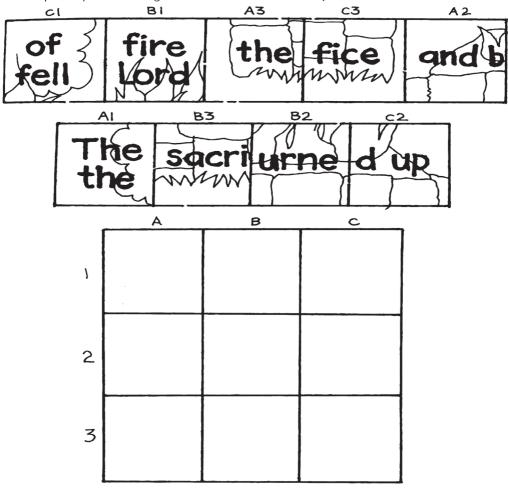
Then this Spring, in March 2020, the 50th anniversary of the festival had to be cancelled due to coronavirus. The next Glastonbury Festival is planned for June 2021.



1 Kings 18

And the Winner Is...

Find the box marked A1 at the top of the page. Copy what you see in the box into the empty A1 square in the grid. Fill in the other squares. (Or, cut the squares at the top of the page apart and glue them in their proper places.) Read 1 Kings 18:20-39 to learn about Elijah's contest.



24

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MEMORIALS

We hope this system will help us to meet requests for memorials more efficiently. Should you wish for a loved one to be remembered on their anniversary in the weekly prayers read during the Sunday services, please complete the slip opposite.

Cut out the slip and place it in the intercessions box at least one week prior to the Sunday for remembrance. If you are unable to get to church, please post the slip to the Church Administrator: Mrs Philippa Elsey, Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels, The Broadway, Houghton-le-Spring.

MEMORIAL REQUEST

Name of person to be remembered:

Request made by:

Date for memorial:

Sunday,...



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Bible readings for September

This list of bible readings is to accompany your Daily Prayer worship and the Sunday Eucharist

SEPTEMBER			
Tuesday	1	LUKE 4.31-17	
Wednesday	2	LUKE 4 38-end	
Thursday	3	LUKE 5.1-11	
Friday	4	LUKE 5.33-end	
Saturday	5	LUKE 6.1-5	
Sunday	6	MATT 18.15-20	
Monday	7	LUKE 6. 6-11	
Tuesday	8	LUKE 6. 12-19	
Wednesday	9	LUKE 6. 20-26	
Thursday	10	LUKE 6. 27-38	
Friday	11	LUKE 6. 39-42	
Saturday	12	LUKE 6. 43-end	
Sunday	13	MATT 18. 21-35	
Monday	14	JOHN 3.13-17	HOLY CROSS DAY
Tuesday	15	LUKE 7. 11-17	
Wednesday	16	LUKE 7.31-35	
Thursday	17	LUKE 7. 36-end	
Friday	18	LUKE 8.1-3	
Saturday	19	LUKE 8.4-15	
Sunday	20	MATT 20.1-16	
Monday	21	MATT 9.9-13	ST MATTHEW
Tuesday	22	LUKE 8. 19-21	
Wednesday	23	LUKE 9.1-6	
Thursday	24	LUKE 9. 7-9	
Friday	25	LUKE 9.18-22	
Saturday	26	LUKE 9. 43b-45	
Sunday	27	MATT 21. 23-32	
Monday	28	LUKE 9.46-50	
Tuesday	29	JOHN 1.47-end	
Wednesday	30	LUKE 9.57-end	ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS
OCTOBER			
Thursday	1	MATT 16. 21-end	
Friday	2	LUKE 4. 38-end	
Saturday	3	MATT 16. 21-end	