

**Rector's letter**

So we have now moved into a second phase of, 'stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives'. It is by far one of the most difficult times I have ever lived through.

As I take my almost daily walk around Olney, it is very moving to see the rainbows and artwork (done by so many) displayed in the windows of lots of houses. It is so encouraging to see that people in our community are thinking about others and not only about themselves.

Today's reading from the Gospel of John (Chapter 3 verse 16) led me to think of how every day, especially every Thursday at 8pm, and at all sorts of other times I am moved to think of those who work in the health professions, the emergency services, those who enable us to have food on our plates, water, light and heat in our homes, those who keep our neighbourhoods free from clutter and rubbish, and all those who are daily giving of themselves to care for and provide for us. I truly can see goodness, love and the face of God in their unselfish deeds. I thank God for all those who are generously serving us and I also look forward to when we all will all be once again able to see each other face to face.

Stay safe and God bless! Andrew+

Funerals. George Scott, 4th May. Private funeral.
Ebba Quenby, 14th May. Private funeral.

New life at Easter. We have a message from the Geary's farm this week: *The lambing shed and the open fields have probably brought to us the biggest sense of normality that anything ever could have done in a time of national crisis. We've witnessed from a distance the hardships and difficulties of our friends, but as farmers we feel very blessed that we can work at home and stay safe. We've delivered in excess of 750 lambs over the last five weeks. The weather has been kind and the sheep and lambs are thriving and beginning to bloom after a long, wet and difficult winter. As we come towards the end of lambing, just over 50 left now, the cows are starting to calve and we've some lovely calves by Magnum, our new stock bull. New life all around us, so reflective of the Easter message and the hope offered in the resurrection.*

Welcome and notices

Reading: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41

Gospel: Luke 24: 13-35

Wed 29: Acts 8: 1b-8

John 6: 35-40

Collect: Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

Intercessions ®: Lord God: **abide with us.**

We pray for our church. During this period of crisis and uncertainty and with all our churches closed we pray that you would strengthen and guide those who are supporting and leading us through these difficult times.

We pray for our world. For those suffering through trauma in physical loss, mental stress and difficult relationships. For peace and hope in their lives today.

We pray for the sick. Toby O'Grady, Kevin, Michael Seabrook, Ted, Cyril, Rene Tourle, Pat Major, Emily, Helen, Gail, Martin, Keith and those who are self-isolating.

We pray for the souls of the recently departed and their families. Doris Wright, George Scott, George Woodhouse, Melissa Cheng, Gladys Johnson and Ebba Quenby.

We remember and give thanks for those whose Yearsmind is now.

Eucharistic Prayer: A

Prayer: Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Listening Ear. Please email prayer@olney.church for prayers.

Some material included is

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A tribute to Gladys Johnson

Last week we learnt that Gladys Johnson (nee Smith) had passed away and as she was so well known in the town, it is only fitting to include a little tribute to her here. When she married, she lived near me in the farmhouse in Near Town with her husband Sidney and they had a daughter Elizabeth. Gladys sang in Olney Choir and worked in the Post Office for many years. In her later years she could be seen riding her bike around the town. Berenice and Arnold Mann recall how wonderfully kind and helpful she was to the residents of Clifton Court, listening to them, sharing their news and often fetching them fish and chips as a treat. Arnold would take Gladys to the Wolverton Grammar School reunions, where they both went to school. She was a well-liked and friendly lady and will be missed. *Susan*

News from Pastures Farm

Talking to Tony and Viv Evans this week I discovered it was Tony's 80th birthday on the 15th April. How lucky it was the family had decided to celebrate Tony entering his 80th year on New Year's Day with family and friends, as who would believe that we would now be in lockdown. Viv had planned another family get together over Easter, but instead enjoyed some wonderful calls and Facetime with the family. On Tony's birthday morning, he was surprised to see the children from the farmhouse had made banners, decorated the cars and put up balloons whilst he was sleeping. Two special friends bravely walked up to the farm via Killick Wood and enjoyed a breakfast celebration sitting outside at an appropriate distance and there was birthday cake (at a distance) later in the day with James & Emma, Toby, Lottie and Jack. As Viv says "No regrets and thank you for all the many good wishes".

Tony and Viv also reminded me that Pastures Poultry Farm Shop is still open (Wednesday- Saturday 9-5pm) with plenty of free parking places so you can shop safely. They also offer a free home delivery service to those who cannot get out – email james@pasturespoultry.co.uk or call 01604 696596 for a product list. You can then place your order and pay over the phone. They offer fresh bread, milk, fruit and veg, their own poultry, other locally sourced meats and a wide section of homemade goods, puddings, ready meals and jams.

Support

Last week we let you know about all the ways we can help support you during these difficult times. We just wanted to remind you that you can email us using the support@olney.church address and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. You can also visit the church website (<http://olney.church/support-network>) and follow the links to the different types of support. This is a completely confidential service so please don't worry about reaching out to us. The office email is also still available for you to use (office@olney.church) or call 01234 241721. Sue Haskell is still offering prayer support via prayer@olney.church.

Hymns from Richard Heyes and Susan Bailey

Don't forget you can skip the adverts at the start of the video links to this week's hymns.

Ye Servants of God

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol,
His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

"Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"
Let all cry aloud and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore him and give him his right,
all glory and power, all wisdom and might;
all honour and blessing with angels above,
and thanks never-ceasing and infinite love.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ9j3e8_yQc

Christ is the King! O friends, rejoice

Christ is the King! O friends, rejoice;
brothers and sisters with one voice
let the world know he is your choice.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Oh magnify the Lord, and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

They with a faith forever new
followed the King, and round him drew
thousands of faithful servants true.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the way disciples followed then.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Christ through all ages is the same:
place the same hope in his great name,
with the same faith his word proclaim.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lccZng7K_M

Saturday prayer group

If you want to join in with the online prayer group on Saturday mornings please visit the church website and follow the link to email the prayer group team – they will then send you details of how to join in.

<http://olney.church>
