

Funerals. None.

Church re-opening. Our church has re-opened for private prayer. We will be open for a limited number of hours twice per week. This started on Wednesday 24th June and will continue on each Wednesday and Sunday 12-3 until further notice. **If you would like to be a steward for a one-hour shift please could you contact susan.bailey@olney.church or the church office (office@olney.church) or ring us on 01234 241721.** *The Standing Committee*

Hymns from Richard.

This weekend is our Patronal festival and so we have a lovely hymn, 'There is a balm in Gilead' which celebrates both St. Peter and St. Paul for you this week.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to save a sin-sick soul.

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus; you can say "He died for us all".

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to save a sin-sick soul

Sometimes I feel discouraged, you know and feel like I can't go on,

Oh, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

Revives my soul, my soul again.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fcMxl_6xsk

Rector's letter.

Wednesday the 24th June is the day we remembered the birth of John the Baptist. He was and is one of the most influential men of all time. He lived in the desert, ate locusts and wild honey, and wore rough scratchy camel's hair clothes with a leather belt. His one aim and purpose in life was to direct others to Jesus Christ. The prophets told of John's and Jesus' coming, and then after 400 years of silence John came to speak for God and to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus' ministry on earth. God's timing is always perfect. John came into the world at just the right time, lived how God had chosen for him, spoke for God, humbled himself before Jesus and declared that Jesus was greater than he was. John pointed those who came to him away from himself and towards Jesus.

I had until a few years ago a wise spiritual director and dear friend who I admired tremendously. On one occasion I told him that I wished I could be more like him and see things in the same way that he did. Fr Tom replied to me very sternly, "No! God called me to be me and you to be you." Of course he was right; he always was. By the same account, all of us are called to live where God calls us to be, have the lifestyles that are just right for each one of us and to seek to help others to find out who the Lord Jesus is and to experience Jesus' love and care for themselves. Stay safe and God bless!

Andrew+

Congratulations. Meanwhile Dawn Brennan is delighted to share some special news. She and David Nightingale have just announced their engagement. Warmest Congratulations to you both.



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

Sunday 28th June 2020

Today – Third Sunday after Trinity



Welcome and notices

Reading: Zechariah 4: 1-6a, 10b-end

Gospel: Matthew 16: 13-19

Wed 1st: Amos 5: 14,15,21-24
Matthew 8: 28-end

Collect: God our saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Intercessions: *A French prayer in the spirit of St. Francis from Andrew Pritchard –Keens*

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

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

We pray for the souls of the recently departed and their families. *David Adams, Ann Cahill, Ted Pankhurst and Dean Ellis*

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

Eucharistic Prayer: A

Prayer: **O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining and whose power we cannot comprehend: show us your glory as far as we can grasp it, and shield us from knowing more than we can bear until we may look upon you without fear; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

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

Some material included is

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We've all been affected by Covid-19 and while we have been isolating, we have admired our frontline workers for heading to work to keep us safe. Many families are juggling home schooling with working, often from home; couples have had to get used to being together over an extended period and single people have lived in isolation for months, many cared for by wonderful neighbours, friends and our Covid-19 support group. Families have been unable to be together, celebrating socially isolated birthdays and anniversaries on social media. Weddings have been postponed and our church closed. However, behind the scenes life's events - happy, sad and challenging have carried on. I've been privileged to share stories and have asked permission to tell a few here. However, for many, the events of the last few months have been overwhelming and the sadness difficult to cope with. You can see from our weekly sheets that eleven people have passed away over the last 15 weeks and some have been Covid related. This is at a time when funerals have been tough to deal with and arrange. The Church of England has created a virtual candle. If you know someone who has been recently bereaved and they are in your thoughts and prayers, you may like to light one. (<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle-remember-someone>).

Covid-19 Experiences. There are several people in our Church Family and town who have been diagnosed with Covid-19. When I heard that **Mike and Susan** Hughes had suffered from Covid-19 I asked them if they would write about their experience. This is what happened to them and how they felt: *"The Coronavirus pandemic still is a very dangerous place for us all, young and old alike! Susan and I were in New York in early March, celebrating Susan's birthday with lots of socialising in the close company of others. All gatherings were 'cheek by jowl', as in any crowded place! And then came Donald Trump's decision to end all travel with the UK! We decided a rapid return to the UK was in order and changed our flights to leave New York on the 16th March. On arrival in the UK on the morning of the 17th, all was well, until on the 19th or 20th, we metaphorically 'fell off a cliff'. From then on it was a blur of massive sweats, explosive coughing and feeling very unwell, but we looked after each other! After some days of a shared range of symptoms, I began to vomit every 30 to 40 seconds, yes, seconds! This persisted for 5 hours and an ambulance was called. There has been no explanation of what caused the vomiting, but as fast as it occurred, it stopped! During this period, it is difficult to recall what exactly happened or how we felt, but we were ill for seven weeks and both of us had a significant weight loss. A legacy has been extreme tiredness and surprisingly a drop in blood pressure for both of us. We will see what the future brings."*

Rita and Bobby also had a frightening experience when they embarked on what they thought was a trip of a lifetime, a cruise around South America. They left on the 1st March and all started well with a flight to Santiago and some sightseeing before boarding the "Coral Princess" on the 5th March. They sailed down to Tierra del Fuego round Cape Horn to then to the Falkland Islands. Civil unrest in Chile surprised them with riots, graffiti, churches daubed with paint and general unrest. The Falkland Islands in contrast were very British with Union Jacks, monuments to the service men, museums, and a statue of Margaret Thatcher. Re-boarding the ship, little did they know it would be 5th

April before they would put their feet on dry land again. The Covid-19 pandemic was moving across the globe and they were going to be stuck thousands of miles from home. Their next stop was due to be Puerto Madryn, Argentina, but they were not allowed to dock, so sailed on to Montevideo, Uruguay. Again they couldn't disembark, but were told they could after the Captain returned to port for supplies and fuel on 20th, after dropping off passengers in Buenos Aires. Then news reached them that their Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro trips would be cancelled and so there was now a real urgency to get home. The Brits on board who were seen on British TV and were called the "Coral 400", and were led by Dame Jill Morgan, who had good contacts and spoke to the cruise company, tour operators and authorities on their behalf. She was able to speak with Ambassadors in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and America. There were daily updates, one which coincided with the first "Clapping for NHS" and they all joined in. Meanwhile the Port Authority in Buenos Aires said they could dock on 18th March if all 3,450 passengers crew had their temperatures checked. Here 1,000 passengers flew home, but not Rita and Bobby. Neither could they stay there, as the authorities said they would enforce a 14-day quarantine at midnight. At 11.56 the ship sailed off to Montevideo. An armed guard stood on the gangplank there and "The welcome to Uruguay" sign had a hollow ring. At this point medical staff were arranging additional medication, including for Bobby who needed 10 doses a day for his heart condition. Then the ship headed for Fort Lauderdale, Florida with some degree of normality on board, but the Captain was told to head for Rio de Janeiro and Bobby and Rita's flight on 24th March was confirmed. Just off the coast in sight of Christ the Redeemer and Copacabana beach, radio contact from the authorities on shore ceased and they had to go back to Fort Lauderdale. At a refuel stop in Barbados, a passenger showing flu like symptoms was taken off. The next day 7 passengers and 5 crew members tested positive and passengers were confined to their cabins. Wearing masks, passengers could pick up food and drink from outside their doors and watch tv and films. Saturday 4th April was their arrival date in Fort Lauderdale, but on the Thursday there was a ship-to-ship transfer of oxygen cylinders and the arrival of 2 more nurses and a doctor. By the 4th April, sadly, two people had died, so now the ship had to head to Miami and ambulances arrived at the dockside. After much anxiety, Bobby and Rita were told to go and have their temperatures taken, get their disembarkation card and get ready to disembark. A police escort took them to the airport and an isolated area. The "Coral 400" were on their way home. It was an emotional time for all. On 6th April they were back in Olney and into 14 days isolation, but feeling anxious and exhausted. As Rita says *"we were very lucky to have got back home so quickly, sadly not everyone on the cruise did"*.

Congratulations are in order for Rita and Bobby now as they have some uplifting and special news; they have just become grandparents! Their son Craig and wife Molly Childs have a new baby named Albert Richard, after Rita's dad. He was born on Friday 12th June at 6.40am weighing 6lb 3oz. He was, Rita says, "two weeks early, very small but absolutely gorgeous... he is edible!"

God bless, Susan Bailey, Church Warden.