

Funerals. None.

Rector's letter

Dear Family, I have just written a piece for the Phonebox that I would like to share with you all. It means that you all get things hot from the press and before the rest of the Phonebox circulation: **A new start.** Many of us are wondering about the future and what it will look like and what it will bring for us. Of course there is so much that we do not know, so much has changed and so much will change; and change can be so very messy. A clergyman recently told me that he and his Church were making sure that they do not rush into the next season whatever that is for them. They have adopted the slogan 'Selah' which is Hebrew for pause. The mnemonic that they are using is: 'Stop Everything Listen And Hear'

They are pausing, praying and planning using 'Selah' because they want to come up with God's ideas, God's solutions and God's plans for the new season that they will be entering after 'lockdown' is over. For some of us, our lives will go back to things pretty much as they were before the pandemic, while others will start new ventures in a totally new way. Here are some thought provoking quotes that relate to starting new things in life:

"New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings." - Lao Tzu (Taoism)

For many we have been or are in a place of pain; there are new things ahead for us. "It is never too late to be what you might have been." -- George Eliot. This may be a time for us to step out of any regrets that we have from the past and walk into being more of the person that we have always longed to be. "If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run, then walk, if you can't walk, then crawl, but by all means keep moving." -- Martin Luther King Jr. If we have good dreams (and Martin Luther King Jr certainly did) then they are worth pursuing and it is good to not be side-tracked, good not to give in to disillusionment and good to keep working at them. With the Christian faith there is much to be said of new starts. The Bible tells us that if anyone becomes a Christian, "... they are a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." We are also told that whenever we make mistakes and ask for forgiveness God will completely forgive us: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is (His) faithfulness". Stay safe and God bless! Andrew+

Hymns from Richard and Susan

'Father God, I wonder' (a worship song to go with the Epistle) Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist; Without the knowledge of Your parenthood and Your loving care; But now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family; And I can never be alone; 'Cause Father God, You're there beside me; I will sing Your praises (repeated) Forever more (repeated) This is a particularly lovely version. As usual Skip the adverts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuXltxvza5A>

Happy are they, they who love God (to link to this week's Gospel) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zckq2QqbzDo>



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

Sunday 19th July 2020

Today – Sixth Sunday after Trinity



Welcome and notices

Reading: Isaiah 44: 6-8

Gospel: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

Wed 22nd: Song Solomon 3: 1-4
John 20: 1-2, 11-18

Collect: Creator God, you made us all in your image: may we discern you in all that we see, and serve you in all that we do; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Intercessions: Thanks to Malcolm for this prayer that is so relevant to where we are on our faith journey at this time:

Loving God, we pray for your church as we start to navigate how we can worship together, both online and offline. As we start to meet together again physically, we give thanks for all who are giving their time in helping to make decisions, cleaning the church, deciding and sharing guidelines and enabling people to come and pray once more inside the buildings that have held our memories safe. We pray for inclusive hearts and minds which will help us make sure that all are welcome and able to worship together still, and for the generosity to sow seeds of love, mercy, compassion, justice, hope and joy.

Amen

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

We pray for the souls of the recently departed and their families. Ann Cahill, Ted Pankhurst, Dean Ellis and Adrian Escott

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

Eucharistic Prayer: A

Prayer: God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Some material included is

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Update on Private Prayer and Re-opening church

We hope to restart some type of service from 10.00am on 26 July. Further information next week. Meanwhile we have decided to reduce private prayer time on Wednesday to 12-2pm. This Sunday (19 July) we will be open for Private Prayer from 12-3pm as usual

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Dear All. Over the next few weeks we will be sharing what has happened over lockdown in relation to our lives, our church family and our church building. Then when you return to church we hope you will feel well informed and ready as Andrew our rector says, to adopt a new start and new beginnings. This week Andrew writes about his time in lockdown entitled: **Sorry I cannot meet with you to tell you this in person!** *During this very odd time in our lives I have had to adapt to a lot of new things. One of them is spending time with people via computer instead of meeting with them face to face. I have really missed talking with folk and worshipping in person with you all. It has also been strange to write sermons, and of course our newly instituted 'Thoughts for the Day', and to then not be able to deliver them to you in the normal way. But all that said I have found it really rewarding to write these meditations and more. In addition to my own writings I have so valued and appreciated the sermons and thoughts written by the Ministry Team and especially Janet, Thelma and Jo. If you haven't been following these, please 'give them a go'; they are full of wonderful insights and gems. So in lockdown, how have I coped / survived? Well, I have been saying the daily office at home as usual, but like you I've been unable to go into the Church or meet up with others and celebrate Holy Communion or take part in other services. (That has been frustrating). On the other hand it has been encouraging for me to 'zoom-pray' with many of you on Saturday mornings and for a group of us to say 'zoom daily prayer' together on Wednesday mornings. It is my privilege to pray for everyone: Church people, town people, children and schoolteachers, 'rugby clubbers' and so many more. Part of my new prayer schedule is that I walk and pray around the town. During these last months I have normally set off with a sun hat and shepherd's crook between 2pm and 3pm. As well as praying, I have had some good conversations with the people who I have met on the way. This strange period has also allowed me time to reflect on my first 18 months in post in the parish and to seek God for our next season together. I am truly grateful for the Standing Committee who has met every week since the announcement of lockdown, the PCC for their wisdom and support, the Ministry Team who lead and preach so well and the individuals and groups who enrich our corporate life and mission as a Church. Thank you everyone! Outside of the parish I have had other duties to perform, (as best as I can within the government regulations). I am just beginning to meet with Police workers in person again, but until recently everything had to be done by video conference calls or by phone. I do not as yet visit all of the officers and staff in Milton Keynes Police Station (as I used to) but I am there on Wednesday afternoons working in an allocated office and individuals are able to come and meet with me at a 'social distance' if they so wish. Andrew Geary is the Mayor of Milton Keynes this year and he is doing a splendid job for us all. I have the honour to be his chaplain; so this year he, Lisa and their family are particularly remembered and prayed for. As part of my 'out of parish' duties I have been invited to attend some very small gatherings which have included*

commemorating VE day in Bletchley and remembering Albert French, (the boy soldier) at the Rose in Milton Keynes. Personally, Fenella and I have been 're-enjoying' taking the 'Marriage Course'. We have chosen to do that to refresh our memories of how helpful it is and with a view to offering it to others when we are all allowed to meet together again. Like many others we have also been stepping up to the challenge of home schooling and caring for our little tribe who have been unable to see and play with their friends. The children have been enjoying the garden during this time whilst I have been doing my best not to kill off every plant and vegetable that we have. Thankfully, this week we have help in the garden again; I can now go from 'worrying the flowers' and 'flourishing the weeds' to just 'watering the flowers' and 'frightening the weeds' (by letting someone who can tell the difference sort things out). My prayer is that during this difficult time and into the future God the gardener will continue to care for us His garden and that He will grow us and care for us all: "So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth". 1 Corinthians 3 verse 7. Every blessing, stay safe in God's love, Andrew+

Surprise. Another rather unexpected but delightful new beginning was for Katie, our administrator. She writes "Finnan George was born on the 9th July at 8.50 in the evening, crashing the party somewhat as he arrived unfashionably early, working on a due date of August 13th! There were a few days in hospital as is normal for premature babies, but Finn showed great resilience and passed every single test the hospital threw at him, and he came home to Olney on Monday of this week to the excitement of his older brother, Alexander, and the relief and happiness of his parents. We wish to thank the NHS and in particular the excellent ambulance crew that attended after the surprisingly rapid onset of labour.



Katie has sent these lovely pictures and will be taking a few weeks well-earned rest. Meanwhile myself, Pat P and Gill P will hold the fort using all the usual contact details.