

Funerals: None

Church Closure: The standing committee met by Zoom on Tuesday evening, the 2nd February and we can advise you that the majority view was that the church should remain closed. There were discussions about the encouraging recent reduction in the local infection rates and the encouraging news about the roll out of vaccines. We will continue to plan for the reopening of the church so we are prepared when we do eventually reopen, but we will only reopen when the Rector and the members of the standing committee consider it safe to do so and the majority of the PCC agree. *Standing Committee*

Two our Church Family have passed away recently. This week some of their friends remember them:

Bishop Keith Arnold. It was with great sadness we heard of the passing of Bishop Keith Arnold. He had an interesting life devoted to helping others in England, Scotland and abroad. He studied at Trinity College Cambridge and Theological College before continuing his work in the church. He was the Bishop of Warwick from 1980-1990 He was a kind, gentle man with a great sense of humour and all who were fortunate to know him will remember him with affection. He leaves a wife Noreen. *Joan Parkin*

Dora Crawford. Dora was a lovely, kind and gentle lady. She had many good friends in Olney, who she socialised with on many an occasion. Dora enjoyed afternoon tea, lunch, coffee or a game of cards and had a great sense of humour. She was a regular at the Wednesday morning service. She was 'computer savvy', used Skype and she didn't find it difficult to change to the Zoom service. Her dear husband John died a few years ago, following a stroke. Before this they enjoyed annual holidays in Madeira. They had two sons and a daughter, and several grandchildren who were the joy of her life with the youngest just embarking on a Master's degree. Dora had many interests, which included music, current affairs, tennis, rugby and the Historical Society. She lived in a beautiful apartment on the top floor of Kensington Place on Wellingborough Road after moving from Coneygere. She had a lovely soft lilting accent from her Irish roots and she will be missed by us all.

Ann Minney, Thelma Shacklady and Judy Gay

A Journey through Lent : Last chance to order the booklet for this course – order by 8th February. The church is generously paying for this. I will deliver a booklet to those who have asked for one. I can offer ideas for discussion, for those who are happy to meet on Zoom once a week. The Zoom meetings will be at 2pm on Wednesday afternoons. Call Janet Lawrence on 01234 240568 or order through the church office Thanks, *Janet*.

Sunday Evening Prayer service. Link <http://olney.church/zoom> or call 0203 051 2874 followed by passcode 427368.

Zoom Wednesday Morning Prayer. 9.30 am. Call 0203 481 5240 and enter the meeting ID: 825 0404 5581# or follow the link at <http://olney.church/zoom> Take care. *Susan and Katie*

Social Media reminders:

Twitter (new!) [@olneychurch](https://twitter.com/olneychurch)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpeterandstpaulchurcholney>

Church office: 01234 241721 email: office@olney.church



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

Sunday 7th February 2021

2nd Sunday Before Lent
(Church Closed)



Welcome and notices

Reading: Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31

Gospel: John 1: 1-14

Wed 10th: Genesis 2: 4b-9, 15-17
Mark 7: 14-23

Collect: God of our salvation, help us to turn away from those habits which harm our bodies and poison our minds and to choose again your gift of life, revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Response: *Wise and holy God: we are your children.*

Intercessions: Holy Trinity we pray for the unity of the Church in witness and for the proclamation of the Gospel; that all might hear of God's love for us all. Heavenly Father we pray for the peace and stability of all peoples and for the leaders of all the nations. Bless our Queen, our government, parliament and all our local leaders to love justice, be merciful and to honour You in all that they do.

Lord Jesus, bless Olney, our places of work, our schools and all who live and work in our town. You held the little children in Your arms and blessed them; hold and bless the youngsters who live and study in Olney, parents who are home schooling, the children's teachers and all who work in education and child care.

Holy Spirit, come among us in Your love; bless our homes, our relatives, all of our friends and all whom we love (we say the names of our loved ones ...)

Lord Jesus You have promised to be with us and bless us, so we are bold to pray: Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. **Amen**

We pray blessing and healing for those who are sick: *Toby O'Grady, Kevin, Keith, Cyril, Rene Tourle, Pat Major, Gail, Martin, Hannah, Rena Partridge, Phill Stocking, Eliza, Bar, Georgina, Michael Seabrook, Debbie, Rachel Lintern and Peggy Armitage.*

We remember the recently departed and pray for comfort for their families and friends: *Barbara Trinder, Bishop Keith Arnold, Dora Crawford and Kathleen Shacklady.*

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

Post Communion Prayer: God of truth, we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands the bread of life: strengthen our faith that we may grow in love for you and for each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has released a 'Prayer for the Nation' which you can find at this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org>

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

Some material included is © The Archbishops' Council 2002

Rector's letter. All of us are saddened because we cannot have our pancake race and Shroving Service this year. It feels like it is just one more thing that we are being robbed of by this terrible virus. However, compared to the loss of loved ones, not having good health or being unable to be with family and friends we can only see that losing these events that are dear to us are inconveniences. Our hearts and prayers continue to go out to those who are mourning, struggling with their own ill health, caring for loved ones who are sick or physically missing seeing those that they care for.

On the 14th February we celebrate Valentine's Day. It is a day to express our love to those who are special to us, but it can also be a day to take some time to thank God for His unending love for us and recommit ourselves to loving God and others around us. It is so important that we capture the truth that we are loved by God and that our best response to His love is to, " ...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength ... (and) ... love your neighbour as yourself."

Lent starts just three days after St Valentine's Day on Ash Wednesday; it is a season of forty days (not including Sundays) when Christians reflect and prepare for the celebrations of Christ being raised from the dead at Easter. Some people fast, eat frugally or give up treats following the example of Jesus, who fasted for forty days in the wilderness. Some also give to charity, set aside time to study the Bible and meet with other Christians to reflect on Jesus' life and prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter. This year we have a chance to join with others in the Diocese and take part in the 'Come and See' materials. Janet Lawrence is running a 'Zoom' Lent course for us all and I shall be leading and hosting a 'Christians' Basics Course'. Details of all of these good things in this sheet.

Whatever your circumstances, I hope that this time leading up to Easter will be a time when you know that you are loved by God and others around you and a time when you are inspired to love God and others anew.

At this time may you know God's love, mercy and peace; and God willing may we all be together to celebrate Pancake Day, Shroving and Ash Wednesday next year. Every blessing, *Andrew+*

Visits: Andrew has visited a number of homes to prayer and Bless them for the New Year.

Come and See. This Christians' Basics Course will run on Wednesday evenings at 8pm. More details to follow.

Hymns: 'Thou, whose almighty word' (Old Testament reading) sung socially distanced by the choir of St. Albans last June <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGuUQjDkQA4> and 'Light's abode, celestial Salem' (Gospel);

Update: On 13th December (it's usually May) the churchwardens, Susan and David were sworn in at church by Rev. Andrew on behalf of the Bishop. On 24th we had Holy Communion for Christmas Eve at 6.30pm and a service for Christmas Day at 10am. Sadly we had to cancel our Christingle Service, the Christmas Tree Festival and at the last minute, the Nativity Trail. However we were able to complete and release the Christmas Service, which

prompted many supportive emails and comments and was viewed 100s of times...for some it was the first time they had seen inside church for nearly a year. For so many, it was a joy to listen to and see members of the church family and the ministry team and to listen to our wonderful church choir and organ. The singing was uplifting and beautiful. Many said how professional and well produced it was and we thank Mark Luckin and Paul Underwood for that. We were however saddened that on 27th December, Covid cases were reported to us from families who were in church on the 20th. Happily all are now well, but it was distressing for us all. However since the 27th we have had to close our doors. We have also had to pass and get approval for a resolution to legitimise the closing of the church, which mitigates against a breach of the Canon Laws B11 and B14.

On Christmas Day, Pat and Ashley Pankhurst together with Naomi Brock and local volunteers, prepared and delivered 25 delicious Christmas Lunches and presents. This was truly wonderful for all of those who received them. Many local businesses supported them with donations of food. Well done to all, this is the true spirit of Christmas. Also over the Christmas period there have been a number of funerals, and a wedding, which only consisted of 8 people, but with live steaming took nearly 4 hours... a record!

It is nearly Lent and sadly we have no Shrove Tuesday Celebrations to look forward to, however we have a Zoom/Telephone service of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday 17th February at 9.30am. We do not yet know what we will be able to offer for Mothering Sunday, Holy Week or Easter, but we will open as soon as we feel it is safe to do so and when we have a team to run the services.

We are pleased so many of you have had your first (sometimes second) vaccination and we look forward to government announcements on 15th Feb. and guidance from the Diocese to guide and support us. Meanwhile our Standing Committee (SC) keeps meeting every Tuesday at 8pm on Zoom and even though church is closed are still busy conducting the business of the church and reporting to the PCC. So here is a summary of what has been happening since the November update. The Tryptic that David collected from Cornwall is still adorning his dining room. On the 10th Nov. the DAC approved the John Newton area, but sadly excluded the Tryptic. We shall now have to find a new home for it, before David has it hung in his new bathroom! The John Kent Fund has been used to benefit 38 students in college or university and is now closed. The Church Hall Boilers, which for many years have been troublesome, are now fully repaired, serviced and certified, which means Susan will no longer have to clamber into the loft space to reset them! We are periodically heating the church and Richard is checking the organ. The rest of us are checking for leaks, vandalism (someone forced open the post box), vermin, working fire alarms, rubbish and breakages (i.e church hall windows).

We have been mindful of the wellbeing of the nursery and its staff. Lisa our treasurer has been sorting out the fees for 2021 and the accounts for 2020, as well as balancing the books. Haydn has been populating and updating our church website. Katie has been keeping the wheels turning and supporting us all. Thank you. *Susan and David*