

St Mary's Slaughtam Parish News



Remembrance Outdoor Services -

8th and 11th November

Christmas Services - possibly ?

November / December 2020

HANDCROSS - PEASE POTTAGE - SLAUGHAM - WARNINGLID

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The Church of Our Lady of Fatima Staplefield, served by St. Paul's ,Haywards Heath 450139

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2020 LETTER

Moving Towards Acceptance

As we draw to the end of 2020 it is fair to say that this is going to be a year that we are unlikely to forget, in fact I wouldn't be surprised if in years to come, 2020 will be on the national curriculum in our schools' history books.

As we head towards the start of 2021 I am sure that we are all hoping that the New Year will look very different. There has been a lot of talk about a 'new normal' as we enter another year, but the reality is that we don't really know what that will look like.

I have written in previous letters about the importance of acceptance when we face difficult times and as we approach Christmas I think this is going to be more important than ever before. Whilst leaders around the world are talking about trying to have stricter 'lock-down' rules now so that Christmas can be as normal as possible, we also need to accept that Christmas this year may be like no other we have had before. In order to make it the best that we can, we first need to accept that it is how it is and then to focus on what we can do rather than dwelling on what we won't be able to do – I know this may not be easy, as the things that we may not be able to do are the important things that we love to do, especially around family and community, but it has to be a better alternative to dwelling.

As well as accepting the reality, and thinking of new and fresh ways to celebrate this time of year, it may also be helpful to remember the eternal truth of the message of Christmas. It is at this time of year that we celebrate that Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us! I have never needed to be reminded of that truth more than I do right now. You may well have questions about God, you may be doubting any faith you had before, you may be angry at God, but I have felt in recent weeks that I can't possibly imagine facing this year without Him and I have been so glad to know Him. He has been the only constant thing in my life in what has been a year of change, challenge and confusion. I have been so glad to have Him with me. I don't have answers to all my questions, there are things I simply don't understand, there are things I have prayed for that I have not seen answers to, but I still believe that God is who He says He is and who I have known Him to be in the past – He is still Emmanuel – God with us.

Continued on Page 2.....



This truth can still be celebrated, even if we can't get together in the way we normally would, even if we can't hold all of our carol services and crib services, this truth is one that is both corporate and personal. Jesus came for you! Even if you were the only person in this world, He still would have come for you. Even if you can't be with others, He can be, and is still with you – and we if accept God's gift of love to us in Jesus, then, even in the middle of a pandemic, we can have peace, hope and joy this Christmas season and into whatever the 'new Normal' of 2021 will look like.

I pray that as we accept whatever is ahead of us, that we will all know that God is with us in and through it all and that we will know His unchanging love for us, and through that love find peace, hope and joy.

Grace and Peace

Carl

Remembrance Services

Sunday 8th November 10:30am –

A short outdoor Remembrance Service.
Gather by the Cricket Pavilion on Staplefield Green at 10:30am for Hymns and a short reflection before processing to the War Memorial for two minutes silence.



Wednesday 11th November 10:45am -

Gather at the War Memorial, Staplefield Green.

Please note the above services are subject to national and local lockdown restrictions at the time of the event. Should either event need to be cancelled we will do our best to inform you

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Coronavirus

Just as we thought we might be getting back to some kind of ‘normal’, the pandemic is rushing through again. It is true, some people think it would be best to allow the virus to run its course and everyone take responsibility for their own health / safety etc. However, this is easy to say, but it has been proved that it can be passed on to others by someone who does not even know that they have the virus. So even those who are most conscientious and careful to sanitize, wear a mask etc., are just as liable to contract the virus. It is impossible to know what advice and direction to take.

Since the beginning of this year, everyone the world over has suffered loss of some kind. The loss of loved ones so unexpectedly, and not being able to say “goodbye” in the traditional way, has been devastating for so many people. The loss of livelihoods and certain freedoms is something we are learning to live with.

Young people particularly are finding it hard - not able to secure employment after leaving school or university.

School children missing out on their education, and of course interaction with their friends.

At the time of writing, the tier system has just been introduced and it seems possible that more stringent rules may come into force, and possibly another complete ‘lockdown’. Let’s hope not. At the moment it seems more confusing than ever for a lot of people.

It’s certainly true that this year has been a year like no other we have known.
Ed.

The following is the latest advice given out by Mid Sussex District Council:

COVID 19 – Community Safety advice to residents

Whilst most people are supporting one another, there is still a small minority who will look to criminally exploit situations like this. If you are self-isolating and require assistance with shopping, cleaning or care services, please use trusted sources – friends, family members or neighbours or a trusted local charity. If you have no support network and are not sure who can help, please contact the West Sussex Community Support Helpline on 03302 227980. It is okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. If the person is genuine, they will understand.

Always be aware of people and companies who may try to sell items at an increased price in order to profit from Coronavirus.

Doorstep offers

Don’t put up any signs on the front of your property which indicates you are vulnerable or in self isolation. Always ask for ID and be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressure you into accepting a service, they are unlikely to be genuine.

Don’t provide your banking details to anyone at the door.

Continued on Page 5.....

Phishing emails

There have been some scammers that are offering virus testing kits or treatments, vaccines or cures for Coronavirus. Testing is only offered by the NHS and there is currently no vaccine for Coronavirus. Please follow public health advice on what to do if you have symptoms or call NHS 111.

Telephone scammers

With more people self-isolating or working at home, it is possible that you might receive more scam phone calls than usual.

Don't reveal personal details or provide financial information (such as your bank account details or your PIN) over the phone, even if the caller claims to be from your bank. Hang up. If you feel harassed or intimidated, or if the caller talks over you without giving you a chance to speak, end the call. It may feel rude to hang up on someone, but you have the right not to be pressurised into anything.

Don't be rushed. Scammers will try to rush you into providing your personal details. They may say they have time-limited offer or claim your bank account is at risk if you don't give them the information they need right away.

Online shopping fraud

Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers. If you're purchasing goods and services from a company you don't know, carry out some research first. Look up reviews of the company and ask trusted friends and family members if they know of the company. If in doubt, don't use them.

Be wary of unsolicited emails and texts offering questionably good deals - if it looks too good to be true, it probably is! Never respond to messages that ask for your personal or financial details.

Avoid paying for goods and services by bank transfer as that offers you little protection if you become a victim of fraud. Instead, use a credit card or payment service such as PayPal if possible.

Useful numbers:

Advice on scams: Citizen's advice Consumer Helpline: 0808 223 1133

Reporting a scam: Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040

Loan Shark Helpline: 0300 555 2222

Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed

Sussex Police: 101 or 999 if an emergency

Mid Sussex District Council: 01444 458166.



A “Thank You” from Joan

I want to say an enormous “thank you” to the members of the Rosemary Club Committee who have been wonderful in keeping in touch with every member. Especial thanks go to Helen Arnold, Karen Baker and Allison Coley. Before COVID raised its ugly head the Rosemary Club met at the Parish Hall in Handcross on the third Wednesday of each month. On this day each month since COVID these three wonderful ladies have ensured that a home-made tea is delivered to every member of the Rosemary Club. Helen has made and delivered the bulk of these - up to 40 teas each month, with Karen (who travels from Rudgwick) and Allison making and delivering the rest, making the third Wednesday of each month as special for each member as it was when the meetings were held.

Other Rosemary Club Committee members - Sylvia Petch, Sue Sallows, Doreen and Alan Stevens and Margaret Tyrell make telephone calls to stay in touch with the Rosemary Club members allocated to them. It is very comforting to know someone is available if you are feeling lonely and isolated. I have not heard of any other club, organization or church that is so caring for its members. Another “thank you” must go to Carol Whiteford who, realising that a lot of people (especially the elderly) who do not have access to the internet, takes the trouble and expense to print off a copy of the Parish Magazine from her computer to display on the Pease Pottage notice board - which is situated at the top of the Horsham Road just before the Black Swan.

It does your heart good to know there are these wonderful people about.



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Handcross Community Pantry

Do you have a couple of hours to spare on Thursday mornings to help Barbara (Butfoy) with shopping for the pantry? You will need a car as there is usually too much shopping for one car boot. If there is more than one person available, then the shopping could be done on a rota basis. Please contact Barbara on her mobile 07853 228605 – thank you. If you would like to contribute to the Pantry over the coming weeks, you (or someone who isn't self-isolating) can deliver cash to the Hardware shop (marked PANTRY) by Friday each week. Someone who is allowed out will then shop for the Pantry. If you are still able to shop we would value some more of the following items:-

Thankyou.

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(e.g. rice pudding, custard)
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Tinned meat
Tinned pies
Cereals
Sugar
Toilet rolls

A poster for the Handcross Community Pantry. The background is a collage of various food items including bags of rice, boxes of pasta, and tins of food. The text is overlaid on this background. At the top, 'Handcross Community Pantry' is written in large, bold, white letters. Below this, in a semi-transparent pink box, it says 'Free provisions for the local community'. Further down, in a grey box, it says 'Open Every Saturday 10am-12pm All Saints Church, Handcross'. At the bottom, there are logos for 'UNITED BENEFICE OF ST. MICHAEL & ST. MARTIN, GLASCHAM & ST. PETER'S CHURCH' and 'in partnership with Handcross Community Pantry'. The bottom line of the poster says 'Serving our local community'.

Where do you come from?

I and my siblings apparently had a slightly ‘different’ accent for a while when growing up. Influenced by being the only English ‘kids’ among American missionary children on a mission station in Tanzania for a while, then home and school in Kenya among contemporaries with ‘Kenyan’ accents (whatever that was) my speech and that of my sisters and brothers must have reflected something of those environments. So new friends back in England would sometimes ask “where do you come from?” Invariably asked by friendly, interested people I did not usually mind being asked. I was proud of my heritage as the child and grandchild of missionaries.

Born in Kenya, I was the son of a missionary surgeon. He himself had been born in Congo, the son of pioneer missionaries to that huge country in the early 20th Century. My wife, Jen, has an even longer heritage as a ‘Missionary Kid’ - born in South Sudan, she is the daughter of missionaries there, and grand, and great-grand daughter to pioneer missionaries to China and East Africa. She, too, is proud of that heritage. However, the question may not always be innocent. “Where do you come from?” may be a front for the hidden message “you don’t belong here”, and have the intended result of making the person being asked uncomfortable. The recent ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement has highlighted again how insulting that question may be when aimed at a person who does not share the same colour skin, similar style clothes, accent or some other characteristic which may differ from the prevailing majority.

As Missionaries ourselves in Uganda, and white skinned people in a very small minority, Jen and I have often been asked “where do you come from?” Recently, stopped by a police road check in Uganda, the officer in charge asked us, after the routine questions had been completed, whether we were missionaries. We said “yes – why do you ask?” We were really encouraged by his answer, “Well”, he said, “you are white, and you are humble”! Knowing ourselves well enough to be painfully conscious that we are often proud, we thanked God for His grace that enabled us to respond humbly on that occasion. We have experienced racism directed at us as minority whites in a black country when it was intended to hurt, make us feel uncomfortable, foolish or unwanted – it is painful, and you need to be very secure to be able to avoid being hurt and wounded.

Yes, we’re proud of our Missionary heritage, and we’re not ashamed of that particular pride! To those who deride, mock, and bitterly criticise Christian missionaries we would answer that the heart of the Christian message is that of love. St Paul wrote, “If you love, you fulfil the whole (of God’s) law” (Romans 13:8), and St John wrote, “God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not die, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jesus Himself taught “If you hold to my teaching, ...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” and again, “...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”. (John 8:32, 36). We have witnessed first hand the wonderful, joyful liberation experienced by those set free from guilt or shame through faith in Christ.

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We're **not** proud to have to acknowledge that we are guilty of the sin of pride. C.S. Lewis, author of the wonderful Narnia series of books, and very many others, as well as being a great philosopher and Christian apologist, stated that in his opinion all sin stems from pride. Pride, that sense of entitlement that may cause us to be angry when someone goes ahead of us in a queue, cuts us up on the road, or some other minor infringement of our personal space; or that causes us to feel that we are entitled to keep hidden some income, and so avoid paying tax; that we are entitled to look with possessive lust on another person. That's the pride that leads marriages to fail, families to break up, nations to go to war, and we are guilty of that.

We are so very grateful for the Cross of Christ which reminds us that Jesus has paid the price that enables us to be forgiven; and it's an empty cross, because He rose again after the crucifixion, and sends His Holy Spirit to guide us into truth, and help us in our weakness.

ALL lives matter to Him.

Rob and Jen Morris

CHRISTMAS

We know that Christmas is going to be different this year and that we are not going to be able to do all the events we would normally love to do. Whilst it is very difficult to plan too far ahead at this current time, our hope is to have some form of carol service, whether outdoors, or running some smaller events with limited numbers.

We also hope to do an outdoor Nativity Service on Christmas Eve. Please keep an eye out for posters and social media updates for more information nearer the time.



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Mole - by Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust
...and I live in a hole

If your lawn is full of nectar-rich flowers for butterflies and bees, with a patch of long grass for grasshoppers and hedgehogs, then Mother Nature will thank you, but if you're one of those particular people who demands that their lawn is a perfectly manicured carpet, slathered in chemicals and shamelessly shaved each summer Sunday, then Mother Nature will not be happy and she'll send in her best hit man. So while on 5th November we remember, remember Guy Fawkes, I'm here to celebrate Britain's other infamous tunnelling terrorist – the mole.

It's hard to bond with the mole. Like 99.9% of us, I've never seen one and probably never will. They're almost a supernatural entity – the Bigfoot of the back garden. Their invisibility means my mental image of the mole has been painted by *The Wind in the Willows* and children's cartoons instead of real-life encounters. I'm always surprised when I see an actual photo of one and it's not wearing glasses.

Moles aren't blind. Admittedly, they'll be struggling by the second line of an eye test but there isn't much call for perfect eyesight when you spend all your life in total darkness. Instead, their pink nose is covered with 5,000 sensory organs which register touch and vibration, allowing the mole to 'see' with its snout; a super-sense that makes them efficient hunters. Their tunnel network spreads out like an underground web and when a wiggling worm drops into it the mole's super-senses tingle, sending them scrambling through their pitch-black passageways. Worms are captured, cleaned, beheaded and stored, still wriggling, in a larder for future consumption.

The mole's front paws are like a pair of giant pink snow-shovels and come equipped with an extra thumb; a characteristic they share with the giant panda. These wide shovel-hands can move an incredible 540 times their own weight of soil in a day. That's like me moving 55.46 tonnes of mud (and before you go scrambling for your calculators, yes, I could do with losing a few pounds).

The molehills that erupt on our lawns are spoil heaps created by the construction work below. OK –they're unsightly but gardeners should be welcoming moles. When potted, molehill soil makes an excellent growing medium for seeds and seedlings, so if you're blessed with molehills - grab a trowel. Once the tunnels are completed the molehills will stop appearing and, in the long run, mole burrowing bestows untold benefits to soil aeration and quality, but for me, it's a pleasure just knowing that such an amazing animal is living, unseen, a few inches below my feet. Some people will still complain but I guess some folk will always make a mountain out of a, well ... y'know.





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November garden notes

September was set to be completely devoid of rain until Storm Alex tracked across from the continent bringing much needed, though rather heavy, rain.... (100mm) in four days and unwelcome strong winds. It's been pretty wet since.

Some vulnerable trees fell (we lost a large Liquidamber which had some rot in the stem), leaves and plant debris was strewn along the sides of roads. However, the good news is the grass looks much healthier and the ground is now soft enough for planting bulbs and shrubs. November is always a variable month with either clear skies and frosts or murky, misty, damp weather.

In the vegetable garden, take down bean poles, burn bean haulms, especially if infected with rust, likewise bin any tomato plants with blight. Stake sprouts and other vulnerable brassicas; keep harvesting leeks, swede and parsnips. Cover brassicas with netting as pigeons will undoubtedly find your plants and peck away as winter arrives. Compost as much garden waste as you can like leaves and dead stems. Unwanted seed heads and perennials weeds are best burnt, if you are able to, without upsetting neighbours - or taken to the amenity tip.

As winter draws in, indoor plants can bring good cheer and a welcome splash of natural colour into our homes. Non hardy cyclamen will keep best if you remove dying and mouldy leaves and flowers to avoid botrytis infections. Indoor azaleas need plenty of water, but winter cactus little. Both prefer plenty of light but not the brilliant south facing window-sill sort. East or west facing or a position set back from a south facing window is best. Poinsettias like it warm with reasonable light. African violets are easy to look after and even the carnivorous plants, though they don't produce any colour in the flowering department.

If you save or overwinter tender plants like salvias, pelargoniums, nemesias and some fuchsias they need protecting from frost, gales and freezing rains. Move plants into a greenhouse or into a sheltered spot, but if you can't, some may survive if partially wrapped in bubble polythene. Waterlogged or frozen pots are bad news ! For those who store vegetables and fruit, keep a check regularly for rotten/mouldy ones . As the biblical saying goes : "a little yeast works through a whole batch of dough. Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast" (1 Corinthians 5 v 6) i.e. one bad one can infect a whole lot of good ones !



Spare a Thought

Decorations in house and street, inducing thoughts of festive treat.
Christmas cards with usual rhymes, bring usual greetings for auld lang syne.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Food collected, drinks in store, there's never room for any more.
Fun and games to make you jolly, crackers, parties, balloons and holly.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Wrapping paper, a secret thought, hiding away the gifts you've bought.
Singing carols, they're pleasant on ear, and they sound right for this time of year.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Exciting times on Christmas morn, opening presents from early dawn.
Stockings and dear old Santa Clause, Christmas pudding and brandy sauce.

But spare a thought for Jesus

Scattered toys throughout the day, awaiting time for new owner's play.
Fairy lights on Christmas trees, and families sharing memories.

But spare a thought for Jesus, spare a thought.

Roger Stapenhill



AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

TRUST IN GOD AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.

*All articles for the January / February 2021 Magazine
should reach us by Friday 18th December AT THE VERY LATEST.
Addresses and e.mails on inside of front cover.*

Thankyou. Editors

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