

St Peter's Wolvercote & All Saints' Wytham Wednesday 13 May 2020

Dear Friends,

Now we are in mid May it feels like time to say a little more about my retirement plans, as a number of people have been kindly asking us.

It is a very difficult time indeed to be going! However my deed of resignation was signed and sealed back in February, and having talked with my consultant neurologist and with Bishop Steven, and aware that my Parkinson's is continuing to progress and that my medication is gradually becoming less effective, it has become very clear that it would not be right to change these plans.

I had originally intended to finish with the Festival week at the end of June, and then take a couple of weeks holiday before preparing to move house. However now that the Festival has been cancelled, I have decided to take this holiday earlier, allowing me both to work at a more relaxed pace, and to continue to work until Sunday 12th July, so this will now be officially my last Sunday. However although I finish work at that point, my licence does not expire until 11th August, and if the church is open in any form, then Jane and I will want to keep coming to both St Peter's and Wytham until that point. Our move to our new house will be slightly later than planned, and we expect it to take place in the second half of August.



However, as we are not sure when we will be fully back in church, and Jane and I are keen to see everyone before we go, we have decided that whenever church services resume, Jane and I will come along for a couple of Sundays, sitting in the congregation, just to see everyone before we finally go. The Team have also kindly decided to invite us back for a Farewell Service when restrictions are lifted, and Bishop Steven has given his blessing to all these plans.

During the vacancy, Sarah will work with the St Peter's churchwardens to look after St Peter's, while Shei will work with the Wytham churchwardens to look after All Saints' Wytham. Shei will continue to look after pastoral needs and Funerals across the benefice, as well as Weddings at Wytham, while Sarah looks after Weddings at St Peter's, and will continue to head up our work with Wolvercote community. Other members of the ministry team will continue to assist with the organising and planning of services, and will share in the pastoral work as they do already. Julia will be back at work as Parish Administrator from a couple of weeks before my departure.

It is a very difficult time to be going, but I am glad to have still been here during the worst of the coronavirus crisis, and of course I will be continuing in ministry here for another couple of months yet. Many thanks to you all for all your encouragement and support,
With love and prayers

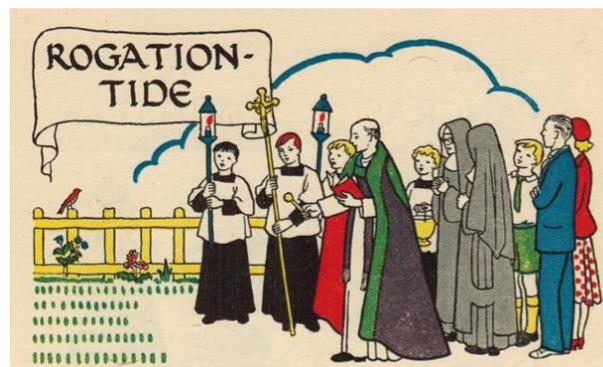
Charles and Jane

Rogationtide: A time for asking God's blessing on our crops and harvest

On Sunday 17 May, Sarah and Anne will be leading us in a Family Service to mark Rogationtide.

Rogationtide was originally about asking God (*rogare* means 'to ask' in Latin) to bless the crops: this seems especially relevant to our present environmental crisis.

Rogation Days are the three weekdays before Ascension Day, but many churches have observed Rogation on the preceding Sunday. Traditionally, a Rogationtide service is held outside and is often marked by the ceremony of beating the bounds, in which a procession of parishioners, led by the minister, churchwarden and choirboys would proceed around the boundary of their parish and pray for its protection in the forthcoming year.



At Rogationtide we celebrate God's wonderful creation. We remind ourselves of how much we depend on the crops in the fields and farm animals for our food, as well as remembering so many other blessings. But it is also a time to repent of the harm we have done, and are doing, to our planet; our neglect and exploitation of our environment; our maltreatment of our fellow creatures, so that many are now facing extinction; above all, we repent of global warming and climate change, largely man-made. As Christians we cannot shrug our shoulders and carry on as if nothing is happening. We human beings are responsible for planet earth. God has placed it in our hands. We must repent and with God's help we can and we must change our ways.

During this Rogationtide, you might like to use the following traditional Methodist prayer as we remember the needs of our farmers and our communities worldwide during the times we are living through.

'O God, who hast placed us as thy children in a world thou hast created for us: Give us thankful hearts as we work and as we pray. We praise thee for the day of light and life, for the night which brings rest and sleep, and for the ordered course of nature, seedtime and harvest, which thou hast given us. We bless thee that thou hast given us the joy of children and the wisdom of old men. We thank thee for all holy and humble men of heart, for the love of God and man which shines forth in commonplace lives, and above all for the vision of thyself, in loneliness and in fellowship, in Sacrament and in prayer; for these and all other benefits we praise and glorify the name, now and for evermore. Amen

Beth Knowles

Reflections for a church in lockdown

Bishop Steven is presenting a regular series of reflective podcasts and online audio to resource our worship during the pandemic. To listen to Bishop Steven's reflection on Psalm 2 - 'You are my son' - or other of his reflections, go to <https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org>.



Christian Aid Week 2020

"Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all. Let us love:"

"Let us love, not in word or speech but in truth and action" (1 John 3:18).

This verse from the New Testament sums up what Christian Aid (CA) is all about. Support them today. Give, act and pray - because they and we believe in LIFE before death.

People have already shown incredible kindness, protecting global neighbours. COVID-19 is a major emergency for Christian Aid. CA Week is its most important fund-raiser, normally through house-to-house collections, special services, quizzes, coffee mornings, Big Brekkies and shared lunches. But none of these usual activities are possible in the current situation.



Please donate directly to CA with a debit / credit card via its website (<https://www.christianaid.org.uk>) or by phone - 020 7523 2269.

Thank you!

Oxfordshire Art Weeks 2-25 May - Amazing art in a virtual festival

COVID-19 couldn't defeat the UK's biggest artist open studios and pop-up exhibition event.

Throughout May browse the artist galleries to see a huge selection of pieces from wall art and sculpture to homeware and jewellery.

Be inspired, entertained and delighted, and choose a treasure from the comfort of home. Click here <https://www.artweeks.org> to find out more.

Search for Wolvercote and Wytham artists, explore the daily online exhibitions and enjoy the wonderful range of work which is available online - reducing our carbon footprint, no moving from place to place (but we hope next year to be peripatetic once again).



Volunteers sought for COVID-19 study

A clinical trial, led by a team of Oxford scientists, is looking to recruit patients to evaluate the effectiveness of several low-risk drugs in controlling the symptoms of COVID-19.

Those aged over 65, or over 50 with an underlying health condition and vulnerable to developing serious symptoms, are encouraged to contact participating GPs, which includes Summertown Health Centre, to discuss their suitability to be included in the so-called PRINCIPLE study. The study will compare the current best available care with treatments recommended by an expert panel advising the chief medical officer for England, including a seven-day course of hydroxychloroquine, usually used for acute malaria or arthritis; and the antibiotic azithromycin

Participants will still be able to take paracetamol to alleviate their symptoms. Go to <https://www.phctrials.ox.ac.uk/principle-trial/how-to-join> to learn more about the study and how to join.

Downes Family C19 Ringroad Challenge



Anastasia (9) and Trinity (6) have been worried about those who are homeless in the city of Oxford during the coronavirus crisis. They persuaded their Mum Tamie, a GP, and Dad Greg, Director of Ministerial Training at Wycliffe Hall, to help them raise money to offer support.

Their chosen charity is ACT an innovative charity based in Oxford building a community where the homeless, prisoners, ex-offenders and others in need experience acceptance, support and opportunities and where people are transformed and set free to become all they were intended to be. During the current crisis, ACT provides daily meals outside St. Aldate's Church.

The family have completed a sponsored cycle for their daily exercise, circumnavigating Oxford on the ringroad cycle path (18 miles). As they cycled, they prayed for the residents and institutions of Oxford - particularly for NHS workers and those affected with the virus. To support their appeal, go to their dedicated page on <https://www.justgiving.com/tamarisk-downes>.

Church Administrator - reminder about Julia

Julia Goddard is on furlough until late June during which time St Peter's post, email and telephone calls will be monitored. For pastoral matters, continue to contact Charles tel:01865 553992 or email: charlesdraper@btinternet.com; Shei on tel:01865 430704 or email: shei.crowther@rcc.ac.uk; or Sarah on tel:01296 655237 or email: sarah.flashman@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

For all other urgent matters, contact the church wardens: Wendy tel:01865 512456 or email: wendy.sobey@btinternet.com; or Will and Sandie Capel tel:01865 556982 or email: wandschapel@btinternet.com.



Photographs for Rogationtide from Stephen Drew, Jackie Eatock Taylor and Luca Mazzocca