



**St Peter's Wolvercote & All Saints' Wytham
Wednesday 6 May 2020**

Dear Friends

This Friday we will be having a somewhat muted celebration of the 75th anniversary of VE Day – very different from the day itself when huge crowds gathered in joyful celebration! Their celebration was of course combined with a huge thankfulness for the many who had made such heroic sacrifices to bring it about. And yet the struggle was not completely over – the war in the Far East continued for another three and a half months, with a rather more sombre ending.

Similarly perhaps today, as we look forward to the end of the current lockdown, we are deeply thankful for the heroic sacrifices many have made to bring us to this point. We too are aware of the continuing struggle – that many restrictions will need to continue, and that life will be far from normal for a long time yet.

This year is also the 75th anniversary of Christian Aid, a charity set up by the churches in Britain and Ireland, to provide emergency help to the many thousands of refugees as the Second World War came to an end. Although Christian Aid was set up by the churches, its aim was always to provide help to anyone in need, regardless of faith, philosophy, religion or cultural background.

Christian Aid Week starts this Sunday. It will be quiet this year, with few fundraising events. However, the need is greater than ever. At present there is a serious concern over how poorer countries, without those health services we enjoy, will deal with the pandemic. We think particularly of places where thousands of refugees or slum dwellers live close together, with no opportunity for social distancing.

There will be no Christian Aid local collections this year. If you would like to make a contribution to their coronavirus appeal, please go to the [Christian Aid website](#) and give your donation directly. If you don't have access to the internet you can donate by telephone at 020 7523 2269. Thank you!

What most impressed me about the people of Britain during the War is that they never turned their backs on the needs of the rest of Europe and the world, although they suffered so much themselves, . Whether you choose to give to Christian Aid, or prefer other charities, or are just able to offer your prayers, I hope that the very great needs in our own country will not make us turn our backs on the even greater needs that are starting to emerge in other much poorer parts of the world.

With love and prayers

Charles

Julian of Norwich

This Friday we celebrate Julian of Norwich. One of her sayings most quoted is that 'All shall be well, all manner of things shall be well'. This is a comforting saying, but if we think it means that everything will suddenly turn out jolly, just as we desire, we are in for disappointment.

Julian received these words from Christ in the context of the grief she felt for the sins of the world. It would take too long to comment properly on this. However, it does give us a message of hope that, even if what seems the very worst happens, things will be well as we or those we love are taken into God's loving arms. It is a message of reassurance that, even when things seem impossibly tough, we can survive them because God, in Jesus Christ, is with us as we battle.

It is worth noting that Julian was about six years old when Black Death ravaged the country. When she was aged 30 she suffered an extremely severe illness from which it was thought she would die. She survived and chose self-isolation as an anchoress in order to devote her life to prayer. She lived until she was 73 or 74, having experienced much of what we feel we are going through at the moment.

The very last chapter of her Revelations includes;

'I learned that love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw for certain, both here and elsewhere, that before ever he made us, God loved us; and that his love has never slackened, nor ever shall.'

Amen.

Viv Bridges

VE Day in Wolvercote 8 May 1945



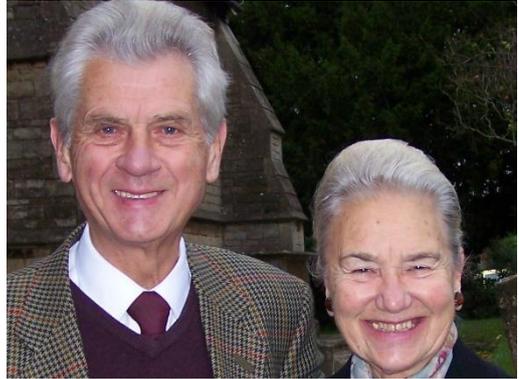
VE Party in the Village Hall in 1945.

The photograph above was reproduced from Ann Spokes Symonds' book '*The Changing Faces of Wolvercote*'. The header photograph was reproduced in Michael Stockford's '*Them and Us - memories of Upper and Lower Wolvercote*'.

VE Day recollections

Not surprisingly, the majority of our church members who were alive on VE Day were quite young. Their memories are fragmentary. Audrey Valentine remembers standing on a suspension bridge over the River Ouse. The many people running around and dancing was causing the bridge to sway which made her mother very anxious. Jo Coney was living in Stevenage. Although she remembers the street parties, the trestle tables, and the grim clothes - a reminder of wartime deprivation - her most vivid memory was of being devastated when she was asked to return her Mickey Mouse gas mask!

For Michael and Rita Stockford, VE Day celebrations hold even more special memories. It was the day they met - at the Wolvercote Village Hall celebratory dance. He'd had his eye on this pretty girl for a while. When his mate telephoned to tell him she was at the dance, he was there like a shot. How they actually got together is another story - one for the Flying Goose! So congratulations to Michael and Rita on their 'special' anniversary!



Sewing scrubs

Evelyn Bryant still has the letter that King George VI sent to her, as to every other child, to mark victory in Europe. Little did she know that 75 years later she would be occupying herself by sewing 'scrubs' for NHS staff and care workers during a pandemic - another war with many casualties but none caused by the bombing of cities, thank goodness.

Evelyn is just one of an army of volunteers across Oxfordshire who have been donating their time and skills to make hundreds of pairs of scrubs, laundry bags and personal protective equipment (PPE) following an appeal by care homes and hospitals including the John Radcliffe.

If you'd like more information, contact Evelyn (01865 514415) or Val Tate (01865 559316).

Reflections for a church in lockdown

Bishop Steven is releasing a regular series of reflective podcasts and online audio to resource the Church during the pandemic. The first reflection, a helpful and supportive contemplation, was an exploration of Psalm 1 – like a tree planted. Just what we need at this time. If you'd like to explore further go to Bishop Steven's blog page on the Diocese of Oxford website (<https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org/>).

100 Club supports charities hit by COVID-19

Proceeds from the 100 Club go to Mission Giving at St Peter's. From money raised in the last few months, we can donate £850 each to two charities hard hit by the ongoing pandemic. The Oxford Gatehouse (<http://oxfordgatehouse.org/>) offers free support for adults aged 25+ who are homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income or looking for company and community. Although their drop-in centre has had to close for the duration, they are providing a food and drink delivery service to vulnerably housed guests. With many of their normal fundraising avenues closed, donations are vital. Further

donations of food, money, clothing and other items are welcome as always. Go to their website or contact Diana Clews (01865 558982).

Open Doors (<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>), an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. is the second beneficiary. Lockdown means that many Christians across the world no longer have income and can't buy food. On top of this, Christians are often ignored when official aid is distributed. They desperately need help. Open Doors is reaching some of those affected, but much, much more needs to be done.

"I saw men, women and children crying of hunger; it's tragic," said an Open Doors partner in Syria. *"We're in dire need of funds to support a larger number of families. We've helped 80 families, but the number of needy families is much higher."*

Thank you to everyone who supports the 100 Club and our mission work. You can still join for a chance to win the monthly top prize of £100 or four prizes of £25 each. April's draw took place last weekend and winners have been notified. For details contact Bill Clarke (01865 510109).

Church Administrator

Julia Goddard will be 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: wandscapel@btinternet.com.

Home sweet home



Last week we saw a beautiful photograph of a woodpecker from Jackie Eatock Taylor. Today's starling, just popping into a hole in the soffit above my head, has been nesting here for three or four years. The arrival is accompanied by noisy cheeping from her hungry babies. The mate immediately flies off for another forage. Such hard-working little creatures.
Stephen Drew