

Parish of Curdworth, Middleton and Wishaw

NEWSLETTER

For the week beginning

Sunday 29th March 2020

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Passion Sunday



This has been our first full week of ‘lock down’ – an unfamiliar situation for everyone. We hope you have begun to adapt to these challenging circumstances.

LENT 2020

The Church of England’s **#LiveLent** continues. You can download the app to your phone or tablet. There is a daily reading and reflection, an action, prayer for the week and a challenge—for each day of Lent. Have a look, it only takes a few minutes.

Parochial Church Council Meeting

The PCC had a virtual meeting on Wednesday evening. Agenda items included this Newsletter, a vacancy update, finance and the Three in One Magazine.

Feedback following the first edition of this Newsletter was positive and it was seen as a good way of keeping in contact during the coronavirus crisis and while our churches and hall are out of action. It was decided to continue with its publication on a weekly basis for the time being.

The **Vacancy Update** includes the following statement from the Archdeacon of Aston:

“Thanks to all who were involved in meeting a candidate as the next incumbent

some weeks ago. The process has moved forward – the Bishop has affirmed the very positive response that the candidate received from both parish and the patronage and interview boards. We do need to wait for one further piece of process in mid-April and communication following that from the candidate’s current diocese. This is entirely normal in these circumstances and there is no need to think anything other than to have longer to anticipate with joy the good news about your next incumbent.”

In other words, everything is fine!

Finance was discussed and was, in the light of the current situation, a cause for concern. Obviously, with no Sunday services, no hall bookings and no fund raising events, there is going to be a significant shortfall in expected income. Clearly this does not just apply to our Parish, but to all churches, charities and many other organisations. The Church of England Birmingham is asking us to encourage everyone in the practice of ‘prayerful generosity’. The PCC is therefore asking anyone who does not already support the churches by monthly or weekly standing order to carefully consider if they could do this, even if only for the next few months. Although there are no Sunday services at present, the usual bills will still have to be paid and, especially with a potential new incumbent on the horizon, it is essential that we are seen to be ‘paying our way’.

There was a discussion about the **Three in One Magazine** and the feeling was that in the current circumstances it would not be feasible to produce the May/June magazine and possibly not the July/August edition either. It was decided, therefore, to continue to publish church news in this Newsletter for the next few weeks at least.

At the beginning of March, Sue Hemmings stepped down as editor of the Magazine. The PCC would like to thank Sue for her sterling work as editor and express their appreciation for her part in producing an increasingly professional looking publication.

The PCC’s next meeting (date to be confirmed) will be conducted via Zoom, a video conferencing app. This means that we shall be able to see each other!

And now for something completely different!.....

Alan Vaughton is asking for some help in the church yard at St Nicholas. If you felt able to help with tidying in the church yard for an hour or two each month, it would be very easy to practice social distancing and work in your own area. At this time of year everything is growing rapidly and some extra help would ensure the church yard looks at its best. Contact Alan for further details.

avaughton@yahoo.co.uk. or 07807 970 293

Following last week's Newsletter, there were a number of people who offered to help anyone who might need shopping. If you know of anyone who is struggling to get what they need, please contact us via 07778 458 789 or margaret_allen69@yahoo.co.uk.

At the end of the readings you will find a short reflection on the Gospel. Thank you to Lisa Wilcox for this week's reflection.

PRAYERS

In your prayers this week, please pray for those who are sick, including:

Lynn Adcock

Shirley Bolton

George Bullivant

Diane Craven

Lesley Cox

Fay Dayus

Pat Harris

Stacey Hobbs

Charlotte Mason

Will McFarland and all children and adults with autism

Isabella Murphy

Freya Pearson

Cathy Smith

Marie Sylvester

Barbara Thomas

Jenny Tillson

Paul Wilson

If you would like anyone added to this list, please let us know.

Remember those who have died and those who mourn them:

Adrian	Phil Burwell
Daniel	John Consterdine
Joan Jarvis	Joan Jewell
Ron Taylor	

In our local community we remember all those who are key workers supporting vulnerable people in the community, in our hospitals and schools.

This Newsletter and the collect and readings for Sunday are being sent to as many people as possible by email and will also be available on the website and on A Church Near You. If there is anyone in the community who you think would like to receive this by email, you or they can let us know by email, phone or text. If you are able to print this for someone without access to the internet, please do, or let us know and we will try to provide a paper copy.

In the interests of data protection, we cannot print the list of people who will have received this by email, so you won't know, but we would rather be given an email address several times than not at all!

These are difficult times for us all, but hopefully we will all be able to keep in touch and support one another.

If you would like anything added to this sheet in future weeks, please send it to us by email or by hand.

Many thanks.

Stay safe and keep well.

Roy and Margaret Allen

07778 458 789 margaret_allen69@yahoo.co.uk

Collect and Readings for Sunday 29th March 2020 –

Passion Sunday

The Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

The First Reading

is from the book of the prophet Ezekiel chapter 37

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' ⁴Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading

is from Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 8

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to

her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A short reflection on the Gospel

In today's Gospel from St John, Jesus shows again one of his miracles. This is the last of the miracles that he performs before his own Passion and resurrection.

A death of a friend is one of life's most difficult situations to cope with.

We would expect Jesus to be with his friend that he loved when he was dying, but if Jesus has been with Lazarus during the final moments of sickness, Jesus might have healed him rather than let him die. But Lazarus died so that Jesus power over death could be shown to his disciples and others. The raising of Lazarus was an essential demonstration of his power, and the resurrection from the dead is a crucial belief of Christian faith. Jesus not only raised himself from the dead but also had the power to raise others.

We may think God's timing, especially at this time of trouble with Coronavirus, means He is not answering or is not answering in the way we want. But He will meet all our needs according to His perfect plan and purpose. Amen

Lisa Wilcox