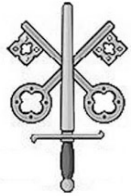


Parish Magazine for
Wem, Lee Brockhurst and Weston-under-Redcastle

August 2020



St Peter & St Paul's, Wem
St Peter's, Lee Brockhurst
St Luke's, Weston-under-Redcastle



Rector

The Revd Nick Heron
The Rectory
Ellesmere Road, Wem SY4 5TU

01939 232550

nphm16@aol.com

Retired Clergy:

The Revd Mike Cotterell, Preb Pam
Freeman, Preb Rob Haarhoff, Canon Dr
William Price, The Revd John Tye

Readers Emeriti:

Celia Camplin, Cathy Dibben

FOREWORD

Or should the above read forward? Since 'lockdown' our Parish magazine seems to have taken on a new lease of life, we have certainly had more and a wider variety of articles than before which is quite superb. Parish magazines need not be solely 'parochial'!

This edition is no different except it is our first August version for a very long time, again we have a plethora of inputs to enjoy, lift our spirits, focus on our move through this stage of the pandemic and engage our minds with. Poetry, personal, moving and from wider afield; thought provoking (which is *always* good) personal reflection; inspirational news about Zest for Life; background to our sister Church, literally right next door to us; essential feedback from treasurers and prayer day planner; experiences of great depth and wealth; necessary updates and more.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to this, and recent on-line editions, it would be splendid to keep this momentum going so do, please, think of what you can 'bring to the party' through your own input for the September edition.

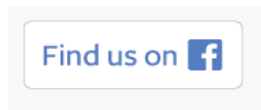
Whilst our communities and churches are moving into a different stage of response to the pandemic we still need to exercise great caution and care for one another and ourselves - keep taking care and stay safe.

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

Churchwardens:	Elaine Shaw	236575
	Chris Mellings	809521
PCC Lay Chair:	Sybil Farmer	232568
PCC Treasurer:	Caroline Sinclair	232626
Planned Giving Officer:	Bob Dibben	236178
Organist & Choir Master:	Rodney Bellamy	01630 652564
Deputy Captain of Bells:	Karen Compton	236561
Sacristans:	June Powell	234412
	& Kath Ridgway	290162
Church Flowers:	Olive Kenward	234774
	& Sybil Farmer	232568
Church Hall Bookings:	Elaine Shaw	07969 511590
Baby and Toddler Group:	Alison Hope	07526 757492

Further details are available on our website:

www.wemcofe.co.uk



@Wemparishchurch

**From the Registers of
St Peter and St Paul's Wem**

At Rest

1 July James Paul Lee (interment)

9 July Bette (Elizabeth Mary Catherine) Rich

10 July Sylvia Mary Williams

13 July Richard John Hodson (interment)

**“Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord and let
light perpetual shine upon them.”**

Wem Parish Church

Opening for Private Prayer

Church **closed** on the afternoon of 3 and 7 August

Please note that due to a church funeral at 12 noon on both
Monday 3 August and Friday 7 August St Peter & St Paul's
will have to be closed for the afternoon following each service
to enable the necessary cleaning

Book of Remembrance for August

1 st	Bob Lloyd Sherwood	15 th	William Anthony Glue
1 st	Edward John Finch	16 th	Violet Williams
1 st	Eileen Constance Morgan	17 th	Elizabeth Mavis Linden
2 nd	Horace James Hall	17 th	Riley "Ray" Wilman
3 rd	Harry Sudlow	18 th	Aelred John Morgan
3 rd	William "Bill" Cuthbert Lloyd	18 th	Clifford John Nichols
3 rd	Daisy Catherine Owen	19 th	Edward Ivison
4 th	Margaret Higgins	19 th	Roger Nigel Savage-Bailey
5 th	George Frederick Brisbane	20 th	Birte Cooke
7 th	Marjorie Holt	21 st	William (Bill) Henry Bamford
7 th	Berwyn Sadler	24 th	Doris Anthea Berry
7 th	Kenneth Thomas Lloyd Bishop	24 th	Frederick James Dickens
8 th	Ann Courtney	24 th	Elizabeth Mary Ellison
8 th	James Patrick Bowring	24 th	David James "Jim" Rhodes
8 th	Cynthia Dorothy Bennion-Pedley	25 th	George Francis Wilkinson
8 th	Evelyn Dorothea Mary Thompson	25 th	Julian Grocott
10 th	Les Carter	26 th	Florence Eunice Hall
11 th	Charles Thomas Hutchinson	26 th	Eric Holt
11 th	Irene Maria Wellings	27 th	Margot Inge Anni Thomas
12 th	Geoffrey George Parson	29 th	John Swain
14 th	Nancy Elizabeth Canham	30 th	Mary Coles

ST PETER'S, LEE BROCKHURST

Church Warden:	Val Lusby	235610
Church Warden and Treasurer:	Roger Ashton	232425
Secretary:	Phoebe Ashton	232425
Vice Chairman:	Tim Wilton-Morgan	235703
Warden Emeritus:	Robert Marsh	200641

**ST LUKE'S,
WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE**

Church Warden:	Arthur Fox	01630 685180
Church Warden:	Helen O'Neill	01939 200663
Church Warden (Deputy):	Sylvia Griffiths	01630 685204
Treasurer:	Colin Holloway	01939 200682

UPDATE

Things have moved on since our last magazine and, whilst most probably know, it is well worth reiterating where we now are apropos our Sunday worship and weekly church opening.

Sunday worship has or is resuming across our Benefice although as none would expect it cannot, as Bishop Michael pointed out, be a return to 'worship as normal'. Because the situation is necessarily fluid as we find the optimum way forward across the three parishes we are not promulgating the services for the next month, rather these will be advertised as required lest there are any changes; for now, it is hoped the typical pattern may be in place for the coming month.

Places of worship across the land may now be open for private prayer and public worship, subject of course to the measures which are now common place throughout society - Of the **utmost importance** for us are the maintenance of **physical distancing (the 2m rule applies in all churches)**, the use of **hand sanitiser** and the **removal of opportunities for virus transmission**.

At each Eucharist communion will be in one kind, that is the bread, with no sharing of the common cup; The Peace cannot be shared; hymn singing is not permitted in accordance with governmental guidance and likewise neither may we yet have refreshments after services.

Likewise, the Occasional Offices of Funerals, Marriage and Baptism may now take place subject to guidance about safe protocols and precautions - in all cases please speak to myself about how these may proceed as this is not always simple or straightforward and clarifications may be required. The generic facemask guidance applies to all.

We now have guidance on the wearing of masks for public worship, which taken directly from the C of E website is:

"This guidance is to help ministers and their congregations to understand the current advice on wearing face coverings, and how this applies in churches. This advice is reflected in the specific Government guidance for conducting various worship services within enclosed spaces such as church buildings.

1. Q. Should I wear a face covering in a church building?

A. "..... People are also encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet, such as a place of worship.

We strongly advise that face coverings should be worn by all those attending a place of worship, including ministers, worshippers, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, where there may be other people present; remembering that they are mainly intended to protect other people, not the wearer, from coronavirus COVID-19 and that they are not a replacement for physical distancing or hand washing."

Apropos face masks and visiting church for private prayer the 'guidance' is a tad ambivalent ie 'where there may be other people present': please do, as you will not know in advance whether you will be on your own or not.

As always up to date information can be found on the C of E website at: www.churchofengland.org

What does this mean for our Benefice?

As hopefully all now know – and subject to any necessary modifications:

LEE BROCKHURST.

Church worship resumes on 2 August, with a Eucharist at 11.15 am, at which point the church will once again be closed when not in use for public worship.

WESTON.

Church remaining closed for the time being. Public worship will resume with Holy Eucharist at 9.30 am on Sunday 2 August.

WEM.

Church open 9.00 am to 3.00 pm Monday **and** Friday (*not Monday to Friday*).

Sunday Worship:

8.00 am Holy Eucharist

9.45 am Holy Eucharist

Quite rightly Bishop Michael has reminded us that: *'there may be nervousness due to the continued, and real, threat of coronavirus which has had such a devastating impact in our communities'*.

This applies to individuals as well as church communities and no one should feel under any pressure at the present time to restart church attending, it would be wonderful to see everyone again, but.....there will come a time for all to do this safely.

We, that is myself and the Church Wardens of Lee, Wem and Weston have worked and focused to ensure that we can open as safely and expeditiously as possible. This is however, as all good things in church, best done as a collaborative and community process in fellowship. Please play your part in keeping us all safe

by both following the necessary guidelines or regulations and by speaking to any of us at any time if you see or are aware of any improvements we might make. Across our Benefice and in our churches we continue to be 'all in this together'.

Take care and stay safe,

Nick

OUR CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

As said earlier in this edition things are still a little early and matters too fluid to be definitive about our set Sunday times for worship, however, the Sundays for this month are :

SUNDAY 2 August. The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 9 August. The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 16 August. The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 23 August. The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
(Also Slavery Memorial Day)

SUNDAY 30 August. The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

August has three important Festivals, nicely separated, throughout the month. Whist Mass will not, as yet, be said on these days do please take time on each day to reflect on the beauty and richness they add to our month devotionally. They are:

Thursday 6 August. **The Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord**

Saturday 15 August. **The Blessed Virgin Mary**

Monday 24 August. **St Bartholomew the Apostle**

The Transfiguration.

Luke Chapter 9 28-36

The story of the Transfiguration is told in Matthew, Mark and Luke and is referred to in 2 Peter. Each time it is made clear that God's salvation is for all and Christ is the one who brings that salvation. The figures of Moses and Elijah represent the testimony of the Law and the Prophets and the event prefigures the resurrection. It has been described as a 'hinge' of the Gospels and one of the five major events in the ministry of Our Lord.

*Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured
before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain,
and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem:
give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross
that in the world to come we may see him as he is;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

The Blessed Virgin Mary

Luke Chapter 1 46-55

Our Lady requires no introduction nor her Feast any explanation. 'Our tainted nature's solitary boast' [Wordsworth]. This day is now celebrated as the major feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout Christendom.

*Almighty God,
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary
and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood
may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever*

St Bartholomew

Luke Chapter 22 24-30

It has long been assumed that Bartholomew is the same as Nathaniel who the gospels speak of being brought by Philip to Jesus. One of the Apostles he was unsurprisingly beside the Sea of Galilee at the resurrection appearance. Tradition tells us that Bartholomew, as the other Apostles, became a missionary and was martyred for his faith.

*Almighty God,
who gave to your apostle Bartholomew grace
truly to believe and to preach your word;
grant that your Church
may love the word which he believed
and faithfully preach and receive the same
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.*

***Sine we are surrounded by so great a cloud
of witnesses....let us run with perseverance
the race that is set before us”***

Bette Rich

At Bette's Funeral and again at the service to celebrate her life we heard Elizabeth, Bette's daughter, read the following beautiful, poignant poem - written by Bette herself. We print it as the smallest of tributes to Bette.

*Rest eternal grant unto her O Lord and let light perpetual shine
upon her*

Come gentle sleep and close my weary eyes
That I may dream
That I may dream of skies - dark by night and bright by day
Wondrous blue or steely grey.
Come gentle sleep and close my weary eyes, that I may dream.
That I may dream of light –
Blazing sunlight by day, silvery by night,
The click of a switch or gentle candlelight.
Come friendly sleep and close my weary eyes, that I may dream.
That I may dream of love - husband for wife –
parent for child - brother for sister - friend for friend.
Love never ending - through good times and bad –
love when we are happy and when we are sad.
Love for our maker - his love for us has no end –
beyond this life into eternity.
Come happy sleep and close my weary eyes that I may dream –
That I may dream that last wondrous dream of peace.
The Peace of God.
Come happy sleep - and close my weary eyes - that I may dream.

written by Bette Rich

ZEST FOR LIFE

The Rector has asked me to pen an article for the August magazine giving some details of the work being carried out by ZEST FOR LIFE which of course I am pleased to do!

ZFL is a small, locally-based charity for which I have served as treasurer since it was setup in 2008. Like many similar organisations, we operate amongst a small community in the Nyakach Region of Western Kenya. Kisumu is the nearest town around 60km away. It sits on the shores of Lake Victoria and is the 3rd largest city in the country. Nyakach itself is an agricultural area with many peasant farmers operating at subsistence level. Farmers will keep chickens (for eggs and meat), goats (for milk), and maybe a cow or two (also for milk). They will grow crops such as maize and beans as well as a variety of fruit - bananas, mangoes etc.

Our basic mission remains that of enhancing the opportunities of young people by enabling them to stay in education. Whilst education at primary level is free of charge, fees are payable at both secondary and university/college level. We are only a small operation with limited means – it follows therefore that the scale of our activities is similarly limited and we need to be very careful about taking on too many commitments, not least because increasingly we are finding that if we offer a bursary to a student starting at secondary school level, this can lead to an eight year commitment if that student goes on to university.

Currently we work with one primary school – INNIS EDUCATION CENTRE. We have a long association with INNIS – this derives in large part from the far-sighted leadership of a former headmaster Moses Awiti. We fund a daily “porridge” meal for around 50 very needy pupils in the Nursery and at the request of the School, this was recently extended to Form 1. There is a very simple point here – children cannot learn if they are hungry.

We have also raised funds to build latrine blocks and to carry out much-needed improvements to classrooms. Recently we were able to pay for a new classroom for the Nursery department – previously this was located in a tin shed with a mud floor. We have also provided funds to develop the school library book-lending scheme, the results of which were immediately noticeable with material rises in the English scores of many pupils.

Several years ago, Mr Awiti asked us to support one of his pupils who was moving on to secondary school. In this particular case, Tracey had

qualified for Kenya High School in Nairobi – some feat for a child from Nyakach! Her family were of very limited means and without third-party support she would not have been able to take up her place at the school. Of course we were pleased to assist and Tracey has now moved on to university – she is nearing the end of her course in law at Nairobi University where we continue to support her.

In subsequent years, Mr Awiti pushed us to support other very able students as they qualified for National Schools at their KCPE exams (we would recognise these as 11 plus exams though they are taken at age 13/14). This led to the establishment of a bursary scheme under which each year we assist two or three very able and very needy students from Innis. We are now at a stage where a number of these bursary students are moving onto university seeking support.

In addition to eight former Innis students at National Schools, we are also currently supporting :-

Phenny – like Tracey, she is studying law at Nairobi University
Martin is studying actuarial science at Kabarak University in Nairobi
Clinton is studying maths and computer science at Maseno University in Kisumu
Sheila is studying education – also at Maseno
Brenda is studying journalism at Maasai Mara University
Belinda is studying education at Moi University in the Rift Valley

From the outset we have always been very aware of the needs of the communities around the schools where we have been operating. At the very start, we were introduced to Mrs Consulata Muga. I have no idea how old Consulata is but I know that she is not young.

She has lead the Siatok Women's Group for a number of years. Siatok is a group of single mothers who work together on a co-operative basis supporting each other from a welfare perspective and also financially. They have a farming enterprise and also undertake basket weaving and other craft-type ventures. In 2018 we were able to assist Siatok by paying for training in connection with a new Catering enterprise and also with Chicken farming. Following the training provision we responded further by assisting with seed-corn funding to enable the group to purchase equipment to get started with both enterprises. We extended this programme by providing similar funding to a second widows group – Jefna. We were somewhat taken aback when we learnt that in the second week after their training course, the Jefna ladies had provided the food at a funeral where there had been well over a thousand attendees!

So the good news is that following the setup of these enterprises both groups were going forward nicely and developing modest income streams particularly so with the Catering venture. The bad news arrived with Coronavirus. Like ourselves Kenya has been subject to lockdown but unlike ourselves government support has been largely non-existent with the result that food and travel have become very expensive and hunger is becoming a real issue. Government workers have been laid off without pay and we are getting stories of real hardship. We have responded by sending money for food to both Siatok and Jefna but we are painfully aware that the amounts we are able to donate assist for only a few days. We have also sent money to a couple of our students/former students who are struggling.

There is good news here in that we are in good contact with many of the families where we provide support or have done so in the past and most are in okay shape. We receive messages via WhatsApp regularly and most indicate that everyone is in good heart though worryingly it seems that as lockdown continues things are getting progressively more difficult. I can only say that we continue with our extremely modest programme of support as best we can. I can also say that I am surprised that this story does not appear to have reached the media here.

In conclusion, ZEST FOR LIFE can tell many stories of good progress though education is currently pretty much on STOP and therefore most of our support programmes have also paused. More worrying is the current picture of hardship which has been imposed by the pandemic. We cannot even scratch the surface of the need even in the local area where we operate but that should not and will not stop us trying.

ZFL exists by the generosity of a smallish number of regular donors, many of whom have supported us since the start. Thank you for reading this article – I hope you have found it interesting. If by chance you are moved to support us either with a donation of your own or by getting involved, please come and have a chat.

With every good wish

Keith Edwards



Wem - A Thank you from our Treasurer and Gift Aid Officer

During Lockdown under Coronavirus Rules our beloved Parish Church has been closed, no services have been held and no Collections received.

However, as from Sunday 19th July this changed as services resumed under the strict guidelines of Social Distancing and other requirements.

During Lockdown most of our congregation will have become aware of the facilities to continue giving via the Internet. A Just Giving page was set up and has been well used, bringing in a useful sum for the work and expenses of our church. Further, some direct payments have been made into the church Bank Account.

In addition Bankers' Orders have continued to be received and some new Bankers' Orders have been established. These regular gifts are most helpful in our budgeting.

Our readers will notice that all of these methods of Giving involved electronic means, via the Internet. It does demonstrate the prevalence of the Internet in moving money around and there cannot be many who do not know its capabilities whilst a few will not have computers or tablets or smart phones from which to process instructions to their banks.

Where would we have found ourselves without electronic banking and the Internet? Perhaps in times past the need for cash in the church Bank Account was less, when almost every transaction was conducted in cash before cheques were introduced, cash machines were installed and electronic banking facilities took off from there.

We, as your Treasurer and Gift Aid Officer, know full well how not only electronic banking has benefited the church during these difficult months but further how the computers that we use and the special software employed have enabled us to claim from HMRC useful amounts of Gift Aid – also electronically.

Yes, we do have to maintain appropriate paper records for audit purposes but the speed of the Internet has ensured that wherever possible this very fast system has boosted our non-cash revenues.

How can anyone help further? If any reader is a UK Taxpayer as defined by HMRC and he or she is able to give a Gift Aid Declaration that is particularly helpful in maximising our Claims. Please contact Bob for the necessary forms if you wish to support your Giving in this way, via Bankers' Orders or through the Numbered Envelope Scheme.

However, if you are not a UK Taxpayer and you use the Numbered Envelopes we can still recover some Tax through the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS). Our claims are limited to Gifts of a maximum of £30 per Giver per Service with an annual Claims limit. Could you provide a Gift Aid Declaration and have not yet done so?

We cannot cover all eventualities in this short piece so please consider what we have said and contact Bob for a more detailed and of course confidential discussion. At the time of writing Bob is subject to Coronavirus Shielding so cannot visit or receive visitors but a telephone call will suffice and forms can be provided electronically or by post.

So, thank you again to all who have provided your Giving electronically and to all who stored up weekly envelopes ready for Sunday 19th July. Your gifts of money, large and small, regular and occasional are all welcome and gratefully received.

Caroline Sinclair
Church Treasurer

Bob Dibben
Gift Aid and Planned Giving Officer
01939 236178

Lee Brockhurst - Finance

With my St. Peter's Treasurer hat on, I reiterate all that Caroline and Bob have said. To the congregation and supporters of St. Peters any cheques or the setting up of SOs and DDs to

improve our income would be very welcome and adding gift aid if you are not already doing so.

In addition I thought this paragraph out of the latest Diocesan finance report would be useful information for those with electronic computer skills. A 'just giving' facility was mentioned by Caroline and Bob, this is a new alternative.

The Finance Team are working tirelessly to provide parishes with the tools and support you might need to facilitate on-going giving. These include a new innovation, the **"Donate Now"** button. This is live on the Diocesan Website! With the help of local software company Data Developments you can now direct your donors to the "Donate Now" page on the Diocesan Website, where they can click the "Donate Now" button, complete their details, and specify your church for their gift. There is an option for them to agree to Gift Aid their donation and also an option for them to cover the transaction cost if they would like to. Like with Contactless and Giving Direct the funds are received into the Diocesan bank account as we are the registered Charity but we will pass these on as soon as possible along with a report showing when the donations were made. "Donate Now" is an all-encompassing tool but could really help giving in services streamed through the internet

Roger Ashton

**Any queries about searches in the Whitchurch Road
Cemetery or elsewhere**

**Please contact Mr Tom Edwards of 1 Eckford Park, Wem,
SY4 5HL or on 01939 233932**

WHITCHURCH FOODBANK
HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

For most, if not all of us, it is heart-breaking enough that we require Food Banks in the first place. Now we have to realise that the current crisis is placing increased demands upon them whilst some of the usual sources of support are in shorter supply.

We will all have heard and seen in the news headlines the question of food poverty and its consequences for many, exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic. The easing of covid restrictions does not in the slightest mean this need is diminishing. Our local Food Bank performs a wonderful work in helping to alleviate this scourge and the urgent need is ongoing.

All the churches in our Benefice do a wonderful job in supporting our local Food Bank. If you are now coming back to church do please consider bringing a donation to this, non-perishable food of any description plus essential toiletries will always be gratefully received - an up to date list of specific shortages is always available on their website (underneath).

However even when as our churches reopen the usual way of supporting Whitchurch Food Bank may not be possible for you, yet the coronavirus pandemic has plunged many whose work we in 'normal' times rely upon, or occasionally take for granted, into very difficult circumstances!

The Food Bank is still open to accept donations at their base, Bargates Hall Whitchurch, in the usual way between 9.30 and 11.30 am on Tuesdays & Fridays. Social Distancing will be maintained. There are two other alternatives:

Firstly: the Wem Co-op will take donations, please ask staff for the exact location of the 'bin'.

Secondly: via online giving, please go to their website -
whitchurch.foodbank.org.uk
where donations can be made on line.

'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink'
Matthew 25.35a

By Crummock Water

This is a poem which I partly wrote in the Lakes last October on holiday and finished a few days ago. During lockdown I have read and read many books to keep me occupied. These books have taken me into many fictional lives and places. The people became almost part of my life. So, I have written this poem about a beautiful place which, although it has nothing to do with this dreadful virus, might help you to be taken to somewhere where you too can stop and look and dream a little.

Craggy fells wrapped in cloaks of green velvet hues
Rise up high, watching the valley below.
Mist filled clouds hang as if suspended;
Wrapping them in their gossamer white shawls:
Spun in the heavens and caught in a spell of timeless space.

The sun with sudden splendour bursts through
The threatening grey of the enclosing sky
Throwing shafts of dazzling light in burning streaks
To touch the black, mirrored
Waters of the lake below.

Oh beauteous lake
What secrets do you hold In your shadowy depths?
None but the gentle, grassy shores
Butted by patchwork fields
And hedgerows lying in mute reflection on the waters.

Guard this beauty well Wellbreak Fells
Through seasons past and yet to come.
Peace, be still to all who stop and stay awhile
and enter into this tranquil scene.
Troubled hearts are stilled and souls are healed.

Cathy Dibben

Day of Prayer - How was it for you?

This was a time for experimentation – making the resources available on line, using 'Zoom' for the concluding time, and the opportunity to explore prayer in a way different to our 'norm'.

Thank you to all who contributed their prayers throughout the 12 hours of the day. It transpired that between us our prayers had covered a wide range of topics.

Some feedback received has been:

- Was able to incorporate my own resources I use at home
- Was 'moved' by the Blessing
- Enjoyed being outdoors

So, how was it for you? Have you been inspired further? Has anything struck you that would enhance, encourage others?

Is there anything that would be helpful / not helpful for planning another Day of Prayer?

It would be lovely if you could share your thoughts/feedback by emailing Sue McLeod susandmcleod@btinternet.com or in writing which can be dropped off at church.

ALSO – as a result of the positive experience on Zoom, the Monday Prayer Group now 'meet' on Zoom.

If you'd like to join in at 4pm please email Sue McLeod for your virtual invitation.

Thelma Pugh

Community – Reflections during Covid 19

Kerry David Foster

Covid 19 has given us all many extended opportunities for reflection. For many across the world, the virus cut short any chances of peaceful reflection, leaving grief and sadness for those left behind. My own reflections have wandered far and wide and I have had the chance to think about the ups and downs of the last seventy two years. Certain key issues have dominated my thoughts about life so far. I have always loved the natural world – birds, animals, trees, flowers, fish etc and have been at my happiest under open skies and on rugged and stormy coastlines. I have always been interested in understanding how I came to be me and how others came to be them, both of which led me into an education involving psychology, sociology, theology and epistemology (the processes involved in learning.) The final issue has brought the natural world and education together and has involved me in an on-going search to understand who we are, why we are, our metaphysical origins and destinies, and the possible existence of a creative force in the Universe that I both sense and see...and fail to understand. My reflection focuses upon this last issue.

As a child, I grew up believing that God was separate from me and completely unfathomable. God was up above the clouds living in a rather exclusive estate with a large number of perfect and pious old men. The God of my childhood perhaps lived in a distant galaxy and visited life on Earth only when it was thought to be necessary. I was unable to link the idea of God's place of residence with the village of Rainford where I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s. The "Old White bearded man in the sky" was for me an older version of my Dad. A particularly strong memory from my childhood was a plea from the vicar of our village church asking the congregation to pray for the millions of displaced persons wandering aimlessly about Europe – emaciated, starving, homeless and frightened – in the early 1950s. I questioned then why such a powerful Being above the clouds could not give a direct hand. I still ponder on this and similar contemporary matters.

As I grew up, I became aware of Christian teaching about a man called Jesus of Nazareth (Joshua Ben Joseph to give him his Jewish name) who was part of a three way living entity who went between a human

life on Earth and a location that was described as heaven / paradise which was far away from this planet – somewhere else that still lay beyond my comprehension. As adulthood approached, I became more deeply engaged with the descriptions of Jesus, the man who lived a very human life in his totally Jewish community. I grew into adulthood fascinated and challenged by the descriptions of a man who demonstrated a remarkable courage and willingness to engage with complex emotional / cultural / political and psychological issues as they affected members of his own society. The human qualities of Jesus provided building blocks for what I wanted to be my identity – Jesus became a serious role model during these middle years. My identification with this man in middle age was one that transformed him into a separate Superman able to perform “miracles” which were still beyond my ability to comprehend. His miraculous activities – as I understood them at that time in my life – were theatrical and wizard-like. My interpretation was that he had magical and divine powers that made him very different from me and the rest of human kind. The “Superman” Jesus was still far away and not getting any closer.

Now, at 72, my perceptions of “God” and Jesus have transformed once more, largely in response to Covid 19 and its power to alter old life patterns. Going to our favourite pub (the Castle in Wem), being with family, friends and neighbours with my wife Rosemary, attending church services at St. Peter’s and St Paul’s, visiting France and the Netherlands, all came to a dramatic halt in the early part of the lockdown. A well-established pattern of on-going social interaction was suddenly halted and I felt largely alienated from the many social contacts which had nurtured me and given meaning and direction to my life.

Then came the decision to clap the many workers who, in too many cases, literally gave up their lives to serve the needs of those most distressed by the corona virus. Every Thursday evening at around 7.30pm, Rosemary and I came round to the front of our home on Windmill Meadow to join most of our immediate neighbours (who also sat outside their homes at considerable distances from one another) and at 8.00 pm we all stood to clap and give thanks for those whose depth of caring did everything to support the sickest and most vulnerable in society. I openly confess to shedding silent tears most Thursday evenings when we all stood together. Old criteria for keeping people separated were cast aside so easily. My wife and I are retired teachers, my neighbours Brett and Vikki remain partners in the tyre

business, Anita is a retired civil servant, Michelle serves the multiple needs of customers at Wem Co-op, Simon has driven buses and coaches and now transports doctors and paramedics around the county for Shrop Doc and Tracy (Simon's wife) is retired because of declining health. Rob, a retired Vicar, joined the group, accidentally and fortuitously when he walked through the neighbourhood on a Thursday evening with his two dogs and was invited to join in our acknowledgment of all the key workers.

Although the formalised clapping sessions have now ceased, we choose to continue meeting as a group because we all feel that we have found something which has immense value. We don't want to lose a feeling that binds us together. We continue to meet and still maintain the government's recommendations on social distancing; we enjoy sharing a beer, a coffee, a glass of red wine or a coke, conversations range far and wide and vary remarkably in depth. It is on the subject of "depth" that I want to end this article. The references to matters religious, theological and philosophical are entirely mine and may or may not relate to the beliefs of anyone else in our group

Whatever "God", "Yahweh", "Allah", "Om", "Krishna" etc is as a real entity within human consciousness, I do not believe that height, distance and "Superstar" status should separate us from what I believe I have learned about the nature of a Being that is here in great depth and closeness within our Thursday group. The group continues to debate a plethora of different issues. The group sings together. The group offers humour and solace in equal quantities when the situation needs it. All of these things combine to touch what I believe "God" is – a feeling of closeness, companionship, respect, acceptance, nurturing and support. The attributes of divinity are surely about justice, wisdom and love, qualities that are manifest in our Thursday meetings and which draw members together on a weekly basis. The positive and reciprocated feelings that go between us all surely mark a pathway for our understanding of at least one part of the wider Creative personality?

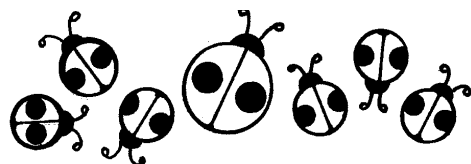
I believe that God is to be found in human relationships. Everything I have ever read about Jesus tells me that he loved humanity in its many forms and was at his happiest when he was in a state of communion / fellowship with the people. In my current view, there is no need to look skywards (implication "at a great distance from the one who looks") to find God. From my experiences in life so far, in marriage, as a teacher,

as a friend, as a parent and as a member of the Thursday group, I believe that a facet of the Creator can be found through human relationships. Essential elements in a loving relationship have to include the desire to support others in maximising their own unique potentials and to become the best that they can possibly be – to reach depths which we try to facilitate through human interactions. Our Thursday group generates vast quantities of warmth in terms of showing interest and concern for all members, in terms of being non-judgemental and just, and in terms of being unconditionally welcoming.

On the 29th of May this year, Rosemary and I left our home on Windmill Meadow in order to establish a new base on Sycamore Drive – a mere quarter of a mile away. The original group of neighbours still come together on Windmill Meadow each Thursday and on two occasions now, we have met at our new home off Whitchurch Road. We are very happy to report that some of the teenage children of our neighbours are now choosing to join in our Thursday fellowship – without any threats or bribes! Social distancing is maintained at all times wherever we congregate. The “community” we all enjoy is not a physical thing. The reality of community is a feeling that binds us together. The greater the depth of feeling, the closer I believe we come to experiencing the message of love given by Jesus during his short stay on Earth. Come rain or shine, we all come from different corners of Wem to enjoy genuine fellowship. Resulting from this potentially lethal virus has come something truly wonderful – an opportunity to get closer to our neighbours and perhaps an opportunity to experience a greater closeness to a divinity that does not require us to look up into the sky for lasting communion.

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These are my honest thoughts during the lock-down period and are offered for readers to discuss and debate, if they so wish. I hope that you will be challenged by my perceptions and that you find the candour refreshing and stimulating.



Musings of a Church Secretary

We have been in lockdown now for about 17 weeks. During this time we have not been able to attend church and meet our friends in the congregation. We have also missed out on some very important church festivals: Mothering Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Day, Pentecost and our Patronal Festival plus others. Other events that have passed us by are those fundraising occasions when the wider public help to support the work and fabric of St Peter's Lee Brockhurst. I am of course thinking particularly of the Brockhurst Farm Strawberry Tea and from the past the Plant Sales at The White House. We continue to pay the Diocesan Quota and the electricity bill although the latter, thanks to Roger, has been reduced to a more reasonable sum per month. We also have some work to do according to the Quinquennial Review report just received.

It is to be hoped that we can run the Autumn Fayre but maybe not at Moston Park because of social distancing etc. etc. and apparently we can Ride and Stride on Saturday 12th September but not expect to find churches open, manned and certainly no refreshments, however, we could get some sponsorship money if we get some volunteers to ride or stride!

So why am I labouring this point? Well I think we do need to try and run a fundraising event before the autumn, possibly in early to mid-September or in conjunction with the Harvest Festival at the end of September. I would be happy to host this in the farm garden or maybe we could hire John Bowen's camp site for a day. It would have to be a ticketed event with tickets bought prior to the occasion and possibly, like in some National Trust houses timed entry. e.g. 10 or 20 at 1 hour intervals.

What do you think? Please send me suggestions for venue, type of event and how to run it a.s.a.p. so that we can begin to prepare the publicity.

Thanks for reading this.

Phoebe

Worship Memories

I wonder if life in lockdown has triggered memories for anybody else as it has for me. In my case it must be to do with being on my own and being able to cast my mind back without fear of interruption, which is what happened when I read the article about the hymn 'How Great Thou Art' in the magazine last month.

The article mentioned that it was a favourite of Billy Graham in his Crusades and there I was remembering going, as a teenager, with a group of church friends to his first crusade to this country. He was an inspirational speaker and I do remember sitting thinking about going forward when the time came but eventually deciding I wasn't quite ready for that commitment, possibly as none of my friends appeared to want to go either.

I then began to think of other visits and people I have been fortunate to see or hear during the course of my church life.

I have been twice to visit the shrine at Walsingham in Norfolk, which is very beautiful. The second visit was organised by Southwark diocese and we were accompanied by the Reverend Roger Royal, who was presenting Songs of Praise and/or Good Morning Sunday on the BBC at that time and was very much a larger than life personality.

When the children were small and we were on holiday in Cornwall we were able to go to a recording of Songs of Praise on the beach at St Ives. On another occasion when Don and I were holidaying on a tall ship in the West Indies we were invited to watch the blessing of the fishing boats on the beach on one of the smaller islands, a very simple but moving ceremony.

I also recalled two visits to the pilgrimage at Glastonbury, watching the procession of the clergy through the streets and then moving to the Abbey grounds for a Holy Eucharist service.

On the second occasion, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, joined us, arriving by helicopter in the Abbey grounds. When the time came to take Communion there were several

stations to cope with the number of communicants and I was amused to hear one of our congregation, a very serious man I thought, whisper "It's like being in the supermarket, that line's moving more quickly than ours!".

Many years later I joined with friends from St Peter and St Paul's to go to Telford and hear another Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, preach.

When on holiday with Don we visited Lourdes, to me a fascinating place, very peaceful and sacred inside but with many shops nearby, full of what I thought of as quite tacky souvenirs, until it was explained to me how poor some of the visitors are and yet they needed to be able to buy a souvenir of their visit. We also visited sacred sites in Portugal and former Yugoslavia.

Those have been some of my memories but the most recent and outstanding one I have left till last. This was when I was cruising around South America with Shirley and we were hoping to visit the Falklands Islands. There is no guarantee that a cruise ship will be able to anchor off Port Stanley, it is so dependent on weather and sea conditions, so it was a great relief when we were able to visit as we had some passengers on board with connections to the Islands and it was hoped a service would be held in the Cathedral at Port Stanley.

We arrived in the morning and the service was timed for the late afternoon, so we were able to go ashore or on excursions before going to the service, if that was what we wished to do.

I went ashore in the morning to buy some stamps for a friend who is a keen collector, had a look round the museum and took some photos and then went back on board for lunch as I was off to see the penguins in the afternoon and as that was in a different part of the island we were being picked up by a local boat. By now I was hoping all the timing was right and I would be able to get to the service.

We had an interesting visit to the penguins and saw what the terrain of the island was like away from Stanley. We had been collected in

4x4 vehicles and it soon became apparent why! I had a front seat in the leading one which was good until we approached a small stream and there were just two planks positioned as a crossing point for the vehicles! To say my heart was in my mouth was an understatement, however, of course the drivers were well used to it and all was well! We also drove past minefields still being cleared after the 1982 conflict.

On our return, we were told as we approached the ship that the last boat to shore in time for the service would leave the ship in ten minutes so I realised I needed to hurry. As I got up to quickly get back on board a rogue wave washed over us and I got soaked! I managed to get to the cabin and change into dry clothes and get back in time to catch the boat to shore. Fortunately the Cathedral is not too far from the landing stage so I was able to get there in time. However, I arrived as all the crew, dressed in their best uniform, were lined up ready to march in. I thought I would let them go first but one of them beckoned me forward. Needless to say, as I was about to go in the door, the clergy and crew started to move forward so I had to hurriedly find a pew to slot into, as I didn't want to appear as part of the procession. After I'd got my breath back I was able to concentrate on the service, which was very moving.

So, my visit to the Falkland Islands was very memorable with the service in the Cathedral being a fitting end to an eventful day.

Olive Kenward

The next issue is scheduled to be prepared on **Thursday 20 August** and will be available on **Friday 28 August** after 4.15 pm if we are able to produce a physical magazine. Otherwise it will go out in an electronic version.

Items for the magazine can be left in the drawer at the back of the church in Wem (by 9 am Thursday) or sent to:

pamedgmond@hotmail.com

Caring

During these strange and difficult times, our Prayer Diary has highlighted, amongst others, the paid and unpaid carers in our midst. A local care organisation, Condoover College, has two homes in Wem and we thought you might like to hear about the recent 'staycation' at The Orchard which is home to six profoundly mentally handicapped adults. All travel was undertaken virtually!

"On the first day, we went to the Tower Ballroom at Blackpool and listened to the Wurlitzer. Then we had a day at the seaside: the residents had their feet in water, sunglasses on, and heard the sounds of the seaside, we even had play ice cream. In the afternoon we had a Punch and Judy Show which they all loved. We have also been to the zoo and on safari to Longleat to see the animals, followed by some singing and signing. The residents all thoroughly enjoyed their staycation."

For the families and friends of the residents it is so pleasing that in addition to the care they receive they are also treated to such wonderful experiences.

Holy Days in the AUGUST Calendar

- 4th Jean-Baptist Vianney, Cure d'Ars, Spiritual Guide, 1859.
- 5th Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642.
- 6th **The Transfiguration of our Lord.**
- 7th John Mason Neale, Priest, Hymn writer, 1866.
- 8th Dominic, Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers, 1221.
- 9th Mary Sumner, Founder of the Mother's Union, 1921.
- 10th Laurence, Deacon at Rome, Martyr, 258.
- 11th Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Minoresses, 1253.
- John Henry Newman, Priest, Tractarian, 1890
- 13th Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down & Connor, 1667.
- Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910.
- Octavia Hill, Social Reformer, 1912

- 14th Maximilian Kolbe, Friar, Martyr, 1941.
15th **The Blessed Virgin Mary.**
20th Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, Teacher of the Faith, 1153.
William and Catherine Booth, Founders of The Salvation
Army, 1912 and 1890.
24th **Bartholomew, the Apostle.**
27th Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387.
28th Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430
29th The Beheading of John the Baptist.
30th John Bunyan, Spiritual Writer, 1688.
31st Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651.

St Ethelwold

St Ethelwold (c.912 – 84) did great things for the church at Winchester, which in those days was the principal town of Wessex. He began as a simple monk, eager to restore the Rule of Benedictine in England, a major reform for the church of the time. So, after serving at the abbey in Glastonbury, he was sent on to restore the old abbey at Abingdon. The king thought highly of him, and used him to teach his son, the future king, Edgar.

When in 963 Ethelwold became Bishop of Winchester, he replaced the cathedral canons with monks, thus founding the first monastic cathedral in the land. This was a uniquely English institution, which remained until the Reformation. The monastic reform quickly gained momentum: with the King's support, Ethelwold restored old monasteries such as Milton (Dorset), New Minster and Nunnaminster in Winchester, while new monasteries were founded and richly endowed at Peterborough (966), Ely (970) and Thorney (972).

Ethelwold was austere, able and dynamic. Under his leadership, the monks excelled at music, illumination and writing. When Ethelwold set the monks to work with the masons in the cathedral at Winchester, he built the most powerful organ of its time in England: it was played by two monks and had 400 pipes and 36 bellows. In

music, Ethelwold's Winchester had the distinction of producing the first English polyphony in the Winchester Troper.

Ethelwold's monasteries also produced a surpassing new style of illumination, and his school of vernacular writing was the most important of its time: with accurate, linguistically significant translations. A major event of his episcopate was the consecration of Winchester Cathedral in 980.

DIVINE

Planet Earth photographed all those years ago by the Apollo Moon astronauts, in all its full colour glory in an otherwise dark and seemingly lifeless solar system and universe beyond, brings to mind the latest mindboggling astrophysics and astrochemistry research factors that, going by the perceived laws of the universe, brought about life on Earth.

The chances of it happening were so infinitesimal. Apparently the age of our Sun and Planet Jupiter's position and gravity had a big part to play. Mercury, Venus and Mars lost out. The volume of water, mostly oceanic sea water was critical too.

Water, as we know, is still critical to our wellbeing, water reserves and soil moisture are so important but compromised by volatile weather bringing floods then drought. Once the surface of Earth had got an atmosphere, which is an amazingly thin layer, nature could develop and bring what we see today, our wonderful flourishing countryside with its mountains, forests, valleys, rivers, lakes and coastlines.

Then of course the theory of evolution comes into play and somewhere along this evolving comes the human being with a brain that transcends all other living life. To me this whole scenario does not make any sense at all unless there is Divine intervention.

Roger Ashton

The Church in Wales

In Wem we live only a few miles from Wales, now thankfully open again to visitors, and in Church terms Wales is very different from England, so, at least in Church terms, Bettisfield is very different from Newtown. For just over a century the Anglican Church in Wales (note 'in', not 'of') has been separate from the Church of England. This came about because the Liberal Party adopted Welsh disestablishment as a political programme to attract the votes of the strong nonconformist population in Wales. And so the Anglican Church in Wales in fact began its independent life on 31 March 1920, although the lockdown prevented any commemoration of the centenary this year.

The Church in Wales is made up of six dioceses – Bangor, Llandaff, Monmouth, St Asaph, St Davids, and Swansea & Brecon. Each diocese has a cathedral and a bishop, and at present 3 of the 6 bishops are women. There is an archbishop, but whereas in England the archbishops take their titles from Canterbury and York, in Wales one of the 6 bishops is called Archbishop of Wales, but he (so far always 'he') remains bishop of his diocese, at present Swansea and Brecon.

There is no General Synod as in England, but the equivalent in Wales is the Governing Body, made up of bishops and elected clergy and laypeople. The Representative Body looks after the property and finances of the Church. The Church in Wales has its own prayer books in Welsh and English – no Common Worship in Wales!

One very new feature of the Church in Wales is the creation of Ministry Areas (known as Mission Areas in our neighbouring diocese of St Asaph). These are made up of a varying number of parishes, with an average of about 20, so a typical Ministry Area might resemble our Rural Deanery of Wem and Whitchurch. Ministry is led in these areas by teams of clergy, lay-readers, and

other laypeople. Ministry Areas have in effect replaced parishes and rural deaneries. Time will tell whether people will ever relate to these larger areas in the way in which people relate to their own parishes.

I was baptized and ordained in the Church in Wales. I worked in ordained ministry there for 27 years (although the attractions of Wem prevailed over those of Wales for retirement!). If you go to Wales do visit some of the cathedrals and churches, and pray for God's blessing on the Church's work throughout my native land, now sadly the least 'religious' part of the United Kingdom, as it enters its second century as an independent province within the world-wide Anglican Communion.

William Price

Morning Prayer

When morning in russet and saffron clad
Is mantling the hills in a dew-soft plaid
To the song of the moorland two-wings glad
Let my heart upraise;

When light creeps in through the chinks of the door
When the mist ascends from the mountain floor,
When the ocean shimmers like burnished ore,
Let me give thee praise.

O God of the morning, Christ of the hills, O Spirit who all the
firmament fills,
O Trinity blest who all goodness wills,
Keep us all our days.

From Prayers of the Western Highlanders

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 7:1-10, Matthew 8:5-13

When the Romans invaded Israel, they used soldiers to keep order. For the centurion in Capernaum it was more than just a job...

The centurion had a young servant who was in great pain and dying.



When he heard that Jesus was near, he asked the town leaders to ask Jesus for help.

The leaders told Jesus..



This man deserves your help. He loves our people.

He has even built us a meeting place!



This could have been a tricky situation, for Jews never went into the houses of non-Jews.

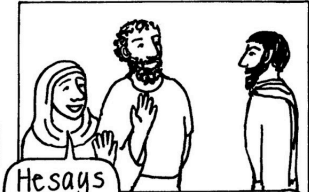


But Jesus said..

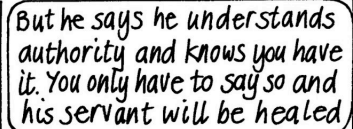
I will go and heal the boy.



But the centurion knew that, as a Jew, Jesus could not go into the houses of non-Jews so as Jesus got near, he sent some friends to him.



He says he isn't worthy enough for you to come to his house.



But he says he understands authority and knows you have it. You only have to say so and his servant will be healed

Jesus was amazed!



I have never met anyone in Israel with as much faith.

He said to the friends...



You may go now. What he has believed has happened.

When the friends got to the house they found the servant completely healed!



How many beans make five?

A bean, a bean, etc., etc., and that's an old one. Sadly, as I put fingers to the keyboard my runners have some wonderfully colourful flowers and bees have been seen visiting them but there is not even a hint of a bean to count. No not even a couple of millimetres of a bean is yet to be seen.

On the other hand the plants are trying to out perform Jack's famous Beanstalk. Soon I shall need a ladder to reach the tops. Now, would the beans please take as a good example the tomato plants in the adjacent greenhouse? They are showing early signs of their fruits, just tiny green bobbles at first, then some already expanding to become recognisable as little tomatoes – green but getting there – and even the cucumbers are trying hard to fruit.

Down at ground level are the strawberry plants. Lots of leaf. Not many strawberries. The dry weather did not help in the early days and the result has been a lack of lovely red juiciness hiding under the leaves. What's the solution? New plants have been obtained and are to be planted and then hopefully a few weeks later perhaps a further crop will be available to accompany some cream. What a delicious prospect!

Next are the onions. They have not been successful. The less said, the better there, so we move on.

Perhaps the great growing success story – “success” is a terrible misnomer here – is the amazing greenery produced by the multitudes of weeds. Yes, you expected that. If you did not then you are either a fantastic gardener and keep the weeds at bay or a complete amateur who has yet to experience the tenacity of every weed that wants space in your garden. Keep hoeing!

Over in the flower beds the little plantlets that went in a few weeks ago have enjoyed the feeds that they received along with watering and then of course the rain. As the days and nights became warmer so these plants have perked up and now fill not just their own spaces but jostle for space with their neighbours. Very soon they will burst with colour and the green of the young plants will

become the background to more colours than we shall have seen to date.

Larger, bushy plants are now bursting outwards and upwards. It's as if they want to peer over the fence to see what's what next door.

Roses are red, violets are ... yes, we have both but the roses were glorious in their various colours until ... the thunderstorms and rains came. That was just when they were in full bloom and the belting raindrops shook so many petals off the stems that now the roses are bare but the ground below is a carpet of whites, reds and yellows, rapidly turning brown as the petals fade.

Covering the largest area of the garden is the grass. Lawn, surely? No, grass because the dry weather caused it to go brown and crisp until the rains came and Hey Presto! some lushness has begun to return. In fact, with some feed and then the timely rains the grass has needed more regular mowing to keep it in trim before the birds disappear up to their breast feathers amid the fast-growing blades. But there's another story because a couple of years ago, when in need of a new mower, a self-starting machine was acquired. Lately it was anything but self-starting and around the green grass the air was almost turning blue as one tried to start the reluctant mower. Reaching for the spark plug removal tool one discovered that the plug was slightly loose, meaning that compression was being lost and thus the self-starter was becoming a non-starter.

An adjustment to the spark gap and replacing the plug with a little more firmness found the engine bursting into life and all is well again. What it is to have the tools and expertise to undertake a little task "on the spot". So there we are, weeding, watering, mowing and on hot days enjoying tea on the patio. Lockdown? It is so pleasant to sit back but only when the work is all done.

Bob Dibben

Explanation of the concept of God

From Thelma Pugh:

I was sent this by email, some time ago. Apparently it is from a book by Wayne W Dyer -

Your Sacred Self: Making the decision to be free.

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us."

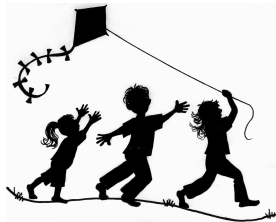
The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist."

Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist."

To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above."

Maybe this is one of the best explanations to the concept of GOD?



The following poem was sent to us by Tricia Bamford, sent in turn to her by a friend. Both thought it lovely and wished to share it.

The Rainbow Children
By Gemma Peacock

The history books will talk of now,
That time the world stood still.
When every family stayed at home,
Waved out from windowsills-
At those they loved but could not hold,
Because they loved them so.
Yet, whilst they did they noticed all the flowers start to grow.

The sun came out, they can recall,
And windows, rainbows filled.
They kicked a football in their yards,
Until the nights drew in.
They walked each day but not too close,
That time the world stood still.
When people walked straight down the roads.
That once the cars did fill.

They saw that people became ill,
They knew the world was scared
But whilst the world stood still they saw,
How much the whole world cared.
They clapped on Thursdays from their doors
They cheered for the brave.
For people who would risk their lives
So others could be saved.

The schools closed down, they missed their friends,
They missed their teachers so.
Their Mam's and Dad's helped with their work,
They helped their minds to grow.
The parents used to worry that,
As schools were put on hold.
Their children wouldn't have the tools
They'd need as they grew old.

But history books will talk of them,
Now adults, fully grown.
Those little boys and girls back then,
The ones who stayed at home
They'll tell you that they fixed this world,
Of all they would fulfil.

The RAINBOW children building dreams,
They'd dreamed whilst time stood still.