



A Warm Welcome to
WOODBIDGE ST MARY WITH GREAT BEALINGS

10TH JANUARY
1ST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY – THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Wherever we are, we are the body of Christ.



LOCKDOWN 3

This very clear ‘motorway message’ is something which, sadly, even some of us need reminding of. Our two Churches are not the exception to all the government and church advice to stay at home. In fact, the ever-rising death rates locally are evidence enough that individuals who think they are somehow ‘immune’ have actually ‘caused’ this increase. It is selfish and it is madness. So please do what the sign says!

I am extremely grateful to our Wardens and PCC members in particular who helped to put the record straight this week. Also, to someone who contacted me recently to postpone a memorial service one year after a loved one died and, who commented quite rightly: “It seems that uncertainty is the only thing which is certain and constant.”

Our Lord was always asking his followers to go into one’s own room or private space to pray, so let’s do that. I am also hoping that we can have some additional and regular ‘online’ prayer time together by ‘zoom’. Even though this may not be our first choice or preference, at least it is participative, visual, active and real, unlike so many pre-recorded ‘outtakes’.

I worry that some believe that our living faith is dependent upon or only possible at all inside a church building. It is as if all the New Testament evidence to the contrary is being ignored as much as our motorway sign. Let’s be certain and confident instead, away from any crowds, and both seek and find our ‘inner- Galilee’ peace and calm, where God is also.

Fr Nigel

COLLECT FOR THE WEEK

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
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.

Amen

INTERCESSIONS - THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST – ALISON DAVIS

Let the Spirit of God in our hearts plead for the Church and for the world. Grant to all who are made members of your Church by baptism the grace of the Holy Spirit to live worthily of their calling.

We pray for:

- those who are newly baptised and for any families who are waiting to have their children baptised, and adults unable to be baptised due to the current pandemic and resulting restrictions.
- our clergy and congregation: that we may be filled with such joy in believing that through worship our lives may overflow with love, compassion, generosity and humility.
- the world: for the leaders of the nations and their governments and especially President Elect, Joe Biden; for areas most besieged by the pandemic; for broken places where healthcare and resources are scarce and the pandemic brings further suffering; for the vaccination programme worldwide; for places facing natural disasters and for areas of unrest.
- our communities: as we all face significant challenges and changes we bring to mind the elderly, confined to their homes and separated from family and support; children and young people, where normal schooling has ceased; those who have lost their source of income, those who fear for their home, those who have no home; we give thanks for those offering extraordinary, everyday kindness.

- key workers: for all medical staff and hospital workers, who go to work knowing the risks they face; for medical researchers, seeking ways to prevent and to cure; for social workers, protecting the vulnerable; for care workers, providing contact and support to those who have no other help; for teachers, worrying about their charges; for farmers, delivery and shop workers, keeping the nation provisioned; for cleaners, fighting the spread of infection.
- those who are sick, for those struck down by Coronavirus including Caroline and Jeremy Hawksley; for those with other illnesses and conditions which leave them vulnerable; for those with poor mental health and for all who suffer.
- those who have died: for those taken suddenly; for those taken unexpectedly; for the families they leave behind; for their friends; for those who have died alone; for Bishop John Waine, Canon David Lowe, John McNally, Allen Vince and for those who have no one to remember them. May they rest in peace.

We give you thanks for calling us by name and guiding us through all the storms and difficulties of this life, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

THOUGHTS FROM THE REV'D. ANDY TODD

One of my many interests - outside of the study of theology, which is rather mandated by my present ministry formation - is the prehistory of the human species. The attraction of this topic began over forty years ago at university where, as an Arts student, I was required to add a third-subject to my programme of studies. I knew nothing of prehistory and archaeology as a distinct discipline but the course outline promised some stimulating insights in human history. That and the distinct advantage of only two lectures a week.

The subject has been an 'on and off' pursuit for me ever since. The comparison of the scientific record of fossils globally distributed in strata with the biblical account of creation is compelling. I am not at all bothered to attempt a reconciliation of the two (e.g. God created the world but he laid it out in rock-formations for us to discover) and am happy for them to co-exist on separate intellectual levels.

The thought I find most provoking is the sheer age of humankind, which new discoveries over the past few decades have progressively dated earlier and earlier. Whereas we once thought that people something like us, of the genus *Homo*, had been around for 50,000 years or more - the general view during my degree course - we now know it to have been at least three and possibly six times as long.

So we have a lengthy period of planetary dominance as a species and have stamped our mark on this earth since first appearing here. One of our earliest 'successes', termed the overkill hypothesis, was in driving the megafauna, the giant animals such as the

mammoth, to extinction: all species worldwide, were gone in a geologically tiny space of time. We continue behaving in the same way today.

Another fascinating aspect of recent discoveries is that cave-dwelling nomadic hunter-gatherers a hundred millennia ago buried their dead. That is to say, they must have shared some sensibility to the passage of life and a feeling of respect to those departed from it. Was this the beginning of spirituality?

With this appreciation of the prehistoric timeline, the birth of Christ sits in an unusual perspective. I have had many people voice to me their objection to our faith by saying that the stories about Jesus, and even more those of the Hebrew Bible, concern events that took place so long ago that their reliance to humans today is tiny.

I tend to see it quite another way: if the whole of our species history were the equivalent of a single day, then Christ came to us about twenty minutes ago. The only valid question about the incarnation when seen from this stance is why did he wait so long?

Christ's birth, death and resurrection, far from being part of our distant history, are, relative to our species existence, shockingly the latest news. This is a manifestation that has only just happened and whose effects are still rippling forward through humanity's present, and its future.

WOODBIDGE ST MARY'S CRIB - Penelope J. Bird and photos by Fr Nigel



"Many people are intrigued by our lovely Crib, and its transformation during the phases of its restoration. One of these days, it is hoped to print an article on it in full.

It begs as many questions as it answers; and despite much research, we are as yet unable to identify the designer - or, indeed, the country of its origin (presumably, such is its quality, from the European mainland), though we receive many suggestions. It is, nonetheless, possible to place it in its context of art and theology, together with the rationale and resonances of its original design at the time that it was made.

The individual figures are dated from a few different years right at the start of the 20th Century. They are cast in a very fine-grained, dense gypsum, that is capable of taking extremely fine detailing. No doubt, they were meant for reproduction - though never of the "mass" kind, because each piece is so carefully hand-finished, down to the last tiny detail: also, in the six or so years since their meticulous cleaning and restoration, no comparable piece - even an individual one - has yet been discovered via the Internet or international art-markets; we live in hope!

Carefully stabilised and conserved wherever possible - and freed from thick layers of heavy overpainting - the original surface of the draperies has a delicate, "deckled" surface which adds much to their richness. Fortunately, the beautiful, expressive features of the faces survive largely untouched; we have had, though, to supply a number of new hands.

How strange, then, that these lovely figures, totally unrecorded and unregarded, should have lain forgotten at the bottom of a cupboard - placed there, by whom? - until their rediscovery about twenty years ago. "



The Three Magi from the East and 'Rupert'... or is it, 'Perry Mason' the camel?
Answers on a postcard please!

NEWS FROM THE THOROUGHFARE

ITS OFFICIAL! Our United Benefice became a legal reality on January 1st. A big thank you to all who attended our New Year's Vigil and also to those who enjoyed our two-way walk between both Churches. Watch out for the pictures on our Church website.

CONGRATULATIONS! - Puva and Paul Andrews were married at St Mary's, Woodbridge in 2019 and are delighted to announce the birth of their baby son, Joshua on 3rd January.

FACEBOOK - Our Facebook page took 1,400 'hits' on our brilliant new Nativity Trail. Our thanks to Rita James and all who took part as well as all who travelled with us! Have you visited our pages recently?

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST - **Brenda Jackson**, leader of New Horizons Lunch and Activities Club, which - in better times - for two days every week meets in our own Hall, has been awarded British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the community. **Stephen Gee**, husband of Sarah-Jane, one of our Rainbow Leaders, was also awarded BEM, for his work as a biomedical scientist in setting up the Covid-19 testing lab at Ipswich Hospital. We were also pleased to hear that **Gwen Zammit**, an occasional member of our congregation and choir, has been awarded BEM for services to the community of Charlton, Royal Borough of Greenwich, in the New Year's Honours List.

COMMUNICATION AND STAYING IN TOUCH DURING LOCKDOWN - As we enter the current Lockdown, the earlier channels for the news sheet are still in place. They came from the 'phone trees' set up in March to maintain communication and have developed into hand deliveries and several other forms. Please also 'Watch this space' for details of Sunday Worship from next week, 17th January @ 10am.

If you would like to chat further, please contact Barbara (07710 229345 & bandjstear@btinternet.com) or Veronica 01394 383257 & vhowe22@yahoo.co.uk) who will be pleased to talk and/or link you up with another member of our congregations. They will be delighted also to offer you the Zoom links for **Thursday T@4 sessions**.

If you would like to join a small group (of Elders and others) for **Morning Prayer at 9 am on Saturday mornings**, Barbara or Veronica will be able to pass on the links for that too. The onscreen text of the service is provided.

CHURCH SOUND SYSTEM - We are currently reviewing our sound system at Woodbridge St Mary. Please let your views/suggestions for improvement be known to Fr Nigel. Pardon? Also, we welcome those of you using our Induction loop system ('T'-setting) to let us know if there are any problems with your audibility?

TIME TO REFLECT – Monday 11th January, 10.30am. We will be looking at Psalm 23. Please contact Sandra Schur for further details via the Parish Office.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER – all are welcome to join us at 8pm on Wednesday 13 January 2021 – by lighting a candle at home and sitting quietly in contemplation and prayer. Our ‘word for stillness’ this month is *“I will go before you – and level the mountains.”* (Isaiah, 45, 2) If you would like to receive a copy of Michael’s notes please ring 387280 or email margie.stagg@btinternet.com. Michael & Margie

CHURCH FLOOR CLEANING TEAM - St.Mary’s has a great team of twelve people, who, in teams of two, vacuum and sweep the church floor each week over a period of six weeks. The team has been led by Tony Waller, who also organises the team rota. Tony will be stepping down at the end of March, so we’d love another person to organise the rota to clean the floor. If you are able to help or would like more details please contact the parish office via email parish.office@stmaryswoodbridge.org or telephone 01394 388820. Thank you.

HOUSE FOR SALE - 4 Carmelite Place is on sale at the reduced price of £485K with W.H Brown in Church Street. Please contact them for details. 01394 380280

CONTACTS

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SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES! Answers next week...

