



REFOCUSSED

THE **PARISH MAGAZINE** OF
ST ETHELDREDA'S CHURCH
WITH ST LUKE'S CHURCH

March 2021



Lent letter to the Parish

from John Barnard, Lay Reader

The year seems to be racing away. The church is firmly into the season of Lent and is looking forward to Easter.

This time last year, at the beginning of March, we were happily chugging along with our plans and ideas and then news started to come in of a virus that caused concern. On 23rd March the whole world changed in a manner that none of us has ever known and is still affecting the lives of everyone. Will we ever get back to what we thought of as 'normal' – what will our new 'normal' be and how long will it take to get there?

During last Lent we at church ran a course called 'Meeting God in Mark', that is Mark's gospel, following a book written by Rowan Williams, our previous Archbishop of Canterbury. Because of 'lockdown' we had to stop meeting for this course but, with the ability to communicate via Zoom we ran this course again during Advent (the lead up to Christmas) and this time we completed it.

One whole third of Mark's Gospel is taken up with the events of the last week of Jesus' life. During this final week, Jesus is left more and more alone. It is almost like a progression of rejection. He is left alone by everyone. Judas betrays him, the disciples desert him, Peter denies him, the Roman governor and soldiers reject and abuse him until finally he feels that he has been abandoned by God. Totally alone in the world and facing an agonising death, it is at this time that Jesus chooses

to reveal that he is the one for whom the world has been waiting. The High Priest asks him 'Are you the anointed one' the Son of the Blessed?' Jesus replies 'I am'. He uses the Divine Name, which God calls himself when he speaks to Moses in the Hebrew Scriptures, sealing his fate with no possibility of reprieve

It might sound a strange thing to say, but because we know the ending, we can sort of forget how absolutely awful Jesus' rejection and aloneness must have felt. Jesus was human. He felt what we feel. He suffers what we suffer.



Parish of Bishop's Hatfield St Etheldreda with St Luke

St Etheldreda's Church Service

SUNDAY: 9.30^{am} Holy Communion

WEDNESDAY: 10^{am} Holy Communion

THURSDAY: 7^{pm} Holy Communion/Compline
(Thursday evening services will be led on Zoom)

St Luke's Church Service

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You can view all St Eth's services, in real time, or later at your leisure, online at:

www.facebook.com/StEthHat/

Join us for Morning Prayers online each day at 7.30am and Compline at 9pm

Editorial



Editor of Refocused

Mary Rathbone, Lay Reader
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Dear readers, we hope that you enjoy this issue of Refocused. Unfortunately, due to COVID, we will not be producing it in hard-copy. Hopefully by next month though, we will be able to return to parish-wide distribution.

All going well, we should be able to return to worship again in St Eth's and St Luke's from early March. We will keep you informed about this on our Facebook page.

This month, as we travel through the heart of Lent, we are running a Lent course, based on a book written by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, called The Nail.

We also have another course, running called Explore, for those wishing to learn more about the Christian faith.

Even though these courses have started, you are still welcome to join us in them, see page 7.

Holy Week straddles the end of March and beginning of April this year. Services will be held on:

28th March: Palm Sunday
29th March: Monday of Holy Week
30th March: Tuesday of Holy Week
31st March: Wednesday of Holy Week
1st April: Maundy Thursday
2nd April: Good Friday
3rd April: Holy Saturday
4th April: Easter Day

More details of these services will be posted, in due course, on our website and Facebook page.

Mothering Sunday always falls at the half way point in Lent, and this year we remember all mothers, those who have been maternal figures and Mother Church, of course on, 14th March. Rev'd Kathryn offers some thoughts on page 6 about the mothering heart of God and how he is always there for us offering love, support and guidance.

Lent letter to the parish continued from front page

We are now in our third period of lockdown and the inability to see our friends and relations and enjoy their company and a good hug, can make us feel isolated and alone, even lonely.

I find it comforting that Jesus has been there and knows how we feel. What is more, Jesus promised, possibly because he knows what it is like, that we will never be totally alone. In John's gospel he promises that he will never leave us orphaned. He will be beside us all through our lives. You can look it up in John's gospel chapter 14 verses 18 to 27 where not only will he be with us, but he will also give us peace in our lives, peace of mind, peace that we need never be afraid. Do you know the old hymn "What a friend we have in Jesus"? A friend indeed!

So, this Lent I encourage you to spend some time preparing for Easter. Use lockdown time to focus (or refocus) on God. You might like to read a book. We at church are using a book by Stephen Cottrell (Archbishop of York) called *The Nail*, or Rowan's book referred to above; both are short, well written and in their way, beautiful.

We all hope that lockdown will gradually come to an end in the not too distant future when it is safe to do so and I look forward to seeing many of you in church where we can once again sing together, worship together and gather around God's table to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection.

In the meantime, have a good Lent looking forward to Easter. With best wishes. John Barnard.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27

What's on at Hatfield House

RESTAURANT: OPEN FROM 3RD APRIL

WEST GARDEN PARK: OPEN FROM 3RD APRIL

HATFIELD HOUSE: OPEN FROM 3RD JUNE



DOGS AND DAFFS CHARITY WALK

21 March @ 9.30am-4pm

Banish those winter blues and put your best foot forward in aid of Riding for Disabled – Digswell Place Group. Come along to the Stable Yard at Hatfield Park with your pooch to register and stroll the grounds of Hatfield Park following a selection of our Park Walks available here.

HOT AIR BALLOON RIDES

1 March— 31 October

Experience the skies and enjoy unforgettable panoramic views on the airborne adventure of a lifetime with Virgin Balloon Flights. Find the world at your feet when you hop in the basket

NGS Gardens Open for charity

20 March 11am—4pm

Since its foundation in 1927, the National Gardens Scheme has donated over £55 million to nominated beneficiaries. Once again Hatfield House will be supporting the NGS by opening the Gardens on Saturday 20th March ahead of the official 2021 visitor season. The takings from the day will be split between the National Garden Scheme and a charity of Lady Salisbury's choosing.

For more information on all events at Hatfield House

www.hatfield-house.co.uk/events t: 01707 287010 e: visitors@hatfield-house.co.uk

Find us on 

www.stetheldreda.org

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ROWAN WILLIAMS, Candles in the Dark

Book Review by Mary Rathbone, Lay Reader

I feel certain I'm not the only one who has had a sleepless night or two over the past year of this pandemic.

It was during one such night recently that I stumbled across this book. As sleep eluded me I decided to have a browse around at Amazon and discovered this book, published in December 2020, languishing at position 14 in the section: Best Sellers in Christian Books.

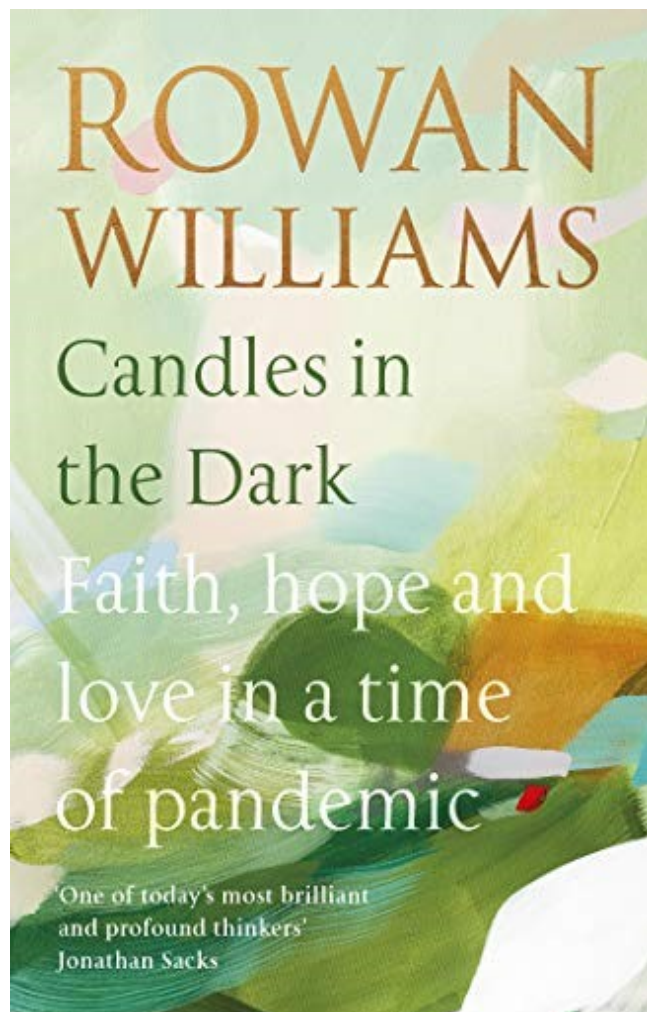
Intrigued I downloaded it onto my Kindle and the gentle words of wisdom, from the former Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke to my heart and calmed my soul.

I wanted to share it with our readers because I found the book to be one of hope with much food for thought, which directly relates to these strange days we live in.

I must confess that I have not yet read the entire book because, although it is an easy read, it is not a book to be rushed at. As a collection of 26 dated reflections written for the congregation of Bishop Rowan's parish church, between March and September 2020, the reader can easily dip in and out as the mood takes them

Candles in the Dark offers comfort to those looking for light in these dark times. It both challenges and nourishes the reader, as well as providing fresh resources to face a still uncertain future

This book will be a central part of my Lent reading this year and I intend to enjoy slowly unpacking and meditating upon each reflection before Holy Week. Thank you Bishop Rowan.



26 MARCH 2020

A CHANGE HAS BEGUN

'As we contemplate the coming months, not knowing when we can breathe again, it's worth thinking about how already the foundations have been laid for whatever new opportunities God has for us on the far side of this crisis.'

ROWAN WILLIAMS



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Are you in need of some daily hope during this lockdown?

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CONNECTIONS

I am cycling from Land's End to John'O Groats (LEJOG) for the Alzheimer's Society because my mum passed away from Alzheimer's Phil Robinson

Well, what a strange world we find ourselves in at the moment. I was so glad that 2020 was over, done and dusted I thought, hoping that 2021 would be better.

Last year was one of those years, lock down birthdays, not being able to see family and friends, missing huge events. Kids not able to play with their friends. Mates losing family members to Covid, amongst other things (big hugs to those friends).

At the same time it's been amazing to see how people came together and pulled together, helping friends & neighbours.

Fingers crossed things will start picking up in 2021 and this current situation will improve and we'll get back to seeing our family and friends. Be able to have parties and celebrate those special birthdays that we missed last year.

Another thing that has been hit massively is the ability for charities to raise needed funds to support those in need of help.

Last year I had set myself a huge challenge of cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats in memory of my mum, but this got cancelled like so many events. It was postponed to this September (fingers crossed it will go ahead this year).

I was talking to Fliss leading up to New Year and she mentioned that she was going to do RED January (run every day). So not one to be beaten by my missus, I decided to do Ride every day in January and then stupidly set myself a target to ride 1000 miles and to do dry January all at the same time.

I hit my target and now I am carrying a rubber ring around to sit on! My missus also smashed hers, running every day too.

In all though it was an amazing start to my training for completing my challenge of riding LEJOG in September. It will also let me know how tough it's going to be doing 1000 miles in 9 days, instead of a whole month.

I know things are very difficult at the moment, but if you are able to spare a few quid please think about sponsoring me and making a difference to families out there that have to deal every day with Alzheimer's.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philrobinson-lejog



Mothering Sunday thoughts from Rev'd Kathryn

On 14th March, it's Mothering Sunday; a day that is filled with joy for many, and offers an opportunity to give thanks and express our love to our mothers. If you're able to celebrate with your mother in some way, I hope you have a wonderful time.

Today can, however, also be a day of pain, perhaps because of the loss of a child or mother; an experience of miscarriage or infertility; or the reality that our mother didn't behave well towards us.

I believe that God comes to us in all of these experiences, loving us with a mothering heart that *everyone* can seek to emulate. To that end, I offer



this Mother's Union prayer, written by Christine Sine. With love Rev'd Kathryn

God with a mother's heart,

You gather us as your children.

You comfort and hold us in your warm
embrace.

When we hurt your arms enfold us.

When we are afraid your wings protect us.

When we are hungry you feed us with the
bread of life.

God with a mother's heart,

Your love surrounds and supports us,

In good times and in tough,

In the midst of joy and pain,

Always and everywhere.

You will never leave nor abandon us.

God eternal and loving one,

God with a mother's heart,

We thank you this day,

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**We can't wait to see you soon!
Karen, Hollie and Jan**

Jill and Mark Knight

a tribute to their Ministry at

St Etheldreda's and St Luke's churches written by Church Warden, Richard Moron



At their last service in St Eth's we presented Jill and Mark Knight with an olive tree in recognition of the wonderful contribution they have both made to our church.

More recently I was able to deliver a further gift to Jill on behalf of the congregation. The beautiful silver and topaz pendant was made by a jeweller in Orkney and Jill sent the following message.

'What a beautiful gift! Thank you so much for this stunning piece of jewellery from Orkney based on the Cross of the Kirk. It is delightful and I shall enjoy wearing it with many happy memories of all our friends at St. Eth's and the wonderful music we enjoyed together'

Lent Group 2021: The Nail

18 February—25 March, 7pm on Zoom

This year's 6-week Lent course will be based around the book 'The Nail' by Stephen Cottrell (around £6.50 from online retailers). Together we'll be entering the Passion story from the perspective of six key witnesses to Jesus' crucifixion, and asking ourselves if we would have behaved any differently in their situation. The course is designed to be accessible to everyone, and doesn't require lots of preparation!

If you'd like an invite emailed, please email bhteamoffice@gmail.com.

If you have any problems with purchasing the book, or any questions about the course, please do get in touch.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Kathryn

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Via Zoom

To find out more please contact Kathryn (alfordkathryn@gmail.com)
For a ZOOM invitation please contact bhteamoffice@gmail.com

A Monument in North Mymms Church

Written by Richard Morton, Church Warden

There are six churches in our team parish and one of these, St Mary's North Mymms, lies several miles south of Hatfield itself, in the middle of a beautiful park with only a handful of houses nearby. If you have never visited, you should definitely go and have a look. Inside, on a wall close to the altar, is the brass, shown here in a rubbing which I did back in 1973. Not that remarkable at first sight you might think but it has a fascinating story to tell.

The brass commemorates William de Kestevene who was rector of North Mymms from 1344 until he died in 1361. You can see that he was a priest because he is wearing communion vestments, including an embroidered chasuble, which are remarkably similar to those still in use today at St Eth's and elsewhere. He is shown with his eyes open and his hands together in prayer. A chalice is shown below his hands.

Other aspects of the brass are very elaborate for a monument barely a meter long. Below William's feet there is a stag and under that two lions flank his coat of arms. To either side, in the shafts of the canopy are saints: Peter, Paul, James, John, Andrew and Bartholomew, each one identifiable by their instrument of his martyrdom. Above, two angels swing incense burners and William's soul is shown as a baby sitting in the lap of God the father.

William's name is interesting in itself, indicating that he came from Kesteven in south Lincolnshire, five or six days ride north of here. How he came to be rector of a parish in Hertfordshire is not on record.

Of particular contemporary relevance, is the fact that William was the priest at North Mymms throughout the appalling time of the black death in 1351, when up to 50% of his parishioners would have died. He was indeed fortunate to survive because the death rate among priests was particularly high. Many whole villages simply disappeared at that time and North Mymms may well have been one of them.



Perhaps most curious though, is that this brass is known on stylistic grounds to have been made, not in England but in Tournai in Flanders, the foremost center of brass production in Europe, supplying magnificent monuments for at least one king and for many of the mightiest churchmen including Abbot Thomas de la Mare whose wonderful brass can still be seen in St Albans Abbey.

We tend I think to assume that the middle ages were times when people's knowledge and outlook were very restricted so it is fascinating that a parish priest 650 years ago should have known about the skills of Flemish craftsmen and chosen to have his monument made so far away.

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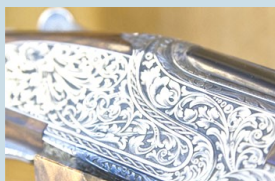
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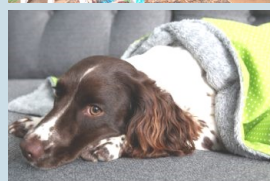
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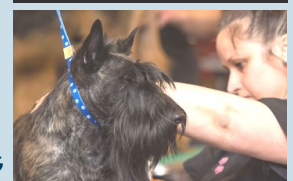
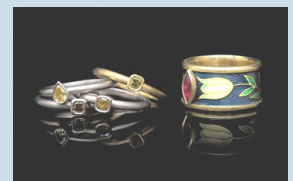
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Please contact—maryrathbone@icloud.com if you have any editorial contributions.

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The Lifeline service is open to everyone - of all ages - that would like to feel safe, protected & independent in their own home

Get in touch

Contact the control centre on **01707 357 696** and request a **LifeLine application form**.

For more information, visit our website: www.welhat.gov.uk/housing/lifeline

LifeLine is a service provided by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

- 24/7 365 day emergency response service
- Average 12 minute response time
- Regular monitoring visits
- Locally based control centre
- Free installation & competitive weekly charge
- Immediate action
- Holiday packages available



Herts Young Homeless

Knitting is the new yoga (apparently)



St Mary's Church in North Mymms has been knitting blankets for the homeless for 5 years.

The blankets are for young people who are coming out of council care and setting up their first homes.

We are going to join St Mary's efforts and start knitting the squares that make up the blankets.

Is this something you would like to help with?

The soothing effect of knitting can be quite relaxing too—so it's a great win-win winter activity

Contact: maryrathbone@icloud.com



The Herts Young Homeless charity at Gracemead House, in Hatfield Town Centre, helps young people in Herts aged 18-24 who are coming out of care, to establish their first homes.

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