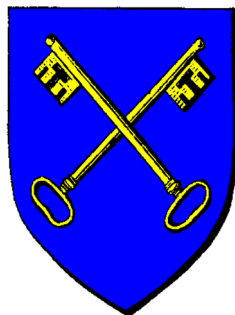


**St Peter's Church,
Raunds
Newsletter No. 37
February and March 2021**



I hope you all had a good Christmas, despite the restrictions. I particularly missed the Candlelit Christmas Eve service but there were plenty of services from our benefice on YouTube and Zoom. The Christingle especially was most enjoyable. Services continue online whilst the churches are shut, including a Lent course in February on a Monday evening. We remember those who haven't got access to the Internet. Also we pray for the families of those members of our congregation who have died, including Roger Bird, Julia Miles and Robbie.

Despite the gloomy news there is much hope. Many of our elderly residents have now had their vaccination. I have snowdrops, aconites and a daffodil out so Spring is definitely on the way. We look forward to a time, not too distant, when we can all worship together.

Take care, stay safe and keep the faith.

Judy



Rev. Jon

I would like to start off quoting from Psalm 91:10: *Neither shall any plague come into your tent.*

Dear Friends,

Camping in various places in the UK many years ago, we used a high-quality British made tent shaped like small bungalow, it hugged the ground looking like a green temporary building and I could not stand up in it. It was snug and protected us against all kinds of weather including one night a quite vicious storm. It folded into the size of a small suitcase and could be taken anywhere so its walls could keep us safe at all times and all places.

We are fond of saying that we live in a global village, that the world is our oyster, that we could as well be in New York or Singapore that the world is shrinking as never before.

We were reminded of that with the first UK case of Covid19.

What is more natural for a man of business than to return from a conference in Singapore to ski in France and then come home to England?

This lifestyle is not of course available to all, but the benefits or dangers of international trade are. You know this is not new - the Silk road brought spices, silks, precious gems, and ideas to the Mediterranean in a rich exchange but also unknown sicknesses to both continents.

So, from inside my tent once more today, locked down for a third time, anxious for friends and family, desperately sheltering from the questions being asked in the media for which the answer has to be "we do not know, or we are not sure" what have I discovered?

Firstly, I have discovered generosity from those around us - even if we are shut in, friends are looking out for one another, neighbours are helping and sharing, shopping for each other and speaking together on the telephone, over the garden fence, across balconies and in many other ways more than before.



Rev. Jon (cont)

Secondly there is a wide wide tent that encompasses all the world - I listen to the radio and watch the tv from around the world and it is fascinating to hear the same steps being taken, the same questions being asked in interview, the same reply. There are descriptions of places I know and have visited which are now as empty as The Lakes. Our tent, my tent is not so small or as insular as I thought.

Thirdly the rediscovered pleasure of stopping, of not always doing, not measuring by looking in the diary at a list of achievements but rather writing a journal of thinking.

I wonder how much of this shall we keep when we are allowed out of our tent?

It will take considerable time for the global or even the national community to start up again.

Let us pray that we may begin this renewal thoughtfully, with proper precaution but also that we may grasp the good things we have found: More peacefulness in some cases, an appreciation of what matters, affection, regard, admiration for the caring professions, and a realisation that we are not joined by the complex web of trade agreements, tourism, or economics, but by a shared humanity or really a shared humanness which makes us a race together not races apart and penetrates into the safety of our imagined tiny canvas tent.

Every blessing Rev Jon

Ginny Pledger— Child & Family Worker

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you all had a peaceful and blessed Christmas even if it was different to what we are used to. Well here we are into yet another lockdown but this time with some positive news of the roll out of the vaccine to the most vulnerable in our communities. It's great to hear that so many people in our Benefice have had access to the vaccine.

COVID-19 Community Care – this important work is continuing across our Benefice and in this 3rd lockdown we now have some new households whom we are helping with prescriptions and shopping along with our regulars. People are very appreciative of the service that all the volunteers are providing. For those who are house-bound or shielding it is vital.

Christingle Service – unfortunately we were not able to hold our usual Christingle Services in our churches last year so we did the next best thing. All three churches (St Peter's, St Mary's and St Lawrence's) joined together and we went online with the service. It was great fun recording our individual parts of the service and in the end over 100 households watched the online service on YouTube which is fantastic.

Assembly – St Peter's, Park Infants, Windmill Primary, Ringstead Primary & Stanwick Primary School. Our theme this week was Advent. Rev. Jon, Billy, Lilly and myself looked at how we might prepare to go on our summer holiday and some of the things that we might need. We then reflected on how we prepare for Advent and the coming celebrations of Christ's birth. We looked at Luke Ch.2 v.11-14

Ginny Pledger— Child & Family Worker (continued)

Assembly – St Peter’s & Ringstead Primary School – Our theme was Christingle. We had Billy and Lilly helping us again to explain all the pieces of the Christingle and what they represent.

Knitted Joseph’s Nativity Character – we didn’t get as many knitted Nativity characters this year due to the lockdown etc. but we did get enough to donate to Grassroots Nursery. The children really enjoy receiving their characters each year and these are always gratefully received by the Nursery. We were able to donate 71 Joseph’s. So a big thank you to everyone who knitted a Joseph.

End of Year Assembly – Ringstead Primary School. Rev. Jon and I joined Paul Adams and the Ringstead School community for their Christmas end of year assembly. This all took place via MS Teams as the school was isolating. We had lots of virtual fun. The children had made some amazing Christmas decorations, written poetry and sang fantastically. Rev. Jon and I reflected on the Christmas cracker and how that helps to remind us of the different elements of the Christmas story.

That is about everything for the moment. Even though the children are all home schooling, Rev. Jon and I have been asked to continue to provide assemblies so we have some of the those to get recording. More about those in the next report. Until next time, stay safe and God bless. Ginny.

Ginny Pledger

Child & Family Worker

4 Spires Benefice – Raunds, Hargrave, Ringstead & Stanwick



Friday Club

We still cannot meet of course, but as the vaccination programme progresses, we should find lockdown easing and some return to normal life, so that our meetings can resume. We only had 2 of our meetings last year, our Burns Night Supper and our AGM.

The supper should have taken place this year on the 22nd Jan; the nearest Friday to Jan 25th, and our AGM should be on Feb 19th. We shall have to use remote control for that, but fortunately there won't be much on the agenda!!

I look forward to when we can actually meet in person. Stay safe everyone.

Prayer Group.

This continues on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7.30. I phone or contact everyone with a theme, and of course any prayers wanted are always welcome. Anyone is welcome to join us. At the moment we are praying "together" in our own homes, and when we can meet in person we have a time for prayer, a reading of some sort (not necessarily a Bible reading) that fits the theme, we pass a candle round and pray for the person holding the candle, a short Celtic Compline, and then refreshments and a good chat. I will let everyone know when we can meet in person again.

Pat Stuart

Future Newsletter Publications

To ensure you receive future copies promptly you can opt to receive yours by email.

Raunds Foodbank

What a year this has been for the Foodbank! Our awareness has grown and several other initiatives have grown out of it. These include setting up Thrapston Foodbank, Holiday Hunger for families during the summer holidays and half-term, Uniform Bank for school uniform from the local schools and Winter Warmers for children's coats. Our profile has increased on social media through Facebook. We have been on Radio Northampton and have developed links with the East Northants Enterprise Centre.

The Community Cafe closed in March due to Covid-19. Sadly we recently lost Sandra Still who had been a staunch supporter of the Foodbank and Cafe since it first opened, and also Brian Johnson who was renowned for his sponge cake. (We miss the homemade cakes so, if anyone would like to bake one for the volunteers on a Thursday morning, it would go down well!)

The generosity of our community continues, especially with Christmas coming. A local company has offered to buy the ingredients for Christmas dinner for a number of families. The Foodbank will be putting together Christmas hampers, and giving vouchers for Adams Apple. Also we are receiving a regular donation from an individual, specifically to purchase fresh produce to add to food parcels.

We have been given a lot of toys and gifts such as toiletries, some of which we are selling to raise funds. We will be having a stall on Saturday December 5th from 10 till 12, so come and do your Christmas shopping in one place and help support those who are struggling.

I would like to thank all who have donated items, money and time, to the schools and businesses and Raunds Area Volunteers and wish you all a happy Christmas.

For further details see our Facebook page or email enquiries@raundsfoodbank.co.uk or phone 01933 730160

St Peter's Church of England Academy

"Let your light shine" Matthew 5:16

Well children made it in-
to school for one day
after Christmas before
government advice
changed! Apart from the
children of key workers



St Peter's
C.E. Academy

and those thought to be vulnerable, children are now engaged in remote learning. Teachers are setting work and teaching using the internet with children learning on computers with parents help at home. Not ideal and presenting lots of challenges but better than no learning at all. How long for? Who knows?

Christmas in school was not without celebration however. In their "bubbles", children celebrated and learnt, even taking part in a Christingle. Videos and teachers' ingenuity made it as special as possible. The school supported the Mayor of Raunds chosen charity with a toy appeal and designed their own Christmas cards.

Since returning, school staff are now involved in rapid testing twice a week (where they do a test at home, in case they have COVID but are asymptomatic) and learning new skills on a daily basis as they teach remotely. Who would have imagined this a year ago?

Please keep the staff, children and wider community in your thoughts and prayers. They are doing an amazing job.

April / May Newsletter

Just a quick reminder that the closing date for the next issue is Sunday 28th March.

This will be a double issue covering March and April.

Please get your contributions in promptly.

A Prayer for School Leaders

Although this prayer was written for school leaders, it probably resonates with many of at the moment.

*Loving God,
We are so thankful we can come to you.
Right now, we need your help,
To see us through these difficult times.*

*In our challenges, we need your security.
In our striving, we need your wisdom.
In our questioning, we need your guidance.
In our searching, we need your truth.*

*In our uncertainty, we need your answers.
In our anxiety, we need your peace.
In our frustration, we need your understanding.
In our fear, we need your love.*

*In our anger, we need your mercy.
In our weariness, we need your strength.
In our grief, we need your comfort.
In our darkness, we need your light.*

*We pray for moments of connection,
Relief, grace and even joy to come,
Trusting in your faithfulness,
Holding on to hope.*

*Walk with us, each day, we pray,
Today and evermore. Amen*