



CHRIST CHURCH
BIRKENHEAD



Parish Magazine
May 2020

**Welcome to the May edition of our online parish magazine!
As usual it contains a mixture of articles sent in by members
of the church community or acquired from other sources.
Please enjoy!**

The Rev Writes

Dear Friends,

How are you all faring several weeks into 'lockdown'? I hope you are remaining well and safe and keeping sane. It isn't easy is it? My faux pas of the week so far means that I have missed a Zoom meeting – got the day wrong and realised that it had already happened when I checked the invitation email – oops! This is frustrating for me as usually I am pretty good at getting dates and times correct. It is so easy to lose track of time at the moment – I can while away a couple of hours simply looking at things on-line and checking emails and so on.

Not everyone has these distractions of course, for some of those who are living alone it can be very hard. Families that are altogether in small quarters will be finding it a strain in a different way. Behind our house in an adjacent garden the family have a basketball net on one of the outside walls. About three times a day the children are out there bouncing the ball and getting some much needed exercise – not a distraction but a sound of life!

We are still in the season of Easter and can hear much more so than usual the sounds of spring – birds chirping early in the morning, sunlight pouring into the room and all sorts popping up in the garden. In some ways we are missing out this year but in others we are having the time to stop and listen and watch and wait as new life springs up all round us.

At the end of this month we shall have the celebration of Pentecost on 31st May when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in the upper room announcing the birth of the church in quite an unusual way – tongues like fire anointing each one and all of them bursting into languages unknown to them – but known by those who heard their own tongue in a place where they had not expected it. These signs of the action of the Holy Spirit drew many to faith.

The Holy Spirit gave the disciples boldness to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It also enabled them to manage what turned out to be a rather large number of converts. That is an element of the story that can easily get lost – it meant that not only the twelve apostles were involved in leadership but others were appointed by them to manage the practical details of people getting fed and watered too.

The apostles focused then on preaching, teaching and studying the scriptures. Both of these roles were valuable and important. It's human nature to put one role 'above' another and build a hierarchy – we love ranking people and deciding who has worth. In Christ all have worth. The Covid-19 virus has shown up the importance of many different roles in society. The work of cleaners and carers is just as worthy of praise as the doctor or nurse. There I name but a few roles of the many, many people who are involved in keeping everyone safe, fed and healthy.

Some people will be feeling rather helpless – unable to do anything much to help out for various reasons. That feeling of not being needed can cut to the quick when emotions are running high and we are all in a place of uncertainty. For some just being at home and being safe is their contribution and that is OK, it really is.

The context in which we live, the work that we do or have done, the stage of life that we are at, the kind of health we have all dictate what we can and can't do at this time. So do rest in the knowledge that we are loved by God whatever we can or cannot do and find ways of getting through this time – whether productively or not – it is not a contest!

Let's allow our faith to firmly embed in us; read your bible, spend time in prayer and seek to nurture your relationship with the Lord. Give someone a ring who you haven't spoken to for ages, or a friend from church that you normally see each week. Keeping in touch with one another – oh and yes, give me a ring, I'd love to hear from you too.

Blessings to you all during this Eastertide.
Gerri

Kathleen's Corner

It would be hard to write my piece without touching on the Virus. I will try to keep away from the rights and wrongs and mistakes of this extraordinary happening and dwell on my own reflections.

We will all, in one way or another, now have time to stand and stare – even those with children to care for. Many of us have lost those distractions of our lives which keep us 'busy, busy, busy'. We have found time to read. Many people I have spoken to or emailed have told me they have discovered reading. Actually, reading instead of watching TV.

TV has become a daily list of casualties generally contradicting the numbers each day. Dwelling on grief, despair and little room for hope. Perhaps we have begun to realise that much of TV is just that, a repetition of rather silly stuff. I exclude such awe-inspiring programmes as the Hubble Telescope programme, the wonder of which puts our earthly problems in perspective when we consider how a small a part is Planet Earth in the Great Scheme of things.

The outpouring of noisy gratitude for our health workers and frontline workers for instance. Why do these acts of appreciation not happen in such ways during normal times? How often have we heard complaints, irritation and discontent with 'our wonderful health service'? Are what we consider our acts of kindness a form of co-dependence where we give this love because we expect something in return? When that love is not returned do we say, 'After all I did for him/her/them?'

I do not exclude myself in these contemplations: for as the Bible tells us, 'We have all fallen short.'

Kathleen Stansfield



Rita's Ramblings

Apologies in advance for a few of my ramblings ... Now anyone who knows me, knows I am not a fan of housework, so at this 'stay at home' time, I have tried doing anything else to put off tackling the dreaded 'H' word.

Up early one morning I bit the bullet and reluctantly got out the Hoover. I have one of those cordless vacuums and began working in the living room. It wasn't long before, hearing a whoooooo noise, I realised it had run out of charge.

Thus, began a search, high and low, for the charger cable. I have spent days searching, knowing that the last time I used it, I had put it somewhere safe so I could find it easily! I have searched every room in the house, and so far, I have found a variety of chargers, none of which fit, and most of which I can't remember what they are used for. This got me thinking of how we in this age, need power to function successfully in even the most basic tasks throughout the day. Making a cup of tea, showering, ironing, watching TV, using the car, electric lighting, phone ... the list goes on.

So, like my vacuum, without power we are almost useless – we would find it hard to function. With this in mind, I thought of how I can recharge myself. I can if I begin each day by 'plugging myself in' and using the Power of God.

Without Him and His grace, I am like that Hoover, trying to go through the day using my own power- and it doesn't work. I need God's power – His Holy Spirit in me, to recharge me, and keep me going. And as for that cable – I searched ... and God found me!!!

So remember, if we ask Him to, God will fill us up with the Holy Spirit, and charge us up to do the work He has designed us for. Without this we are powerless. We are never 'cordless' and my prayer today is ... 'Lord, never let me lose my Spiritual charger.' Are you 'plugged in'?

Rita O'Loughlin



Archbishop launches worship phone line

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. **Daily Hope**, which is available from today, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

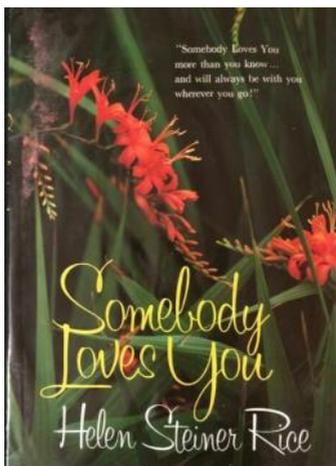
The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. The service is supported by the Church of England nationally as well as through the Connections group based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Callers will hear a **special greeting** from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19. **Options** include materials from the Church of England's Communications team such as *Prayer During the Day* and *Night Prayer*, updated daily from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service.

A section called **Hymn Line** offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled *Hymns We Love*, provides a hymn and reflection based on an initiative by the Connections group.

Archbishop Justin said: "With many in our country on lockdown, it's important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are. The Daily Hope service will allow people to hear hymns, prayers and words that offer comfort and hope, especially in this Easter season. "I want to urge people to spread the news about this service. If there is someone you know who is particularly struggling, give them a call and let them know about the Daily Hope. I'm going to phone a friend; will you join me?"





Somebody Loves You

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2:21

Somebody loves you more than you know,
Somebody goes with you wherever you go,

Somebody really and truly cares
And lovingly listens to all of your prayers.

Don't doubt for a minute that this is true,
For God loves his children and takes care of them too.

And all of His treasures are yours to share
If you love Him completely and show that you care.

And if you walk in His footsteps and have faith to believe,
There's nothing you ask for that you will not receive.

*Dear Consoler of all! How consoling and reassuring to realize that
at all times You love me and that You care about me.*

*From the book of the same name by
Helen Steiner Rice (1900-1981)
Thanks to MaryJo Blades*

The Writings on the Wall

Although born near Llangollen, {by Telford's aqueduct in Trevor} I had never heard the following story until one day, on a day out with our Fellowship Group. Our driver Geoff Phoenix, who is a mine of information told us this particular story. I was so fascinated that I contacted a local history group who then provided me with the following information—*The Writings on the Wall*.

It tells of a special tunnel near the Berwyn station in Llangollen opposite the 'Chain Bridge' hotel. The tunnel contains touching messages left by soldiers before they went to fight in the First World War.

When the tunnel was built around 1864, it was lined with a type of tile that took pencil readily and local people took to writing their names or messages to loved ones on them. It soon became apparent that a great number were written by the young men of the town heading off to the First World War.

It is believed the teenage conscripts used indelible pencils issued for the front line to write notes in the tunnel, which passes underneath the Llangollen Steam Railway line at Berwyn station.

One partially obscured note, signed by AJ Candy, reads as follows: "I really want ..is baby." The soldier—whose name appears on Llangollen's war memorial—was believed to have been killed in action. Young recruit R. Roberts, who returned as a Lance Corporal said: "It looks as though he left messages for his lover here. The sad thing is that he went off to war and didn't ever come back. There's no trace of him."

Alfred James Candy's name appears on Llangollen's war memorial as do four other soldiers' names found in the tunnel. It also appears that the young recruit R. Roberts shared a cigarette with E.M. Morris on July 6 1913. By the time they returned on Christmas Day the following year, they were both signed up to the army and had quickly been promoted.

These frail and delicate graffiti in the tunnel remains a memorial to the thoughts of the young men as they faced going to the front.

Jackie Harness

The Right Reverend John Graham, Bishop of Chester

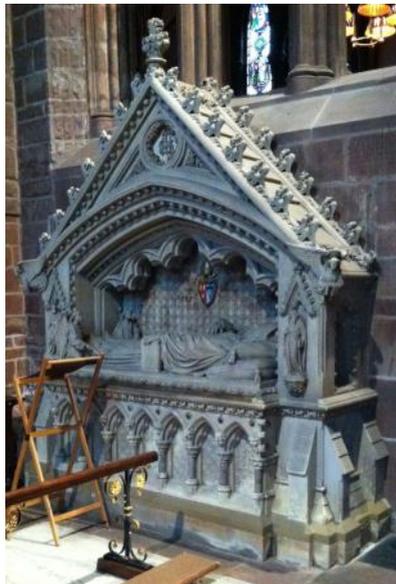
Christ Church was opened for worship on the 25th February 1849, but it was not consecrated until 3rd March 1854. The ceremony was conducted by the Right Reverend John Graham, Bishop of Chester.

Graham was born on the 23rd February 1794, in Claypath, Durham. He was educated at Durham School, and then Christ's College Cambridge. Whilst at Christ's College, he attained high proficiency as a Classical and Mathematical Scholar. He was elected a Fellow and Tutor of his college in 1816 and in 1830 was chosen as Master of Christ's College. During those years he tutored Charles Darwin, from 1829 to 1830.

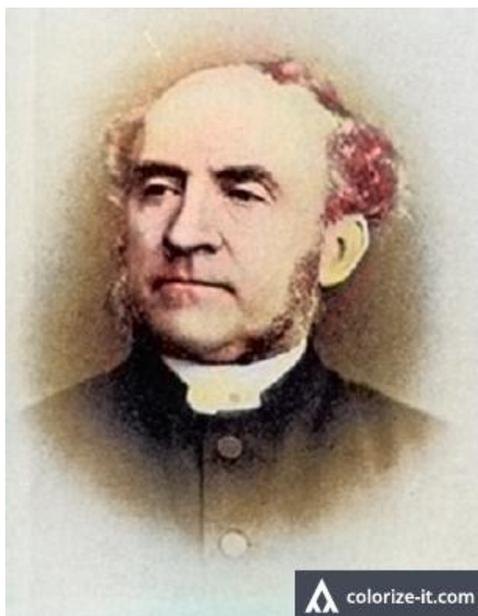
Ordained in 1818, Graham became rector of Willingham in Cambridgeshire in 1843. He was nominated Chaplain to Prince Albert in January 1841. In 1848 he was offered the vacant bishopric of Chester. His consecration took place in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall on the 14th May 1848, and on the 16th June he was installed in Chester Cathedral. On the 25th September 1849 he was appointed 'Clerk of The Closet' to Queen Victoria, an appointment he held till his death.

In 1833 he had married Mary Porteous, by whom he had eight children. He died at the Bishop's Palace in Chester on the 15th June 1865.

Andrea Hendrick



Memorial to
Bishop Graham in
Chester Cathedral



Reverend Richard Paul Blakeney, A.B., LL.D.

He had been in the ministry for nine years when he came to Christ Church and he was Priest-in-Charge for twenty two years, until 1874. He built up the congregation and gave Christ Church a reputation for sound evangelical preaching. "he was beloved by all who knew him and the work of the Lord prospered in his hands." Among the books he wrote were "The Moral Theology of Alphonsus Liqoin" and "A Manual of Romish Controversy."

So wrote Joan Evans in her history of our church published in 1999. You can read more about all the 19th and 20th century vicars whose images adorn the north wall of the nave at in the history pages of the church website.

Blakeney's 'Manual' refutes the beliefs of the Roman Catholic church in strong language. You can read it all on Google Play books at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=Fd0CAAAAQAAJ&rdid=book-Fd0CAAAAQAAJ&rdot=1>

Notice, too, the coloured photo. More to come from the north wall!

An abandoned church?



I very much enjoy music written by English composers in the pre-first world war period. On Youtube many pieces are illustrated, naturally, by views of the countryside. Recently listening to Gerald Finzi's 'Farewell to Arms'(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSRQOFRSd6c>) I watched as the camera swept down the hillside towards what appears to be an abandoned church. The text accompanying the music suggests it was probably somewhere in the Peak District. But where? So far my online searching has found nothing. Does anyone have any ideas?



My searching then led me to the website of *The Friends of Friendless Churches*. This small charity looks after some fifty ancient churches around the country preserving them for visitors and their local communities to enjoy. They range from the high-church arts and crafts Chapel of St John the Baptist at Matlock Bath (illustrated) to the Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel at Waddeston near Aylesbury founded in 1792 complete with its total immersion font. ‘Do not lift the cover as it is very heavy’ visitors are warned.

And then I watched a programme about the now closed Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Railway and the horrors of building the three mile long Woodhead Tunnels. It seems that many men working there in 1853 died not only of work-related injuries but also cholera. They were buried nearby at the small 18th century chapel of St James.

If you know the road there over the top to Sheffield (the A628) you’ll know how bleak the area is. Here is a photo of the chapel from the *British Listed Buildings* website.



All of which, of course, brings me back to the unknown Derbyshire church across the page. Anyone have any ideas? What’s at the top of the hill?

Paul Rees

My little Satnav ...

I have a little Satnav, it sits there in my car.
A Satnav is a driver's friend it tells you where you are.
I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life.
It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my wife.
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive
"It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".

It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear.
And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device.
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught.
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed.
It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then, I could turn the Lady off.

Pam Ayers, thanks to Jackie Harness





The Birkenhead Priory are running *An Image A Day*, sharing spectacular photographs of their grounds and spaces. Visit *Birkenhead Priory & St Mary's Tower* on Facebook to view, follow and share the entire series.

And finally in these difficult days ...

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11: 28-30

Christ Church Birkenhead

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Christ Church Services and Community Activities

**Because of the Coronavirus we regret that
all services and community activities are suspended
until further notice.**

Updates will be provided on our Facebook page and website.

<https://www.facebook.com/christchurchbirkenhead>

<http://christchurchbirkenhead.net/>