

Christ Church Birkenhead

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Services and Community Activities

All services and community activities are currently cancelled.

Updates will be provided on our Facebook page and website.

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

<http://christchurchbirkenhead.net/>



**To worship God, to share Jesus,
and to serve the community**



CHRIST CHURCH
BIRKENHEAD



Parish Magazine

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Services

We regret that during this continuing period of lockdown there will be no services in church until further notice.

However do please keep up to date with us via our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/christchurchbirkenhead. There you will find weekly reflections on bible passages, suggestions for prayer and ideas for positive thinking.

Other resources can be found on the Church of England's website at www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/church-online.

**To open these links and others elsewhere in the magazine:
Go to them, press 'control' and click.**

Sadly, due to a lack of contributions, this edition is shorter than its predecessors. Let's get back to normal next month! Contributions before Palm Sunday, 28th March please.

Paul Rees, Editor
oxtonrees@gmail.com

Inspired by walking...

I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a host of golden...



Mud, mud, glorious mud, nothing quite like it for cooling the blood,
So follow me, follow, down to the hollow...

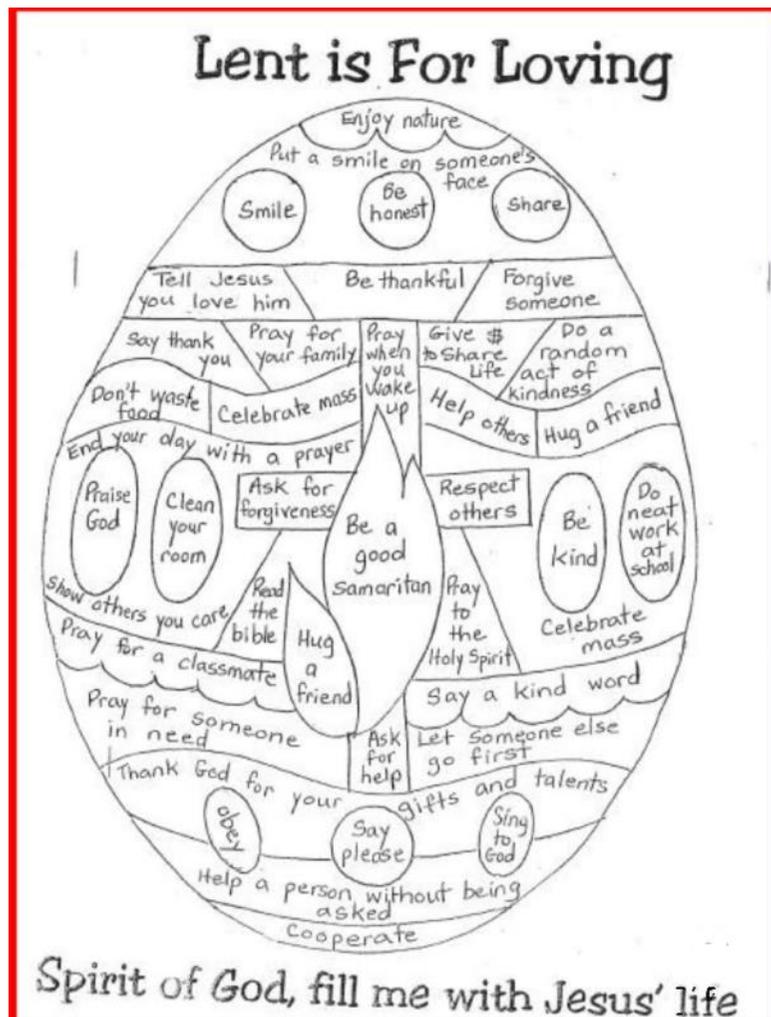


Daffodils in Birkenhead Park, Monday 22nd February
Mud in Arrowe Park, Friday 5th February

Junior Church

As we are now in Lent, I gave some resource packs to our Junior Church members. We sometimes think Lent is a time to give up our favourite things. The packs I gave the children invite and help them to do something for others. Below are ideas for us all to think about doing for others during Lent. A big shout out to our Junior Church children who are amazing in the way they they are managing through these difficult times. God bless you and keep you safe and well.

Mary Kirby, Children and Families Worker



The Rev writes...

Dear Friends.

By the time you read this, we will be hurtling towards Easter and if predictions are correct, we might be a little bit more 'unlocked' than we have been. The Prime Minister has made an announcement and all children will be returning to school early in March. As many people have now been vaccinated with their first dose, we all begin to feel a bit lighter and less worried than we were but with a sense of being cautious.

It is a little early as yet to know when we shall re-open for Church Services at Christ Church; the government announcements do not give much detail and I believe our local infection rate is still high, although improving. I hope to have news on that soon.

All of this does make me wonder what on earth we did before the pandemic! It's easy to lose your bearings after almost a year of this with the prospect of a few months more before we are able to be reasonably free. The 21 June date of possibly all restrictions being lifted is not set in stone, so we need to be careful, yet hopeful.

Did those days before the pandemic seem carefree? I watched some news on the situation in Myanmar earlier this week and thanked God that we are not under a military regime – freedom isn't just one thing is it? Freedom will always need to be within some boundaries, some laws, some guidance, some rules. We feel bound by the restrictions we have been living under but we know they are necessary and are only for a time. Much of the world's population does not share the privileges we have.

In my talk for Ash Wednesday I said that the whole year past has felt like one long Lent. It has in many ways – the things we have been denied have become difficult to cope with. As I sit here in my study the sun is shining and that certainly brings me joy – along with a bit of guilt at the state of the borders in the garden! I have to say that mostly I have a hopeful attitude but my hope is bound up in my faith and the knowledge that God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit provides that hope for a future. That knowledge that God is with me sustains me through the darker, less positive times and I am so grateful for that. If I am fearful, God's presence lifts me and gives me courage, caution or whatever else I might need at that time.

Some may struggle with mental health and feeling low, lonely and depressed can become difficult to bear and impossible to 'overcome'. It is an illness and needs to be treated as such. Call the doctor, get help, if you are able to, ask friends to pray for you. When it might be impossible to pray in your usual way, simply sit in the quiet and be conscious of your breathing. Read Psalm 46, particularly verses 10-11 *"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* *The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.'*

For those not suffering in this way, be the hope that others are losing, remember them in your prayers and ask God to place that seed of hope back into the hearts of those who are suffering.

May God bless each one of you, be present with you and be your light and your joy whatever the circumstances.

Kind regards
Revd Gerri Tetzlaff

A Lent Reflection on Matthew 4:1-11

In life we can have many testing trials that can come and steal our joy. At times it doesn't seem to matter what principle of law you apply, these ordeals can, at times, come thick and fast. We have all experienced great trials this last year due to the Covid pandemic. The fear of the illness itself, the lack of sharing fellowship at Church, the separation of families, the loss of a loved one, and the simplest of things like a hug. It sometimes surprises me how those who I believe may struggle in their faith actually find an inner strength that can lift them and see them through the tough and sad times. Christians have, or should have, an incredible comforter in the person of the Jesus. Yet, there are instances when we can cope and others when we can't, but it is how we prepare ourselves before these trials, that is crucial.

When I gave my life to Jesus I thought it was going to be all plain sailing but this has not been the case. I have had some great times but also some difficult periods. So, I ask myself, where was He in the difficult times? Jesus does guide us through life, He ensures that we are fed, watered and 'mature' in the process, but where is He in the tough times?

The Episcopal Church

Anglican worship was first celebrated in North America on the coast near San Francisco, by Sir Francis Drake's chaplain, in 1579. The first regular worship began in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. English mission societies (SPG in particular) supported the early work under the direction of the Bishop of London, who never visited the American colonies. The American Revolution challenged the ongoing existence of Anglicanism, as many clergy departed for Canada or other parts of the British Empire. Lay leaders were responsible for continuing the work of parish churches and recruiting clergy. The first bishop for the new Episcopal Church was consecrated by the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1784, with two other bishops consecrated by the Church of England after changes in English law.

At that point, The Episcopal Church became fully autonomous and soon began to send missionaries to other parts of the Americas and beyond. Today a quarter of the Anglican Communion's provinces derive at least in part from that missionary work. The Episcopal Church today includes 100 dioceses in the United States, and twelve additional dioceses or jurisdictions in fifteen nations in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Read more at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/>

There is also an interesting unofficial Episcopalian Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/E.C.M.churchhumor/> full of religious jokes and cartoons.



Another Christ Church!

This Christ Church is an historic Episcopal church in Lancaster County, Virginia. Built in 1732-35, it is notable for its unique Georgian design, and is one of the best-preserved colonial churches in the southern United States. The first church was a wooden building opened in 1670. Sixty years later, Robert Carter, a wealthy plantation owner, decided the parish deserved something better. He funded the construction of a brick replacement linked to his nearby mansion by a cedar-lined road, emphasizing the importance of himself and his family.



The church thrived until the disestablishment of the Anglican church in Virginia in 1786. This event, coupled with the Glebe Act of 1802, which authorized the state to seize church property, crippled the Anglican (now Episcopal) church, and Christ Church lost both money and parishioners. Open only intermittently in the 19th century, the church fell into disrepair; the Carter family tombs were neglected, and thieves stole bricks from the walls. Then in 1927 the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities began work on its restoration.

Among the features of the church's interior are its high-backed box pews, which held entire families at service. Its unique wineglass pulpit reflected contemporary Anglican church practice to deemphasize mystery in religious observance. At the centre of the building, its three lecterns were intended to show the relative importance of the readings delivered there. The bottom tier was for community announcements, the middle for the gospel, and the top tier was reserved for the delivery of the sermon.



Today, Christ Church is owned and operated as a museum, having been designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961. Religious services are still held on Sundays in the summer in cooperation with the nearby Grace Church.

<https://christchurch1735.org/>

In Matthew's Gospel we see that Jesus is taken into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to face temptation. The devil tempted Jesus in three ways. Firstly, the identity of Jesus was challenged in the face of great physical need and tiredness. The devil did not say, "You are the Son of God", he said, "IF" you are the Son of God. He was trying to sow doubt into the mind of Jesus. I believe that when we are in times of great physical need or tiredness the enemy can sneak in and start to challenge us on our relationship with our God.

Secondly, Jesus is taken to the Holy City. Again, he is presented with, "IF" If you are the son of God, throw yourself down". His whole spiritual authority was questioned. So it is with us, when we are in times of need through sorrow, loneliness, hurt, or betrayal, the devil can step in and question not only our physical relationship with God, but also our spiritual authority in Him.

Then thirdly, Jesus was tempted with regard to His relationship with the Father and His association to Him. The devil was basically saying to Jesus, you can have everything you came for, but if you worship me instead of your Father, you will not have to go through the pain and the crucifixion; there is an easy way, that is for you to swap sides and change your allegiance. How often good Christians are tempted away believing that the 'grass is greener on the other side'.

Life can be tough; life is tough; but we need to keep our eyes fixed firmly upon Jesus. We need to seek comfort, and courage through the presence of the Holy Spirit and we need to receive and openly accept the love available from a loving God I found these words based on Psalm 23 comforting when I went through a very difficult time last year, I hope someone else may feel the same:

Though I pass through a gloomy valley I fear no harm;
Beside me your rod and your staff are there, to hearten me.
In the midst of quiet hills steeped with green pines,
I heard within my heart the call of the gentle Jesus –Shepherd.
A haunting of my heart yet with consolation offered,
For the valley indeed was dark and I, in need of courage.
I saw him standing there, hand outstretched in welcome:
"Ah, little lamb, I love you, trust in me to care well for you"
I looked from the window cautious but afraid:
Then quietly Courage knelt beside me and my valley of fear began to fade.
The sun took over the shadows; the Shepherd took over my life.
I knew how precious the tenderness and believed once more God's love.

Jackie Harness

A true story

It was wartime. May 8th 1941 was the night of the Nottingham blitz. Nazi German bombers attacked the town causing almost a hundred fires despite the city being the first in the country to organise an Air Raid Precautions network.

In Sneinton, one of the poorer areas of the city, Father Eric (part-time air raid warden and High-Church C of E) was looking out for his church and nearby streets when an incendiary bomb came crashing down. It landed on the roof of the church near the vestry and soon burned its way through, damaging the organ as it fell into the nave. The vicar, grabbing a stirrup pump and hosepipe, entered the smoke ridden church, attacked the blaze and doused the flames.

The following day, Father Eric went about his duties visiting members of the congregation, meeting up with residents in the nearby streets and helping to arrange accommodation for those whose homes had been destroyed. Evening came and Father Eric put on his cassock, crossed the garden from the vicarage, and entered St Matthias to say evening prayer as he did every night. His office read, he decided to inspect the roof to see if the bomb had caused damage to the rafters inside the building. He took a ladder to the dark burned-out corner over by the vestry and climbed.

A few moments later the church door opened quietly. A figure came in, a teenager or perhaps a young man, say, in his twenties. Father Eric watched quietly from the top of the ladder out of sight. The young man walked towards the aisle leading up to the altar. He paused, knelt down, and then grabbed the end of the carpet that ran up the aisle. Slowly he began to roll it up, moving slowly towards the altar.

Suddenly there came a voice from on high saying, "My son, what are you doing in my church?" The young man turned and ran, out through the church door, never to be seen again. And Father Eric had a great story to pass on to his family and grandson!



St Mary and St George Coptic Orthodox Church

After Father Eric left and as the population of inner city Nottingham changed in the decades following the war, so the congregation of St Matthias decreased and in October 2003 the church closed. Three years later the building was sold to the Coptic Orthodox Church and dedicated to St Mary and St George. The first service there was held in March 2009.



The term "Copt" comes from the Greek word for "Egyptian." The Coptic Orthodox Church, then, is the Church that was established in Egypt by the Holy Apostle Mark. "Orthodox" means straight and unwavering. Orthodox Christianity is the authentic and original Christian Faith founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the most pure form of Christianity with nothing added. "Church", the One, Only, Holy, Catholic (universal), and Apostolic Church is the Body of Christ existing in the world. He is the sole Head and His people constitute His Body in the Church.

<http://stmary-stgeorge.org.uk/>

<https://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/sneinton-st-matthias/hintro.php>

Paul Rees

