

2020

MENSTON  
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St John the Divine

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# ROOF APPEAL ~ What's happening!

Our target ~ £102,000

Income to 22/4/2020

*Congregational giving* £21,254

**TOTAL** £25,829 with Gift Aid

We are still short of our fundraising target so it is not too late to donate either by

- BACS to: Menston PCC 40-22-28 A/C 40572640  
Reference (most imp) : Roof + surname
- or cheque payable to Menston PCC. Send to the Treasurer, Hillcrest, Kelcliffe Lane, Guiseley, Leeds LS20 9DE or post through the Parish Office letterbox. If you are a taxpayer please consider Gift Aid. A gift aid declaration form is available from the Treasurer if he does not already hold your details.

Fundraising Events for your diaries - dates in the next few months are provisional on the Government's lockdown advice.

*Two Open Gardens ~ Postponed until June 2021*

***Nostalgia Night** ~ Due to the present circumstances, the Nostalgia Evening arranged for the 4 July this year at Kirklands will now take place at a later date. The event will feature local band Time Warp who play classic hits from the 50's, 60's, 70's and later. Included in the ticket will be a pie and peas supper, bar and raffle. Details of the new date will be circulated when available.*

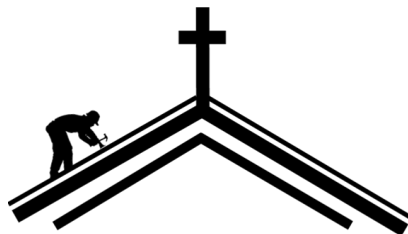
**Coffee Morning** Saturday 18 July @ 2 Park Way

**Bridge Drive** Wednesday 21 October

**Candlelit Supper** Friday 11 December

Your ideas welcomed for fundraising events. **PLEASE** contact Kathy Roberts with your ideas. She collates dates etc to avoid clashes.

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# From the Editor

These strange times continue hence the second on-line edition of our church magazine. Once again, my sincere thanks to Steve and Andrew for their contributions; and to Dominic Hall for his thought provoking View from the Pews, Kathy's prayers and the MU News!

Please feel free to send in your contributions - poetry, book reviews, recipes for a lockdown kitchen? For those who enjoy piano music could I recommend a superb YouTube recording of the Andante from Bach's 4 Organ Sonata, transposed for piano, and played by the Icelandic pianist Vikingur Olafsson. I heard it on Radio 4 the other day and it simply blew my mind away and brought tears to my eye with its beauty and simplicity.

My good wishes to you all - may you keep safe and well.

*Jan*

## **21 May is Ascension Day**

Christ's ascension into heaven was the real commencement of His reign. *John Calvin*

Astronauts sink into insignificance beside this ascension!  
*Vance Havner*

## **31 May is Pentecost**

The Spirit is the source of all our natural gifts. *D MacLeod*

He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scriptures in his hands has all he needs.

*A MacLaren*

*Parish Pump News Service*

## **This month**

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## The Vicarage

### Dear Friends

We live in very different times. Easter locked out of church. Holy week in lockdown. Palm Sunday in isolation. We all have our own reflections upon the absence of friends, church family and the church building. Isolation, anxiety and frustration are common feelings.

During the lockdown period I have been working my way slowly through the Psalms on my own. I have written about other aspects of Psalm 3 elsewhere, but today I just wanted to note verse 4:

*I cry aloud to the Lord,  
and he answers me from his holy hill.*

The holy hill, Mount Zion, was used in the Bible as a term for Jerusalem since it is located there, in the city of King David. In Psalm 2 God says he has installed his King on this hill. The Hebrew literally says, 'The hill of his holiness,' rather than just 'holy hill.' The mountain is only special because of God's holiness, not because the mountain itself was holy.

So, in Psalm 3 when King David is fleeing from his son, Absalom, who now sits on the throne in Jerusalem, it is useful for us to reflect on verse 4. David cries to God, and God answers, *from the hill of his holiness*. Absalom, the usurper, has seized geopolitical control of Mt Zion, but God is still in control of the real Zion. The identity of 'Zion' isn't really useful here – it can be used to designate the hill, the temple, Jerusalem, or even the whole country of

Israel – but really, it is where God is.

What is important for us is that it didn't matter who controlled the city of Jerusalem, or who 'owned' the temple; God answered out of his own holiness. His answer wasn't dependent on a place, a building, or a city. King David was able to trust God enough to sleep despite being hunted down, because he understood that God wasn't confined to a conquered hill. The hill was nothing without God's holiness.

So for us, lockdown perhaps carries the same lesson. We have a lovely church building, and it is a sadness to be apart from it. But when we cry to the Lord, he hears and responds whether we have access to the church building or not. The 'hill of God's holiness' is where God is, not where we put him.

Let's trust in our God to be our comfort, not the building in which we are used to worshipping him. In isolation, let each of our houses be a place where God can fill us with his holiness. In lockdown, let us cry to God and wait expectantly for his answer. And when locked out of church, let us fill the whole of Menston with prayer instead.

*Steve*



## A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

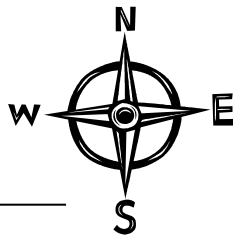
There is no doubt that 2020 is shaping up to be a most interesting and demanding year. The Corona virus that is affecting the whole world has challenged all of us to look anew at the way we live. It has seen the worst of us – panic buying, defiance and selfishness. It has also seen the very best of us – shopping for the vulnerable, contacting long forgotten friends and family, applauding and celebrating the tireless work of the 'key workers' in our community – especially those in the NHS.

It is times like these that, in spite of social distancing and isolation, can knit a community together. Normally, when I go to the supermarket it is head down and focus on the things I am buying so I can get in and get out as quickly as possible. Now, whilst we are all queueing up and waiting for space in the store I find that I am talking to people getting to learn a little more about my community. When out for my allowed exercise – which I am calling a Johnson Jaunt (see if that catches on!) - I find that people will smile and say 'hello' as we pass at a safe distance.

I am mindful also of the people who cannot go out. Those already affected by the virus or those vulnerable to its effects. Through Skype, Zoom and the more traditional telephone, I am able to keep up with the news from loved ones and to make sure that they are OK. This connection with friends and family reminds me that, *'No man is an island entire of itself.'* It is almost 400 years since John Donne wrote this line. The idea that we thrive in a community is as relevant and necessary today as it ever has been. Like everyone else in the country, I am learning to adapt to a new routine. The pace of life is slower and has given me a great opportunity to read more, sort out my garden and spend some time thinking about my place in the community and the wider world.

Finally, if you are readers then might I be so bold to give you a couple of recommendations. 'The Parisian' by Isabella Hamad is a novel centred around the Palestinian community in the Holy Land between the wars. 'Chernobyl' by Serhii Plokhy is a brilliant account of the tragedy and its aftermath. Both deal with the issue of community and how people fit in – an important reminder while we are isolated from one another. Keep safe and wash your hands!

# Prayer Points



**May-** usually the most beautiful month but this year Nature has shown her cruel side and continues to devastate our world with Covid-19. We pray for everyone whose lives have been overwhelmed by this frightening pestilence, physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually.

*Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy.*

## **21 May Ascension Day**

Today marks the moment Jesus literally ascended into heaven before His disciples after bidding them to preach the Gospel and assuring them of His return on the Day of Judgement

God, our Father make us joyful  
In the ascension of your Son Jesus Christ.  
May we follow Him into the new creation  
For His ascension is our glory and our hope.

**31 May Pentecost** when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples in fulfilment of Jesus' promise. Also known as 'the Church's birthday'.

In the depth of silence no words are needed,  
no language required.  
Listen to the beating of your heart.  
Listen to the blowing of the wind,  
the movement of the spirit.  
Be silent – said the lord  
And know that I am God

*Bread of Tomorrow*

*With thanks to Kathy Roberts for this month's Prayer Points*

## 75th ANNIVERSARY of VE DAY ~ 8 May



VE Day stood for Victory in Europe and followed an agreement by the Allied powers following the German surrender. Although the war with Japan was not over, it was a noticeable moment. No more bombs, missiles and blitz – and the ‘boys’ would come home! This year the traditional May Day Bank Holiday has been moved by the Government ‘to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to remember and honour the heroes of the Second World War and reflect on the sacrifices of a generation’.

Canon David Winter writes for Parish Pump News Service; ‘I have two very clear memories of the day itself. The first was the street party which took place in our road on a housing estate in North London. With official permission, the road was closed off, tables were set up, food and drink were served. We spent the afternoon in races and competitions. Dads, mums, teenagers and children then sang the wartime songs, and ‘Jerusalem’ and ‘God save the King’.

‘The other memory is an image of a sailor kissing a young woman – surrounded by happy laughing people. This iconic photograph was in one of the papers the next day, then on camera newsfeeds and is in just about every journalistic library. Somehow it captures the mood of the day – freedom, warmth, the good things of everyday life.’





## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 10 - 16 May

This year, Christian Aid Week will be very different. The Menston committee had already made the decision to stop organising the house to house collection in common with many other churches in the UK. The joint service to mark the beginning of the week will of course not take place either. But we can all still remember the work of Christian Aid in prayer and giving via the on-line method outlined below.

In common with thousands of other charities their work with people in poorer countries is under serious threat. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. Christian Aid will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19.

Christian Aid is inviting people to unite in prayer at this time: a collection of prayers for the current coronavirus situation are available online. These include: prayers of thanksgiving and intercession; a prayer for times of isolation; a prayer for medical workers everywhere; a prayer for the global pandemic; a prayer for the church. Christian Aid prayers are online: [christianaid.org.uk/pray/churches/coronavirus-prayers](http://christianaid.org.uk/pray/churches/coronavirus-prayers)

Coming soon is a pre-recorded video sermon from Rowan Williams.

**Please keep an eye on [caweek.org/virtualresources](http://caweek.org/virtualresources) for up-to-the minute information and resources as they launch.**

Please support Christian Aid by **making an online donation**. You can't put real envelopes through letterboxes this year, but you can deliver them to inboxes! They are creating an **e-envelope** that can be sent by email, as well as shared on social media. You can send a personalised message and will be able to find out how much your e-envelope has raised. Information will be at [caweek.org/virtualresources](http://caweek.org/virtualresources) as soon as it is ready.

*Jan Alexander, St John's Christian Aid*

## ***TOP TIP FOR THIS MONTH from Andrew***

*Richard Rohr* is a Franciscan friar, author and lecturer in spirituality and prayer. During this lock-down I'm taking the opportunity to catch up on one of his wonderful books '*falling upward*'. Much of what he says makes sense to me and seems very appropriate for these times. If you've not come across him before then he is definitely worth a google! (other search engines are available!).

Given all that is going on in the world, sooner or later we are all going to be asking very similar questions regarding our faith; '*Where is all this virus really coming from? Why is it here? Why are we suffering?*' Well they are good questions. My mind drifts back to Job, he begs God for an answer to his questions, but he doesn't really get any. In fact he only starts to trust God when he no longer feels ignored and he can see that God is taking him seriously, and that he has become part of the conversation. (Job Ch 42). When Jesus later becomes the answer in his own pain, death and resurrection, he discovers what Job finally experienced; that God can be trusted when you find yourself in the middle of pain and suffering. What you discover at that point, is that the world is still safe, in His hands and even blessed.

We are saved by being part of a divine conversation. Just like Job we don't actually need answers, but we do need to feel that we are to be taken seriously as part of the dialogue. The frustration is that this understanding usually only comes with hindsight following suffering and struggle. I think we can only really make sense of all this afterwards, and even then, not theologically or theoretically. Our real knowledge of God is to be experienced, participatory. God refuses to be intellectually 'thought' and is only known through the pain and the passion, through the raw mess of it all.

In both Luke (11:29) and Matthew (12:29, 16:4) Jesus tells us that there is only one sign that will ever be given to us, the sign of the prophet Jonah. Sooner or later life will lead us (just like it did to

Jesus) into the belly of the whale, into a situation that we can't fix, can't control, can't explain and can't understand and this is where the transformation most easily happens. That is when we are uniquely in the hands of God. Right now it feels as though the whole earth is in the belly of the whale together. But we must believe that we are also safely held in the loving hands of God, even if we don't yet fully appreciate it.

The wonder of the teaching of Jesus is that he shows us God through tragedy, suffering, pain, betrayal and death itself, not in a way that would wound or punish us, but instead brings us into transformation. Through this we become people who are changed and who have a deeper knowledge of God. Unless a single grain of wheat loses its shell and falls into the earth, it remains just a single grain (John 12:24). The seed must first crack for the expanded growth to happen. Through this everything can be transformed, every experience used, nothing wasted. I know these are easy words to write, but challenging to believe, especially when we see loved ones suffering and hear stories of growing numbers of those who have died. Covid-19 is a real challenge, its not to be ignored and it challenges us socially, politically, physically and as I hope I have shown, also spiritually.

May God bless you and yours, keep you safe and well, and lead you into transformation as His resurrection people.

*Andrew*



## FROM THE REGISTERS

*We commend into the hands of Almighty God:*

Dorothy Westwell

Madge Wilkinson

Margaret (Peggy) Herridge

Eva Pinthus

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Long-standing members of St John's will also be  
saddened to learn of the deaths of . . .

***Pamela Magill*** who passed away peacefully at Abbeyfield, Ilkley on 8 April 2020 aged 96. Much loved mother of Judith, Michael and James. Loving grandmother to Bryony, Alex, Harry and Eleanor.

Pamela will be well remembered as a much loved member of the Menston community for many decades from the 1950s onward. Many in the village will still remember her involvement with Sunday School, Mothers' Union, WRVS, Meals on Wheels and many other groups. A memorial to be held later in the year.

***Nona Harvey*** died peacefully in Ilkley on 31 March aged 94 years. She was the sister of the late Ashton and the late Margaret (Moor Lane) Harvey.

The Harvey family were well-known members of Menston society and both Nona and Margaret were presented at Court. Ashton and Nona were regular members of St John's for many years before she moved to the Moravian Settlement at Fulneck, Pudsey.

Nona had been a dancer with Ballet Rambert and gave a memorable insight into her former life when she danced for those of us who went on the Holy Land Pilgrimage in the 1990's.

*Mike Magill; Jan Alexander*



**During this difficult time when MU and many other organisations and businesses are not functioning because of the Coronavirus pandemic, it is pleasing to find something to write about which may be of interest to many of us.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Mothering Sunday – 22 March 2020**

On this day at 1.15pm on BBC1, 'Songs of Praise' featured a programme about the MU in Worthing, Sussex recorded and hosted by Katherine Jenkins before the Coronavirus outbreak. They came across as a very dedicated group of mature ladies shown to be very active in their church and in their local community, where they support women going through difficult times.

They were filmed making the daffodil posies for the service on Mothering Sunday (which of course did not take place as all churches had closed down by then) and knitting and sewing for the premature baby unit at Worthing Hospital. They knit baby clothes and blankets and make memory bags to hold any special items from the babies' short lives, which many of the mums are quite touched by and appreciative of.

One interesting fact was mentioned, that the Mothers' Union which was started by Mary Sumner in 1876, was instrumental by its campaigning in raising the age of marriage of young girls from 12 to 16. What an amazing thing for them to achieve!

We think any MU members who happened to see this programme would feel moved and proud to be part of such a caring organisation, and to all our members at St John's – keep safe and well and we look forward to seeing you all again when life can return to some sort of normality.

*Marjorie Boddy and Ann Dixon*

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## Loneliness at the Virtual Chelsea Flower Show

All sorts of themes are chosen for the Chelsea Flower Show, but this year's theme turns out to be scarily appropriate for the Spring of 2020: loneliness and mental health.

According to Sue Briggs, RHS Director General, 'many feel they need gardening in their life now more than ever before, for their mental and physical wellbeing during this national emergency.'

Writing on RHS website ([www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)), Sue Briggs says: 'This applies to everyone from those who are having to self-isolate to families planning, maybe for the first time, to grow their own food.'

And so, 'for these reasons, and to do more to support the industry, the RHS will create a Virtual RHS Chelsea Flower Show, to celebrate our great horticultural industry and gardening heritage.' The Virtual Show will run from Tuesday 19 May to Saturday 23 May.

*Parish Pump News Service*

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## GREEN TIPS for MAY

There are so many things we can do to live lives that are just and fair and that respect this beautiful world God has made. This month's tips:



- Look out for British strawberries and other soft fruit this month. Help to support our fruit farmers.

**Remember - reduce, re-use, recycle.**

*Outreach Group*

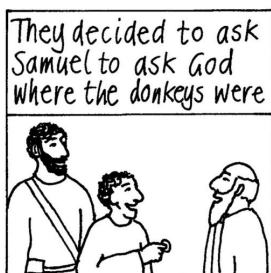
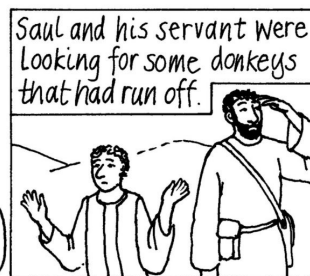
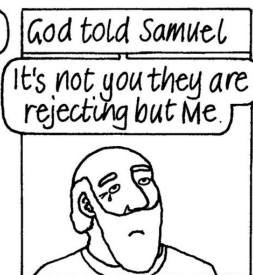
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# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Samuel 8:1-10:1, 17-24

Samuel had been a good leader of Israel but he was now old. The leaders of the twelve tribes came to talk to him...



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– Stanley T.  
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