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Online Edition

**ST PETER'S CHURCH
BRACKLEY**

"Loving God, loving each other, loving Brackley"



Holy week



Later in March we will mark twelve months since the first lockdown began. What have we learned over this period? All sorts of answers might be given, but I'm indebted to a pastor called Andrew Wilson, who (in a recent article on thinktheology.co.uk) pointed out that many of the lessons for the Church this past year are the lessons of the book of James in the New Testament. Here are five examples:

1. There are joys to be found in the trials – “Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness,” and this steadfastness will lead to “the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:2-3, 12). We must not be glib about the struggles of the past year. But if they have at all clarified our priorities, stripped away some worldliness and made us find renewed hope in God, then they have been agents of blessing as well as sorrow.

2. Christians should practically serve their neighbours – “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27). This past year has presented new opportunities for believers to serve those around them in need. It’s been lovely to see people at St Peter’s with a burden to support the Food Bank, the Emergency Fund, to deliver food and medical supplies to people on their street, to telephone those who live alone and to pray for the most vulnerable in society. This is something we must continue even when the need becomes less pronounced or less publicised.

3. Discrimination is a perennial problem – “My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show partiality” (James 2:1). Since the protests sparked by George Floyd’s death, Christians have rightly done some soul-searching about residual (and often unconscious) biases they possess themselves or enable in others. The way of Jesus is antithetical to any discrimination on the basis of sex, age, wealth, health, social status and race, and although some of the aims and ideology of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ group are deeply problem-

atic, Christians should be “quick to listen, slow to speak” (James 1:19) to people’s experiences, and ready to face up to any prejudice in our hearts or partiality in our actions.

4. The same goes for division – “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. What causes fights and quarrels among you?” (James 3:18-4:1). The pandemic has arguably widened economic and political divides, and public discourse seems ever more combative and polarised. Sadly, this has spilled over into the Church in all sorts of ways, yet Christians are called instead to peace (see above) and prayer (James 4:2), as we follow the example of our God of reconciliation, the Prince of Peace.

5. We cannot predict the future – “You do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that’” (James 4:14-15). What would you say to your February 2020 self? Visit your family? Take a quick holiday? Buy shares in Zoom?! We had no idea how 2020 would pan out. The same is true for 2021. In fact, says James, the same is true for tomorrow. Covid-19 has reminded us we were never in control. It has humbled us, which is just as well since, “God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble” (James 4:6).

Let’s learn the lessons of the past year ('never let a good crisis go to waste' as they say), and ask the Lord to continue working in us through the hard seasons of life as well as the happy ones, trusting that “he gives more grace” (James 4:6).

If you would ever like to make a donation to
St Peter's Church,
your gift would be hugely appreciated.
Our bank details are as follows:
sort code 30-11-08,
account number 00060124.
Thank you.

Daffodil Song

By Johanne Levy

Sung to the tune of
‘This Old Man.’



1. Daffodil, daffodil
Yellow trumpet tall and still,
The daffodil tells me it's Spring
Jump in the air and dance and sing.
2. Snowdrop white, snowdrop white,
Tiny little flower bright.
The snowdrop tells me that it's Spring,
Jump in the air and dance and sing.
3. Crocus bright, crocus bright,
Purple, yellow, creamy white
The crocus tells us that it's Spring,
Jump in the air and dance and sing.



Make a difference

Monday 8th March is the day that the Church remembers Edward King, former Bishop of Lincoln, who died in 1910. On my bookshelf I have a copy of *The Spiritual Letters of Edward King* and towards the end of the book is a letter headed 'To a Working Man'. King says "The world goes ahead wonderfully – railways, telegraph, telephone, steamships and now aviation; we must hold fast by the faith..." 112 years on, we might write "The world goes ahead wonderfully – Eurostar, emails, Zoom, solar-panelled shipping, space exploration..." We could also add "...and the development of multiple Covid vaccines within a year".

We live in a wonderful and terrifying world. King could not have foreseen that the wonders of railways, steamships and aviation would play their part in causing a planet-wide climate emergency. You may have watched David Attenborough's *Perfect Planet*. Some of his observations are heartbreaking, but what can we do? Well, asking "what can we do?" is a great start.

At Diocesan Synod on 20th March, one of the items to be discussed is how we will respond to General Synod's massively challenging target of being carbon net zero by 2030. It all seems so big, doesn't it? When I was a curate, Stuart Blanch – the former Archbishop of York – took part in our training. To those of us in large parishes he said: "Just because you can't visit everyone doesn't mean that you can't visit anyone". True. The same goes for saving God's beautiful creation. Just because we can't solve the whole worldwide problem doesn't mean that we can't do anything.



Remember those words from Bishop King: "we must hold fast by the faith". In these amazing, scary, rapid and challenging days, we travel in the knowledge that our Creator and Redeemer has always walked with us and will always walk with us. Let's pray that, through this worldwide pandemic and climate emergency, God will give us the courage and the will to start where we are and make a difference.

Richard Ormston

Richard Ormston
Archdeacon of Northampton



Mouse Makes

Who is my mother?
Look up the Bible verses
then find the mother's
names in the word search

CAIN and ABEL
Genesis 4:1-2

JOSEPH
Genesis 30:22-24

ISHMAEL
Genesis 16:15

TIMOTHY
2 Timothy 1:5

RUBEN
Genesis 29:32

GAD
Genesis 35:26

SAMUEL
1 Samuel 1:20

OBED
Matthew 1:5

ISAAC
Genesis 21:3

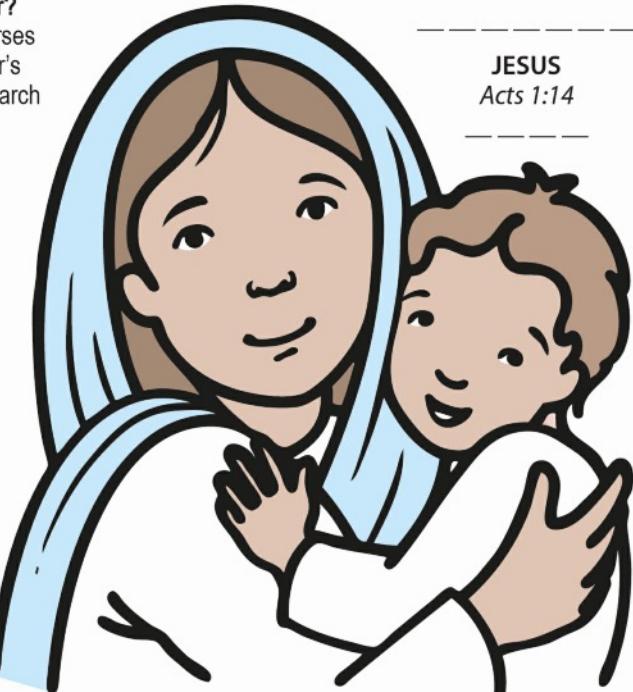
Jesus was loved by his
mother Mary, she looked
after him, worried
about him and prayed
for him. She cuddled
Jesus when he was
born, cried when he
died and rejoiced when
he rose from the dead.

SOLOMON
1 Chronicles 3:5

JOHN
Luke 1:57-60

ESAU and JACOB
Genesis 25:24-26

JESUS
Acts 1:14



R	A	C	H	E	L	M	A	R	Y	V	Z
E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	H	E	V
B	Z	D	R	E	B	V	S	U	A	U	O
E	T	M	U	M	L	E	A	H	N	N	L
K	M	O	T	H	E	R	R	T	N	I	E
A	I	S	H	H	A	G	A	R	A	C	G
H	S	T	A	B	A	T	H	S	H	E	B

There are two other words in the word search, can you find them?

Felix of Burgundy, apostle to East Anglia

East Anglia is blessed with a rich Christian heritage. Just two examples: at more than 650, Norfolk has the greatest concentration of ancient churches in the world, and at 500, Suffolk has the second greatest density of medieval churches. And that is not to mention all the churches in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire...

And it all began with one man, back in 630 A.D, a bishop named Felix. His name in Latin means 'successful' and 'happy' – an excellent description of someone who brought great good and stability to this beautiful corner of England.

Felix came from Burgundy in France. At some point he was consecrated bishop, and went to Canterbury, to see Honorius, the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 630 the Christian King Sigebert returned from exile in Gaul to rule the East Angles, and Honorius sent Felix along with him, to evangelise the people. According to local legend, Felix went by boat, and arrived at Babingley in Norfolk.



Felix may well have known Sigebert back in Gaul, for the two men worked exceptionally well together. Sigebert settled Felix in Dunwich, which became the centre of his diocesan 'see'. Then, with the support of Sigebert, Felix set up the first-ever school in East Anglia. He brought teachers up from Canterbury to staff it, and the school became, according to Bede, the place "where boys could be taught letters".

Felix had a fruitful ministry to the Anglo Saxons for 17 years. He preached Christianity, encouraged the school to grow, and did a lot of other good. All in all, Felix brought the love of God, the good news of Jesus, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, delivering "all the province of East Anglia from long-standing unrighteousness and unhappiness," according to Bede. Certainly, the people came to love Felix.

When Felix finally died on 8th March 647 or 648, he left the Christian faith firmly embedded in East Anglia. Six ancient English churches are dedicated to Felix, and Felixstowe bears his patronage.

Wear your daffodil and unite in memory

Marie Curie, the UK's leading end-of-life care charity will this year celebrate their 35th annual Great Daffodil Appeal, which is held every March across the UK. The money raised from this appeal enables the charity to continue their vital work providing care and support to people living with a terminal illness and their families.

The coronavirus continues to have a devastating effect on Marie Curie's fundraising, as activities up and down the country have had to be cancelled. However, there's still lots of ways people can get involved, with things like the Step into Spring Challenge in March where people walk 10,000 steps a day, they can host a virtual collection or buy and wear one of the charity's iconic daffodils in memory of a loved one.

This year will be even more special as the charity encourages the nation to come together to reflect, grieve and remember for a National Day of Reflection. Tuesday 23rd March 2021 will mark one year since the UK first went into a nationwide lockdown and Marie Curie is inviting the nation to unite and remember those who died and show support and solidarity for those who have been bereaved. The charity knows how important it is for people to grieve and the emotional and psychological impact of not being able to say goodbye properly and grieving in isolation can have.



Due to the pandemic, Marie Curie won't have their normal collections on the street, so donations are more important than ever. To support the Great Daffodil Appeal, you can donate at www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil or you can buy your daffodil pin in store at a number of high street stores including Superdrug or Savers.

If you have enjoyed this short online edition of the current magazine, you can purchase the full 20 page printed edition for the modest sum of 40p.

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