**News from HT & St. M’s**

**Dear friends, This is the sixth edition of our news letter, and we are pleased that you are finding it helpful. On Monday our children return to school. Good luck to you all and we hope you will enjoy being with your friends and teachers again. It’s difficult to believe that it is almost 1 year since the first lock down, and our churches had to close. Here are some thoughts about it from Anthony. God bless you, Anthony and Sue**

**The Third Sunday of Lent.**

**Readings** for this week:

Exodus 20 v 1 – 17

Psalm 19

1Cor 1 v 18 – 25

John 2 v 13 - 22

**Reflection from Anthony**

LENT III

Where were we this Sunday last year? In church!

Today is an anniversary & a sad one. This was the last Sunday we were in church together last spring. I was in church on my own for Mothering Sunday, recording our church service for the first time.

On Passion Sunday, however, even the clergy were banned from their churches – not by the government – but by the bishops!

Such a thing had not happened since AD 1208.

We had just put in place a different way of receiving the Sacraments and all the Covid precautions, then we were shut down, like so much else in society.

How did you feel about that? And what did we do?

I set up a chapel in my dining room and began recording services from there on YouTube and I posted an order for Morning Prayer to all our congregation, so at least, everyone had a formal framework for prayer at home.

Then people started becoming ill all over the country and many died, businesses were shut, many lost their jobs, others started working from home.

The whole world seemed to have gone mad, but at least we in Kent, had very good weather.

The bishops advised clergy to join Facebook. Many of us did, so we could keep in touch better.

Then we all got more digital, opening YouTube channels to record things, and setting up Zoom Prayer Meetings. I think we have recorded over 50 services since March last year.

Who had done a Zoom before March last year?

Who has done one since?

The churches were closed for public worship for the most solemn and significant season of the Church’s year: Lent, Passiontide, Holy Week and Eastertide, Pentecost and even for our Feast of Title, Trinity Sunday.

People have been very good in supporting each other and neighbours, and very good at supporting the Church too by monthly standing orders or by saving up their collection money and the diocese lent us £5,000 to tide us over with our monthly contributions to the diocese, just to keep things afloat.

We very much hope that next Sunday, Mothering Sunday and the anniversary of the 1st Lockdown, will be the beginning of our recovery to normality.

As we reflect on Christ making his way to Jerusalem for the final confrontation and his suffering and death, we remember his words to his Disciples about taking up our crosses daily if we are to follow him.

We have all, I’m sure, had many crosses to bear this past year and they will have been different for each of us, but let us accept them before God, knowing that then He will then use them for our good. **Amen**

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**Another poem to ponder by Ann Lewin**

**Lent**

Lent is a time to learn to travel

Light, to clear the clutter

From our crowded lives and

Find a space, a desert.

Deserts are bleak: no creature

Comforts, only a vast expance of

Stillness , sharpening awareness of

Ourselves and God

Uncomfortable places, deserts.

Most of the time we’re tempted to

Avoid them, finding good reasons to

Live lives of ease; cushioned by

Noise from self-discovery,

Clutching at world’s success

To stave off fear.

But if we dare to trust the silence

To strip away our false security,

God can begin to grow his wholeness in us,

Fill up our emptiness, destroy our fears,

Give us new vision, courage for the journey,

And make our desert blossom like a rose.

**Items of news**  **A message from Cath Hough**  *(I will keep this in for another week)*

Cath Hough is in Tunbridge Wells at some stage most weeks. If any one needs anything to be collected from one of the very few ‘things’ shops, just give her a ring on 872005. Shops that spring to mind are Boots, Superdrug, Mobility or M&S, (limited stock)

Thanks Cath.

**Margaret Lawrence Thank you to everyone who braved the cold wind and stood outside to say a last farewell to Margaret. It was a special moment. The funeral directors said they had never seen anything like it! Of course not! East Peckham is unique! And so was Margaret. RIP dear friend.**

**A Message from Gill Jones: Easter Flowers**: We will be decorating the church as usual for Easter. She wondered if anyone would like to sponsor a lily (£1 a stem) in memory of a loved one. If so, please contact Gill on 871057

**From Yvonne :** Four Seasons in One Day

All night the wind blew cold and strong, it threatened hurt and harm

And yet the morning sky was bright and all was still and calm

But later on the clouds piled up and rain came lashing down

The people scurried here and there as nature wore a frown

But then as darkness reappeared the stars came out to play

The moon sailed forth and promised frost, four seasons in one day

And in our lives we all see change, with days which make us sad

With spring and summer in our hearts and times to make us glad

And sometimes wintry storms appear when tears come flowing fast

And yet across the sky we see the rainbow arch at last

Through all the seasons of your life, whatever you may do

Hold fast to courage, faith and hope and watch the sun break through.

(from The People's Friend by Iris Hesselden)

**Thank you Yvonne**

**Literary Residences** (a little quiz for you – in which books would you find these residences?)

1) Villa Villekulla

2) Kirrin Cottage

3) Orchard House

4) Manderley

5)Toad Hall

6) 221b Baker St.

7) Thornfield Hall

8) Pemberley

9) Misselthwaite Manor

10)Manor Farm

11)Tara

12) 9 Bayswater St. Chelsea

13) Norland Park

14) Thrushcross Grange

15) Barton Cottage

**Answers next week**

**BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**



**To Gwen, whose Birthday is on Friday. We hope you have a lovely day. With love from us all at HT**

**Any messages, or ideas?** Just ring Sue,(871150) or Anthony,(871278) or email us on [sue.morrell@hotmail.com](mailto:sue.morrell@hotmail.com) or [ht.ep.po@live.com](mailto:ht.ep.po@live.com)