

NewsLink

4 April—25 April 2021



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

Dear friends,

I do hope you have a very Happy Easter and that as Christ's resurrection was a new phase in the life of his followers, that this time too, feels like a new beginning, a new life for us as a benefice of four churches. In my letter to you attached, I mention the *Thrive* Project and here is the information about this exciting project and its members.

The Thrive Project

This is a Diocesan/CPAS 'multi-parish benefice learning community' initiative whereby a group of people gather together and learn ways to co-operate more effectively with God's mission in the world. It combines ways to explore the experiences and wisdom of everyone in the community with fresh insights from facilitators and guest speakers.

We were offered 9 places and these 9 people from our churches are willing to commit to this two-year programme of development and growth. Our group includes me and Tessa, plus leaders, lay or ordained – with influence in the life of their churches.

There are four non-residential *Thrive* Community Gatherings of two full days each over the course of two years plus one final day for review and commissioning. Two CPAS facilitators lead the events.

In between the community gatherings, the group now meets monthly to consider how we can work with PCCs and others in the benefice to help form the future shape of ministry and mission across the churches.

The project was put on hold due to the pandemic but is now up and running. Rhona Floate, our Diocesan Rural Field Officer for Wiltshire, will be attending some of our meetings to offer an external perspective and to offer encouragement to the group.

At our first online weekend, one of the first decisions made was how to demonstrate explicitly that we are a benefice working together and supporting one another. This led to each church creating ideas for Advent and was followed by the project with each of the four churches engaged in setting up Prayer Stations for Lent.

These were based on *Experience Easter* which were then linked with Collective Worship which Tessa and I recorded each week for our three church schools. In our videos we encouraged the children to visit their local churches to experience the displays, and we have provided them with resources such as their own palm crosses.

The group are now working on how to re-engage with our church and village/town communities through '*Release for the captives...*' which I explain in my letter attached, and will be a range of social events to help us all re-connect and form new friendships.

The members from our four churches will be keeping our PCCs updated about the progress of *Thrive* and welcome ideas that you have. A list of members and a short message from each of our churches is below:

From Gill Fairhurst at St James, Sth Wraxall

Everyone here at St James is looking forward to sharing fun, food and fellowship together once more, with new friends and old from across our church and local communities.

From Hilary Pike at Christ Church

We are looking forward to renewing our friendships in the benefice and local communities in shared activities as we escape from lockdown.

From Valerie & Alan Bryant and Jean Legg-Bagg at St Nicholas, Winsley

We, at St Nicholas, look forward to growing our friendships both old and new in our village fellowships.

From Rachel Exley and Valerie Calpin St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh

At St Peter's we are really looking forward to seeing our friends at St James, St Nicholas and Christ Church again and making new friends! Hope to see you soon.

The Thrive members are listed overleaf.

Please thank the members for their commitment and hold them in your prayers.

Ann, Rector

Thrive membership

Rachel Exley, St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh
Valerie Calpin, St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh
Gill Fairhurst, St James, South Wraxall
Hilary Pike, Christ Church
Jean Legg-Bagg, St Nicholas, Winsley
Val Bryant, St Nicholas, Winsley
Alan Bryant, St Nicholas, Winsley
Revd Tessa Mann
Revd Ann Keating

Online Services provision — a message from Ann

Dear friends,

Now that we are resuming services in church, we are going to pause our online services whilst we regroup and consider our priorities. Our last online service will be on Easter Sunday. Details of any future services will be advertised on the website, and in the usual ways, by the churches.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my daughter Amy for her editing skills, and my husband Malcolm and Tessa's husband Richard for their filming skills. They have been stalwart volunteers for over a year now; we have relied on them heavily and we are very grateful for their time and commitment.

God Bless them.

Ann, Rector

Please note, there will be no cover in the Benefice office W/C 12th April and the next issue of Newslink will be on 25th April.

Annual Parochial Church Meetings.

The APCMs for our churches will be held on zoom on the following dates.

Christ Church April 20th 7.30pm
St Peter's Monkton Farleigh April 20th 10am
St Nicholas Winsley April 21st 11am
St James South Wraxall t.b.c.

The Rector's Annual report and the APCM papers will be available on the benefice website and a few copies will be left in churches.

The St Nicholas APCM will be held on Wednesday 21st April and we recently emailed a letter about this to all parishioners and posted printed copies to people to whom we normally post Newslink.

Any member of the St Nicholas congregation who does not receive the communication should contact Cedric Pierce on 01225 723284 or email cedric@thepierces.me

Vacancy

We are looking to recruit a

Benefice Administrator

who can assist the assist the Rector and staff team with administration for the smooth running of the Benefice through providing effective communication, accurate information and by being a first point of contact for enquiries. He/she will be responsible for the maintenance and development of our online and social media presence.

20 hrs /wk 09.30 – 1.30 Mon- Friday.

Salary £12,000

Closing date 16th April 2021

For more information please see our website

In the later pages of this week's Newslink you will find

- An alternative version of the Lord's Prayer
- Details of Pictures, Poems and Prayers for Holy Week
- A review of the Lent course, 'Women in the Shadows'
- Information on the Bells restoration project at South Wraxall, the Easter garden at Christ Church and the Hidden Doors Trail at Bradford on Avon and much more....

You can read the full version, and access this week's online service and details of future services on the website www.nboachurches.co.uk. If you require a hard copy please leave a message at the Benefice office on 01225 865046

Safeguarding

Ann and the four Parish Safeguarding Officers, (Caroline Billingham (St N), Valerie Calpin (MF), Verity Andriopoulou (CC) and Marian Marsh (SW)) have been working hard to ensure our safeguarding training and records are up to date and we are now using the new Diocesan database to request and record DBS checks.

As a result, going forward, volunteers who wish to help with any church activities may have to be interviewed and may also need to undertake DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and /or safeguarding training.

The new Diocesan system generates emails automatically once DBS checks are requested so as we update records you may find that you receive emails from Salisbury Diocese Safeguarding asking you to complete these.

If you are asked to update an expiring DBS check, please consider subscribing to the update service when you are asked and let us know that you have done so, as this will avoid the need for you and the parish to submit any future DBS checks for you, saving time and money. If you have any queries about this, please contact your parish safeguarding officer.

Bradford on Avon Hidden Doors

Bradford on Avon Hidden Doors is a trail to explore the community. There are 30 individual handcrafted hidden doors to find, by buildings and in playgrounds around BoA until September 10th, 2021. Their positions have been allocated with consideration of public safety (i.e., not too near roads), other hazards such as waterways, and enabling plenty of space for people to socially distance themselves.

The adventure is new and exciting to locals and those visiting from slightly further afield within the government guidelines. Please support local businesses on your visit and enjoy some of the sites and history Bradford on Avon has to offer.

For a map to follow and more information visit the website
<https://www.hiddendoorsofboa.co.uk/>.



Children visit the Easter experience in St Nicholas Church



The whole of Winsley School came to visit the prayer stations in St Nicholas Church that they had been learning about each week during Lent.

Each vase of flowers placed by the empty tomb represents a class "bubble". Tessa writes, 'It was so special to see the children and teachers enjoying being in church and delighting in the churchyard too! It felt almost normal!!'

Easter Garden at Christ Church

by Judith Hughes

In previous years we have held a Good Friday Workshop in Christ Church in co-operation with the March of Witness.

On this occasion I have made an Easter Garden with the children where I have used flowers by their colours or names to tell the Easter story.

This year we will be putting the garden in the South Porch of the church and we will be adding a laminated copy of the story behind the garden which is available on the benefice [website](#).

There will also be Easter crosses and copies of the Bible Society's Easter booklets for people to take.

Instead of children coming to us we shall go out to them.

The Lord's Prayer. *Paul Batson writes:*



During Lent I have been reading Stephen Cherry's excellent book, 'Thy will be done', in which he discusses the meaning of the words of the Lord's Prayer.

I have tried to convey something of his thoughts at the Wednesday Lent Lunch Zoom gatherings. The following is Stephen's revised version which he offers not particularly for collective worship but rather for our own reflections. Personally I have found using it in my own private prayer times rather refreshing. Please note he spells Kingdom as kin-dom for a reason.

Motherly Father of us all, we honour and worship your being.

Your kin-dom come, Your will be done at all times and in all places.

Give us each day the provisions we need.

Take away the guilt of our sin that we ourselves may be forgiving towards others.

Spare us any trials that would overwhelm us and help us to resist the power of the tempter.

For in you is true fulfilment, authentic power and absolute beauty.

Amen

Do you have an interest in family history?

Ann Keating is looking for someone to deal with enquiries from members of the public trying to trace details of burials in our churchyards, particularly Christ Church and St Nicholas churchyards.

Would you like to help these people in their searches? If so please get in touch with Ann and find out what would be involved.

South Wraxall Bells Restoration Project

The bells of St. James's Church date back to at least 1553 and were re-cast in 1769 by the historic Bilbie foundry.

Sadly, for over 130 years they have not run full circle. Their beautiful peal has been silent and now the rotting bell frame holding the 1.5 tons of bell is facing imminent collapse.



The village is now rallying to save its bells and hear them ring again in time for Christmas 2021.

The Bells Restoration Group has launched a fund-raising appeal to conserve, repair and re-hang the bells. It needs to raise £35,000, with further funding to be secured through grants from charitable bodies.

The Wiltshire Times printed a full page article about the project. You can see the text and the photos at:

<https://www.wiltshiretimes.co.uk/news/19163471.village-wants-bells-ring/>

If you want to know more or would like to donate, there is further information on the South Wraxall website at:

<https://southwraxall.wordpress.com/the-church/the-bells/>

St Peter's Upcoming Events 2021

May - half term holiday - Treasure Map for the whole family, Available from May 17th

June - Cream Teas around the Churchyard. Impromptu according to the weather, watch this space.

August 28th - Street Market - around the whole Village.

October 30th - Bath Male Choir. Of BBC fame, and after their successful tour of Boston USA, in 2019.



Women in the Shadows; a review of a Lent course by Diana Deal

During Lent, six women from the benefice took part in *Women in the Shadows*, a Lent course organised by the Church of England's Clewer Initiative looking at modern-day slavery. Through videos and testimony from survivors, we looked at sexual exploitation, debt bondage and drug-running. Actors took the part of real-life victims of modern-day slavery to create mini-films, showing how and why women and girls can be exploited by smugglers, pimps, gang masters, drug dealers and former boyfriends.

Some women come to Britain to escape extreme poverty, war or violence in their home countries. Others are beguiled by a job offer and the promise of a better life in Britain. But, once here, they find that the job is a lie and that they are in the control of ruthless criminals. British-born victims include young girls who get caught up in drug smuggling through County Lines – a system by which drug dealers inveigle vulnerable teenagers into taking drugs from major cities to provincial towns all over the UK.

Among the facts we learned were:

- There are 136,000 victims of modern-day slavery in Britain, many of them women and girls
- The worst effects of modern-day slavery may be as much mental as physical. Victims may come to believe they are worthless, that the

police are hostile and that whatever they say will be disbelieved.

- Exploiters are very good at keeping victims 'in the shadows' so that it can be hard to recognise a modern-day slave working on a farm, production line or other business, such as nail bar or car wash. Some abusers ensure their victims are well-dressed – minimising the chance of them being recognised.

In the last session we learned how to spot the signs of modern-day slavery and what we can do to help stop the trade and support former victims.

Practically, we can all use apps to learn to recognise and to report signs of modern-day slavery while using a car wash or buying fresh farm produce. The Safe Car Wash app and the Farm Work Welfare app are both free to download from the App Store or Google Play. Or call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700, or visit the Clewer Initiative [website](#).

Contributors to the course said that many former victims never fully recover from the trauma but, with support and therapy, they can transform from victim to survivor.

Here in the benefice we plan to mark national Anti-Slavery Day on October 18 by raising awareness within the church and wider community. Watch this space for more details nearer the time.

Many thanks to Linds Batson for leading the course and to Linds and Denise Button for taking sessions.

Monday Meditation Group Resumes

Paul Batson is delighted to be able to report that the Monday Meditation Group is going to recommence on **Monday 12th April** in St Nicholas Church, Winsley.

The group will meet weekly on Mondays, convening from 4.20pm and will be in silence from 4.30—5pm.

Covid precautions will be followed and so please wear a mask and observe social distancing guidelines.

All are welcome and if you have never experienced Christian Meditation before and would like to know more, Paul would be pleased to explain. Do either give him a ring on 720069 or email him at plbatson@gmail.com.

Pictures, Poems and Prayers.

A revised version of *Pictures, Poems and Prayers For Holy Week*, first offered in April 2020, has now been posted in the resources section of our Benefice website.

Unfortunately, this re-styled edition was not available in time for the 21 March NewsLink. Nevertheless, perhaps something you might find it helpful to view over the Easter Weekend.

Bob Williams would also like to share with you the fact that he is set to retire, after some years, as Editor of the six-monthly Friends of the Methodist Collection Newsletter. The final, Spring '21 edition, for which he was responsible, very much with an Easter focus, with some interesting features linked to Salisbury Cathedral, can be accessed online [here](#). via the Methodist Modern Art Collection website

Prayer for Easter Sunday

We thought we had heard it all, dear God,
we thought we knew!
The Bible stories; the words of our faith;
the rules for living and the way to heaven;
we thought, dear God, we knew!
But here, before the mystery again of a grave that is empty
when it should be filled with a decaying corpse,
we know we know nothing at all!
Lord, have mercy on us!

We thought we had heard it all, dear God,
we thought we knew!
The great stories of the church; the ebb and flow of the faith;
our place in the great scheme of things;
we thought, dear God, we knew!
But here, before the mystery again of death defeated,
of broken folk made whole,
and mighty powers quite broken down,
we know we know nothing at all!
Lord, have mercy on us!

We thought we had heard it all, dear God,
We thought we knew!
The way of the world; the powers that be,
and the powers that would be;
the ebb and flow of armies and international finance;
the endless tide of refugees,
and the awful endlessness of hate;
We thought, dear God, we knew!

But here, before the mystery again of a word of love in a quiet
garden,
and the promise, suddenly,
of a new order of creation
in a place of the old, tired, familiar scene,
we know we know nothing at all!
Lord, have mercy on us!
Have mercy on your people, Lord.

Take out our stony hearts –
our cynical, confident, controlling,
careful, cautious hearts –
and give us again hearts of flesh, we pray;
so that, knowing our own ignorance,
we may be filled instead with your knowledge;
filled with that saving knowledge;
which in the beginning made all things;
that saving knowledge which in Jesus Christ,
crucified, dead and risen,
can make all things, even us, new again;
that saving knowledge which will,
in that same Christ,
bring all things, in the end,
to their completion,
In His name we pray.
Amen

(from the *Wild Goose big book of Worship resources*, The Iona Community, which Ann used for the Holy Week Lent lunch).

A Reflection by Denise Leigh

Pause
As we step out of the door
Look around
Smell the air
Be fruitful

Pause
As we meet a neighbour
How are they today
Listen
Be fruitful

Pause
As we work
As we reach out
Be aware
Be fruitful

Pause
As we put the key in the door
We are home
Be thankful

Pause

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Do check the website as resources are added regularly and check Instagram and Facebook for all our latest news.