



Holy Trinity



St.
Gabriel

The Parish of The Good Shepherd, Ashton-under-Lyne



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

MARCH 2021

Price 50p

Editorial

It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly 2 million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the **reality of our situation**. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain! As the apostle Paul writes: *'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus'* (2 Cor 4:8-10). The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us in these circumstances.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find **new faith and hope in Jesus**. The experience of Jesus' death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future: *'so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.'* (2 Cor 4:10-12).

During the season of Lent, it's good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them afresh to Jesus?

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The views expressed in articles in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish of The Good Shepherd. The editor reserves the right to amend articles as appropriate, for editorial purposes. Please consider writing something for the magazine yourself! And, if you have any comments to make on the Magazine you can contact the editor, Roger Farnworth on 0161 330 2771 or talk to a member of your DCC or PCC who will pass on any comments that are made.

Contents	Page
Finding Fingerprints – Revd Ben Brady	3-4
Church Services / Barry Bowden	5
Real Easter Eggs / Great Daffodil Appeal	6
Covid-19 and Church-21 Survey	7
St Cuthbert	8
Green Pastures – Charity for the homeless	9
Parish Notices	10
Contact Details	11



The Parish Prayer

Father God, whose Son came to bring love and peace to the world, help us to grow in faith and share our hope and joy with all whom we meet, so that we can work together to build your kingdom in Ashton, welcome new people into our churches, and be relevant to those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Finding Fingerprints

I do love Wallace and Gromit. The famous stop motion animation centred around a man, his dog and a whole plethora of wacky stories made out of clay. I have fond memories from my childhood of watching “The Wrong Trousers” with the surprisingly terrifying evil penguin. I have seen them all countless times and I continue to find them funny.

The number of tiny details gives me the chance each to notice something new with each viewing - and my particular favourite thing to spot in every film, from “A Grand Day out” from 1989, to “Wallace and Gromit: A Matter of Loaf and Death” in 2008, is fingerprints.

That’s right, the real fingerprints of the creators can be seen all over the characters and sets. Richard Rohr, a Catholic contemplative priest speaks about everyone having “God’s thumbprint”.

I love to think that, just like the characters in Wallace and Gromit, we too have the marks of our Creator on us. I spoke in a previous reflection about our individual creativity (whatever that may be) and how it is a sign of God being with us and in us.



So onto Lent - here again! It’s the season we reflect on Jesus’ time in the wilderness before his ministry began. I get pretty panicked around this time - Shrove Tuesday gets closer and closer and I can’t decide what I should give up or take up or spiritually reflect on and pretend not to be grumpy about it.

It might just be me, but I feel like globally we have endured a whole year of Lenten fasting from life as we knew it. Unable to see loved ones, travel and everyday activities we may have taken for granted, all taken away. Personally, the last thing I want to do is give up more and guarantee a miserable forty days until Easter.

While speaking to my Spiritual Director this last week, we reflected on Lent and the practice of fasting. A phrase that came up was “Something opening that hitherto was closed”. So, after some

thought, I've decided to put my money where my mouth is.

Over the course of Lent I'm going to actively pursue the fingerprints of God. Daily I will look out for beauty in Creation, reflect on some art or music or poetry, or create something myself. I will take some time each evening to reflect on my day and make note. So at the end of Lent, hopefully, I will have a list of 40 God-given things to share with you all! Hopefully, changing my perspective on my day-to-day life will open my awareness of our Creator God in a way that is closed right now.

What will your choice for Lent open for you and your relationship with God? Whatever you choose to do for Lent, I pray that it leads to "Something opening that hitherto was closed". I pray that you can catch glimpses of God's fingerprints in your life; a sign, a reminder that God is with us.

To close, when I feel unsure what to pray, these words often come to mind. I leave them for whoever needs to pray or read them as a reminder of how God is closer than we can possibly imagine and how like Wallace and Gromit, we are covered in his fingerprints!

Psalm 139:7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.



Rev. Ben

Coronavirus Pandemic

Church Services

At the time of publication, our churches will not open for either public worship or private prayer.

Due to the infection rate of Coronavirus cases remaining high and the continuation of a nationwide lockdown, our Wardens have, with regret, decided that all of our churches should remain closed until further notice.

Clergy, Wardens and a team of volunteers will be keeping in touch via email, phone and post – if you are not receiving contact please ring Roger or Ben.

Should this situation change during March, we will let our parishioners know and there will be a notice on our website.

Pew Sheets

Our normal pew sheets will not be available, but we shall produce a weekly sheet containing readings for each Sunday, the prayer and readings for the following week.

We will try our best to get these to you, either by email or post.

Peaks and Troughs

So many times in our lifetime, and right now, we have the *Grand Canyon* of troughs. COVID-19 and its variants. As the vaccinations continue, we now have one for the variants. We are still in Lockdown but it's a step in the right direction.

ITV News at 10 had an item about a 94yr old lady, living here in England. She survived Hitler's concentration camps but, sadly, her mother, sister and father didn't. Having been in hospital for a month with COVID-19, she is now home again and ok. Never, never give up. Still so positive after all she's overcome - Wow!

The U.S. youth poet laureate, 22-year-old Amanda Gorman, wrote: "The light is there, we just have to be brave enough to see it. We just have to be brave enough to be it."

Shine, Jesus, shine - the light of your love is still shining.

The future has not been cancelled. Stay safe, pray often - God bless us all.

Barry Bowden

Real Easter Egg dropped by supermarkets

The UK's top supermarkets will not be stocking The Real Easter Egg in 2021. For the past ten years Tesco, Waitrose, ASDA and Morrisons have made room on their shelves for The Real Easter Egg.

The head of The Real Easter Egg, David Marshall, said: "Easter 2020 was right at the start of lock-down and we saw people change the way they shopped. We saw an increase of 40% in people buying from our website for friends, family and food banks. However, at the same time, the early pandemic led to the supermarkets having a disastrous Easter as people stayed away from high streets.



This year, supermarket buyers were told to cut brands, reduce the volumes and in some cases ask for stock to be supplied at a loss or cost price. It means there will be fewer brands, including the Real Easter Egg, on supermarket shelves this Easter. So, if you are one of the 80,000 people who usually buy a Real Easter Egg from a supermarket, go online and order direct from www.realeasteregg.co.uk .

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 are 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.

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.

Take part in the Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey

If we have learnt anything since last March it is that, with Covid-19, nothing stands still. Just when you think you have worked out what's going on, another twist in the saga seems to plunge you back to square one. Has Lockdown 2021 simply returned us full circle, or are we in a different place now from last March? Since then, a lot has changed, and we have also learnt great deal. What is different this time is that vaccines offer a genuine hope that there will be a better future somewhere down the road. So now seems a good time to take stock and look ahead.

Last year we ran a very successful survey during the first lockdown, and you can read about some of the results on our webpage:

<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/coronavirus-church-and-you/>

We would now like to get a sense of how clergy and lay people are coping with the current lockdown. We have created a survey that builds on our experience of the last survey and which should enable us to both assess how things have changed and find out what people think as they

look forward to a post-pandemic future for the Church.

The *Covid-19 & Church-21* survey is your opportunity to be part of this crucial research project. It will take about 20 minutes of your time, which will enable you to give a thorough picture of your experiences and opinions. This is an online survey, which we estimate it will take you about 20 minutes to complete. Most of the questions simply require you to click boxes, though there are options to specify your particular circumstances, and an opportunity at the end for you to tell us your views in your own words.

You might need to update your browser if you have an older version because our online platform only works on those with sufficient security.

Please forward this link to any churches or churchgoers you feel might want to take part in the survey and support this research. We should have some initial results within a few weeks and will make these available as widely as we can.

**The Revd Professor Andrew Village,
York St John University a.village@yorks.ac.uk**

**The Revd Canon Professor Leslie J. Francis,
Visiting Professor York St John University**

Cuthbert, beloved monk and bishop of Lindisfarne

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c 634-87) has long been northern England's favourite saint. It is easy to see why: Cuthbert was holy, humble, peaceable, prayerful, faithful in friendship, winsome, and really kind.

Cuthbert was born into a fairly well-off Anglo-Saxon family, and he became a monk at Melrose in 651. He and another monk, Eata, were sent to start a monastery at Ripon, but Alcfrith, who owned the land, insisted that they adopt the Roman customs, which Cuthbert's Celtic church did not allow.

So, Cuthbert and Eata quietly returned to Melrose, where Cuthbert became prior in about 661. Then came the Synod of Whitby in 663/4, and the Celtic Church formally decided to adopt the Roman customs. After this, Cuthbert was sent on to Lindisfarne as prior, where he sensitively introduced the new ways, and won over the monks there.

Cuthbert was very much loved at Lindisfarne. His zeal was evident in his constant preaching, teaching, and visiting of the people. He was also said to have gifts of prophecy and healing. Occasionally, Cuthbert reached 'people overload'. Then he would retreat to a tiny islet called



Inner Farne, where he could pray in total seclusion. When, to his horror, he was told he had been made Bishop of Hexham, he immediately 'swapped' sees with Eata, and stayed on at Lindisfarne as Bishop. Sadly, Cuthbert died on little Inner Farne, only two years later, on 20 March, 687.

Cuthbert was buried at Lindisfarne, but that is not the end of his story. For it was only now that his travels began. After the Vikings destroyed Lindisfarne in 875, several monks dug him up and set out to find Cuthbert a final, and safe, resting place. For the next 120 years Cuthbert was deposited in various monasteries around the north of England and southwest Scotland. Finally, in 999, Cuthbert was allowed to rest in Durham, where a Saxon church was built over his shrine.

All that travel must have done him good; when his body was exhumed to be put into the 'new' Norman Cathedral in Durham in 1104, it was said to be still in perfect tact, and 'incorrupt'.

Green Pastures – the charity that finds homes for the homeless



Here is a story that went on to change many lives:

‘There was a knock at the door. Pete slowly opened his front door, and the stranger standing before him said in a quiet voice, “Please sir, do you have a bed for the night? I’m homeless.”’

Those words, spoken 20 years ago, stirred such compassion in Pete Cunningham’s heart that it moved him to action. Together with a church member, Vicki Woodley, a small pension was cashed in and Vicki re-mortgaged to put a deposit on two flats to house two homeless people, and Green Pastures was born. The vision grew greater than they ever imagined.

20 years later, Green Pastures provides homes and support for over 1,100 people across the county, and is growing rapidly. The passion to release the Church to eradicate homelessness burns brightly. In

partnership with churches and charities, Green Pastures makes real change in the desperate situations in which many find themselves.

Investors are paid up to 5% to house the homeless. Green Pastures buy property for churches and charities so that they can reach out and house the homeless in their area. They provide all the paperwork, expertise and ongoing support to operate successful supported housing projects. Green Pastures is a national Christian social enterprise that releases the Church to end homelessness.

The enormous changes in towns and individual lives can be seen everywhere. Residents of partner, The Greenhouse Project, Plymouth, have experienced the faith of the support workers in their Green Pastures home to encounter Jesus through genuine caring relationship.

One resident commented, “When I met the guys at The Greenhouse and saw how they love Jesus and the way that they were living for God, that appealed to me, and that helped me get back to faith, that helped me get back into recovery.”

For how Green Pastures can help people, call 0300 365 4500 or go to www.greenpastures.net

Parish Notices

From the February registers:

Funerals – we pray for the families and friends of:

Bernard Brian Marland
Barbara Fish

Marion Holden
Brian Stackhouse

There were no baptisms or weddings in February

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Free national phonenumber bringing worship and prayer



Government figures show that 2.5 million people aged 75 and above have never used the internet. And so, to help them, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched a free national phonenumber to bring worship and prayer into the homes of those without access to the internet.

Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England.

CONTACT DETAILS

CLERGY: (*usual day off)

Revd Roger Farnworth, Team Rector (*Tues.)
The Vicarage, Westbury Street, Ashton OL6 9NL 330 2771

Revd Ben Brady, Team Curate (*Fri) 400 1556

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