



Keeping in Touch

June-July 2021



St Mary's North Mymms is an outward looking church, catering for all age groups and helping the local community to experience God's love and grow in faith

Rev Ruth writes ...

Are we there yet?

There's nothing I dislike more than reading or listening to someone waffling on and basically saying nothing. Life's too short to even read 500 words with no content. And yet as I have been reflecting on what I would write for this bi-monthly article, every idea I came up with seemed trite or meaningless.



I do feel though that we need to address the proverbial elephant in the room and acknowledge that the past 15 months have been incredibly challenging for us all in different ways. I don't think that any of us had any idea just how long this pandemic would last or how much our lives would be turned upside down by it. Today, as I sit at my desk, it's May 17th and supposedly the country is just about to go into step 3 of the phased return to whatever the new normal will be.

I recognise that as businesses reopen more fully and some of the social distancing rules are relaxed, that this will in turn cause many people anxiety about their safety. Many of us have now been privileged to have received one if not both of the anti-Covid vaccinations, and yet we know that there are still millions of people 'out there' who have not yet or will never have their jab. Who would have thought even 6 months ago that we would look forward to having an injection? Many of us have become accustomed to taking a lateral flow test every 3 days then waiting for just half an hour to ensure that we're Covid-negative and safe to meet others. But then you worry about all the other people who haven't done this.



Cont'd.....

There is a sense of panic from many people I have spoken to who, in fact, prefer to stay behind closed doors for as long as possible. We know, though, that for many people the isolation they have felt this past year has been detrimental to their mental health and well-being. We have been warned that it will take a long time for people to relearn social skills and that has been obvious as people start to meet up face to face again instead of on their computer screens. Have you noticed just how grumpy and intolerant many people have become, or even you in yourself? ‘How long will this all go on for?’ is a question that keeps cropping up.

The good news is that it’s not all doom and gloom. We have access to doctors and nurses, and free medical facilities, even if somewhat restricted from what they used to be. We can, for the most part, still get our food shopping done relatively easily and with a huge variety of goods available. And most importantly, God is still on His throne. Romans 12v13 says ““Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.” And Romans 15v13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.” These two verses show us where to place our hope, and who to turn to when we are feeling afflicted; the answer will always be to Jesus. As we head towards Pentecost Sunday, we also say ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’



Mission Action Planning

Mission Action Planning is a central element in the diocesan initiative *Living God’s Love*. It is a prayerful process of looking, listening and reflection leading into planning and prioritising; seeking, with the Spirit’s guidance, to discern both a vision and also a course of action. Over the past few months a Working Group has met (remotely) on a regular basis to review our existing vision and to start putting ideas together as to ways we in which we could live it out working with, for and in our local community in ways that bring the joy of God’s love into people’s lives. The ideas are still at a very early stage of development but include

- Running a Café in St Michael’s Room on a regular basis open to all but particularly for those who would appreciate the chance to meet others and talk.
- Restarting the Parents and Tots Group in St Michael’s Room
- Looking at ways to bring back the Family Service
- Exploring the exciting ideas that came from the Outdoor Church presentation and the success of using the outdoor space to tell our stories.

We agreed that our next step is to discuss our ideas with the people we hope to attract to see what works best for them. We also need to bring together groups of people to help develop, organise and run these various activities. So can you prayerfully consider where you feel you could best contribute and let Rev Ruth or Rev Penny know.

Easter at St Mary's Church

What joy there was when those who could celebrated Easter in the church building while many others joined in as the service was live streamed or online for our Church At Home service. Our final act of worship was to go outside singing "Thine be the glory" at the tops of our voices round the empty tomb. There was plenty else going on as well with an Easter Trail, over 100 crosses decorating the Hope Railings and an Easter Egg Hunt when over 150 children searched for knitted and plastic eggs in the churchyard which they could exchange for a chocolate egg.

Thanks to everyone for all they did to make Easter so special in these strange times.



Glorious end to our Easter Service singing "Thine be the Glory" gathered round the empty tomb



The Easter Trail in the churchyard took people through the Easter Story finishing at the empty tomb



St Mary's Easter Egg Hunt Team



Hope Railings were decorated by over 100 crosses made by the children at St Mary's School



Knitted Easter Eggs all washed and drying ready for next year!!!



Fabric eggs decorate the font



Still time to donate



Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis. Rose and her family, and millions of people in Kenya, are struggling to get enough food and water. Our donations could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. People like Rose need every last drop to survive the drought.

In previous years St Mary's has given generously to support the work of Christian Aid through the use of the donation envelopes. This year we have had to do things differently and have set up an e-envelope where you can securely and easily give a donation to help fund this vital work. The link to the envelope can be found on the St Mary's Church website. It's not too late to donate so please give it some thought.



Conscious that we all have a responsibility to care for God's Creation we are looking at ways that we can contribute to righting the wrongs and restoring the balance. Churchyards contribute significantly to providing diverse habitats for plants and wildlife and we are looking at ways that St Mary's can improve the biodiversity of its precious outside space.



St Mary's Church has signed up to TerraCycle an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling typically hard-to-recycle waste. To date, over 202 million people are collecting and recycling in 21 countries and have collected billions of pieces of waste, raising over 44 million dollars for charities around the world. At present we are collecting medicine blister packs but there could be other items in the future. You can find out more by visiting the Terracycle website

There are collection points for the medicine blister packs, bottle tops from plastic milk bottles and stamps in the church porch.





St Mary's Church North Mymms



Teddy Bear's Picnic

Come and join in the fun at
St Mary's Church on

Sunday 11th July at 2.00pm

Bring your own teddies and a picnic tea and
join us as we celebrate all things "teddy".
There are a group of teddies who are hoping
you will find them as they have bravely
agreed to fly down from the church tower on
a parachute weather permitting.



The event will be advertised on Eventbrite where
you can obtain tickets.
Details will be posted on the church website
www.stmarysnorthmymms.org.uk from 4th June

Annual Parochial Church Meeting



St Mary's Church community met remotely on Sunday 16th May for its Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). At the Vestry meeting held just beforehand Martin Ferdinando and Gill Peplow were re-elected as Churchwardens. The purpose of the meeting is to receive reports on the church's work over the past year and the maintenance of church

fabric, to receive the audited accounts, and elect Electoral Roll members to serve as the parish representatives. It is also an opportunity to thank all those who unstintingly give of their time and talents to maintain all aspects of the life of St Mary's. As might be expected the financial accounts made for sober reading given the loss of income over the past 15 months. Parishioners were encouraged to consider ways of raising the income needed to balance the books over the coming years. As well as the annual report required by the charity commissioners there were reports of all the various committees, groups and other activities associated with St Mary's which only served to reinforce what a lively and inclusive community we are.

Weddings

30th May Megan Smith and Anthony Collins

We pray for Megan and Anthony as they prepare for their marriage and life together.

Funerals

5th May Patricia Chown

We remember Patricia's family and friends in our prayers.

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