



**ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
PETERBOROUGH,
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**From the Vicar
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Newsletter 3rd February 2021

Dear friends,

Yesterday we kept the festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) with a Zoom Eucharist. After 40 days of readings that reveal Jesus our attention now moves to Lent, Holy Week and then Easter. We have a couple of Sundays before Lent (Ordinary Time) and then Lent begins on Ash Wednesday 17th February.

During the third lockdown we have kept the church open and broadcast our services on Facebook. The current rule about choirs is that a maximum of 3 singers is permitted but ideally only one. So for a few weeks now the 10 am service has been said with organ accompaniment including the playing of a few verses of hymns. One way we have been trying to maintain the links between worshipping members is by the use of recordings of both readings and prayers. We have valued and are thankful for the prayers of some of our younger members which have encouraged many and ensured that the worship we offer can still be all-age.

I'd be very happy, as always, to receive feedback, ideas, and offers of support and help. If anyone, of any age, would like to record a reading or prayer then please do. Smart phones have a built-in voice recorder, and the recording can then be emailed to me for playing during a service.

Kate will be 100 later this month. There is a card in church for those who would like to sign it.

I don't know if it is just me but this lockdown seems much harder. I believe it is true to say that more people are feeling depressed, stressed and disheartened than the first lockdown. Thankfully the numbers in hospital are now reducing as are new cases. So hopefully, with more being vaccinated, there is light on the horizon.

Address – Candlemas

Gospel Luke 2.22-40

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2.22-40&version=NRSV>

The scene we have just heard took place in a very significant place; the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. In Jesus' day it was the centre of religious life, considered to be the dwelling place of God on earth. It's the place where as an adult Jesus would overturn the tables of the money changers.

The gospel tells us about Jesus entering the Temple, having been taken there by his parents to fulfil the requirements of the Law: the Purification after the birth of a child, and, secondly, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Jesus and his family are doing the usual things after the birth of a child. Maybe there were several other couples there, doing the same thing. Elders of the community were present.

If we carried on reading we would hear of Anna, 'There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.'

It significant that we are given so much information to identify her. She must have been an important person. So we meet 2 old people they are connected with the past and with memory, like a devout remnant staying faithful to the ancient promises of God. They would be very familiar with the scriptures and the promises contained in them, so for instance from Isaiah, a couple of verse:

I will make you the light of the nations so that my Salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it. (40.5)

Simeon and Anna long to see the fulfilment of the promises. But they don't just look back, their total concern is for the future. They don't live in the past, but look forwards. Something still to happen fills their life. They are alive with expectation and hope, waiting for the one who will be the consolation of their people and the light for all people. They are an old couple who are totally open: they hunger for God's presence, and wait for the day when they can see it themselves.

Their waiting is not in vain. Today we hear of the meeting between youth and old age , between young parents and the elders of the community, between hope and fulfilment. Simeon takes Jesus into his arms and says the words that we know as the Nunc Dimittis 'now Lord ,let your servant go in peace , your word has been fulfilled'.

Every time we receive the Eucharist, we too like Simeon, can take Jesus into our hands, back to ourselves, we too can share in his life, and commit ourselves afresh to his gospel. No matter what age we are, we are faced with the same choice: do we take the Lord into our lives, and say yes to who he is , and the person he wants us to be.

May all Christians be responsive to the Holy Spirit and may we all know that we too can, in our time, depart in peace.

Lent 2021

40p for 40 days: I attach the information from Susan about this. The idea is that each person donates '40 pence for 40 days' in lieu of the sacrifice you choose to make, for example chocolate, a glass of wine, tea or coffee or setting yourself a new goal. The 40 pence each day can be collected in a jar or if easier as a single amount of £16 at the end of Lent. This is a family event so jars can be decorated with your favourite Easter themes. And why not share your creations on the All Saints' Facebook page. If you would like to take part then please let Susan know at susan.strand@icloud.com or on 07770 570025.

Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday and there will be a variety of ways that we can give time to our spiritual lives. Among them we will be offering:

Bishop Donald's talks on Hebrews with the opportunity to meet and discuss (Zoom) the themes.

Night Prayer for Lent

Zoom Stations of the Cross

40 day challenge (attached)

Lent in a 'virtual' bag (also available as a booklet in church)

Notes from the PCC

Full sets of minutes appear on the noticeboard once approved. What follows is a snapshot of the sort of things the PCC deals with, on behalf of all, since the church is not only open on Sundays but is an organisation that involves people, fabric, activity for all ages, and finance. Safeguarding is an item on every PCC agenda as we seek to keep everyone safe and follow all appropriate guidance. At this meeting the PCC approved a recommended policy for the Employment of ex-offenders as well as receiving an update on current training done and DBS checks for those who need them. The PCC regularly hears about the importance I put on this and the diligent way that our parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and her deputy seek to ensure that we meet all the aspects of the Safeguarding Policy.

Finance: our treasurer reported that income was £88 508, in 2020, with about £60 000 coming from Planned Giving including the gift aid recovery, less than predicted but so was expenditure. At the end of the year expenditure was £84 012 which allowed an additional £5000 to be paid towards the parish share. This means that we have paid £61 000 out of a request for £73 000 – 85 % paid. So for the first time in maybe 10 years the church has not paid the full share though, of course, we know what a challenging year it was to maintain income. Last March, when we thought lockdown would be a matter of months, we predicted a short fall of £20 000. With hard work and generosity we reduced that gap and made up for a loss of income from hall-bookings, events and plate offerings for far longer than we first thought. With money still to come in from car-parking and the Christmas hamper, we should be off to a good start on paying the share in 2021 and/or paying more for 2020. Deep thanks go to so many for supporting the church during the year in many generous and self-sacrificial ways. It was reported that £12 000 had been received as donations in 2019 for specific projects. It's hard to predict what our income will be in 2021 and the Hall/Events Committee plan to meet after 21st February to plan the year.

Fabric: various projects are ongoing under the leadership of the Fabric Committee and Church Wardens including: renovating the stonework of the Calvary (used as a war memorial and designed by Temple Moore the architect of the church) , erecting a photo board of those with roles within the church, updating the audio equipment, pruning trees. The PCC also reviewed what needs to be done following the approval of the Health and Safety policy at the last meeting. Quotes are being obtained to check wiring and do the PAT testing, first aiders – it would be really good to know of more people with or willing to do first aid training, Risk Assessments have been updated. All churches have a Quinquennial Inspection by their architect that generates a report and a list of works. Thankfully, after renewing the lead over the south aisle and tiles over the nave and installing a new boiler and improving the pipework, nothing urgent came up though there are plenty of smaller jobs to assist in keeping the building and grounds in good shape such as leaking rooflight in the hall, repairs to the parquet flooring, and the repair of the car park wall.

As with all aspects of church life we benefit from the gifts and talents of many people and our communal life cannot grow unless many people are involved whether upfront or behind the scenes. So with fabric we are grateful for the Fabric Committee.

Usual pattern of worship

As always, electronic versions of the Weekly Sheet, Children's bulletin, Order of Service are available on the website. We seek, in a variety of ways, to maintain and build the links between us that are so important to good health. 'Church' in the rich variety of what that means is something that we do together. Being apart and being unable to put on and enjoy our usual activities is a great loss to many. Yet, hopefully, the various online provisions can enable us to rebuild our connections.

<https://allsaintspeterborough.org.uk/covid-19/>

Sundays 10 am and 5.50 pm on Facebook

Tuesday Eucharist on Zoom at 11 am and the joining information is the same as usual,
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2069378522?pwd=WkVWMUpZR01ieXE3dFFVK2ZVcHVkQT09>

Meeting ID: 206 937 8522 Password: 025232 Zoom is free and easy to install.

The same link can be used for the pop-in, cuppa and company on Saturdays at 11 am

On **Thursday** at 7 pm the Prayer Group meets on Zoom. If you would like a particular person or situation prayed for then please do let me, or Rob and Alison Taylor know. Information will be treated in confidence.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81607057704?pwd=eUllNnhHNzRndzF1RUFPNERtMnBEQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 0705 7704 Password: 412317

Please do forward to family/ friends if you think they may value connecting with our church life.

Oberammergau

Some information is attached.

Giving

We are hugely appreciative of the great generosity shown during 2020 in so many ways. We have valued donations from a few pounds to hundreds of pounds, we have valued the fund-raising initiatives and the donations to particular projects. The PCC is aware that 2021 will be another difficult year as it will be for many. Information of giving is on the website:

<https://allsaintspeterborough.org.uk/about/giving/>

And Giving by text

- * Text ALLSAINTS to 70470 to donate £5
- * ALLSAINTS10 to 70470 to donate £10
- * ALLSAINTS20 to 70470 to donate £20