

## *From the Church Registers*

*No Baptisms or Weddings have been possible at this time.*

### *Funerals*

*Thomas Loveridge 21 April 2020*

*John Stark 25 April 2020*

*Nelson Todd 7 May 2020*

*Jane Daniel 15 May 2020*

*We thank God for them and ask  
God to comfort those who mourn their passing.*

### *What's on the Web?*

The **Church of England** website will provide you with up to date information as well as worship and prayer resources. In May **Faith at Home** was launched, with a weekly worship video centred on a value, eg Hope, Courage: although aimed at schools it's worth a look whatever age you are!

### *Giving with a grateful heart.*

We all know that the corona virus has had a major impact on our economy, with many people, especially the young, loosing their jobs or seeing a drop in income. I'm sure you're also aware of many charities asking for donations to enable them to keep on with their vital work supporting various groups and good causes in our society. Of course St Martin's is in a similar position, we've had a substantial drop in our income, due to the enforced closure of both the church building and hall for the past months. We are particularly grateful to those who have continued to give to St Martin's, and would ask more of you to set up a monthly standing order, or to join the weekly envelope scheme: even a small amount coming in regularly really does help. Please contact Julia Bennett (01895 851269) if you would like to do this. It is even more important at this time that those who have the means - a steady income, salary or pension - give generously to the church, as there will be others genuinely unable to give. Why not make a thanksgiving gift to St Martin's (gift aided if possible), for your home, health, food, supportive friends, consoling pet, garden etc - all the God-given blessings present in your life.

St Martin's is also in need of the gift of time and talents, not least in cleaning the church and looking after the churchyard. Normally we are fortunate to have the Community Pay back team helping once a week, but the corona virus meant they were not allowed to come, and at the time of writing (May) it's uncertain when they might be able to return. The Church of England instructed that church yards should be left untended during the pandemic, hopefully this will change if the virus continues to decline, and people bringing their own tools and keeping to social distancing will be able to come and help. We also need more volunteers to clean the church. This will need to be done after every use, to keep the building as safe and hygienic as possible. Could you help? We will not be able to reopen until we have a committed team of volunteers, perhaps on a one week a month rota. Please don't wait to be asked, and don't assume someone else will do it! This is the time for us all to pull together! If you are able to help with cleaning or gardening, please be in touch with Rev Rosy or one of the church wardens, Uche and Marie.

Revd. Rosy

### *From the Vicarage*

Dear Friends,

Did you know that Marianne de Burgh was a famous shell collector? I didn't, until I received an email recently asking if I could provide any information about her. Perhaps you don't recognise her name? She once belonged to the family who were Lords of the Manor, the top of West Drayton society. Our splendid St Martin's window is in memory of the de Burghs. Marianne also has her own memorial in the chancel. Carved in the stone is a modest looking woman, representing Faith, holding a cross rising from a book (the Bible). We read that Marianne was severely ill for many years, bearing it with "fortitude and resignation", dying in 1809 in the 41<sup>st</sup> year of her age. Then we find this touching description of her: "Exemplary piety and virtue, goodness of heart, mildness of temper, and benevolence of disposition were the characteristic features of this most excellent woman."

Without being unduly morbid, the corona virus has reminded us life can unexpectedly and suddenly change, and that our own earthly days are numbered, for we are God filled dust. Many people have been asking what might be the effect on society of this pandemic: can we wrestle any sort of blessing out of the dislocation, loss and tragedy? Could there be benefits to the environment? Could there be a lasting legacy whereby human society is reshaped, perhaps into a kinder, fairer, less grasping more grateful, less me, more we, community? And what about our personal legacy, what might go on our memorial tablet?

Many years ago St Paul wrote to a church where some people thought they were superior to others in the congregation: they were richer materially, and regarded themselves as better Christians, with superior spiritual gifts. This didn't fool Paul, however: "Shew I unto you a more excellent way." Paul goes on to talk of the primacy of love, which is kind, humble, without envy, boasting or pride, truthful and enduring (1 Corin. 13, do look this up and meditate on it).

As Marianne's bones continue to rest peacefully under the church, perhaps we could follow her example of faith, patience and benevolence. We too can place our trust in the merciful God we see revealed in Jesus. We too can put love first, and learn to love more, less selfishly, with a bigger heart. Whatever our age or circumstances, it's a choice we're always free to make. May we release that power of goodness into our homes and community now, and in whatever days are given to us.

With my blessing, Revd Rosy.

### *When will St Martin's be open again?*

Many people have really missed coming to St Martin's for worship and private prayer. Modern technology has its place and benefits, but it's not the same as entering our ancient, peaceful and holy place. Nor is watching online the same as worshipping physically with our brothers and sisters, all pilgrims journeying through life together in the company of Christ.

It's hard to know when we can reopen, as government and church instructions continue to change according to the movement of the pandemic (do keep an eye on the Church of England websites). At the time of writing (20 May) the

Church of England is cautiously hoping it may be possible to reopen churches first for private prayer, and then for Sunday services in July.

Each church will need to take responsibility for making the building as safe and as hygienic as possible, for example, by having a team of volunteers to clean after every use of the church, and keeping to social distancing, which we're all getting used to in places like supermarkets. Perhaps, if we are blessed with the right weather, some worship services could be held outside? Indoors we will need to adapt to some changes, eg spreading out, having a one way system, singing or coffee might not be possible. I'm sure we can cope with this, just as we have adjusted to the 'new normal' in the rest of our lives. Unfortunately the corona virus will not disappear, but hopefully we will be able to gather again before too long at St Martin's to worship God and encourage one another.

Revd Rosy

### *Prayer Page*

There was once a priest and an old peasant. As the priest rushed around his parish day after day, busily doing this and that, he began to notice that the peasant was frequently to be found in the quiet of the church, sometimes for hours at a time. Finally curiosity got the better of the priest. He asked the peasant what on earth he was doing, sitting in church for so long. The peasant pointed at the crucifix with a smile and replied "I look at him, and he looks at me".

This type of attentive, companionable silence is sometimes called Contemplative Prayer, deliberately putting yourself in the presence of Christ as one might gently enjoy being present with a dear old friend, without the need for lots of chatter. Contemplative prayer helps us to live fully in the moment, to appreciate the gift and holiness of that unique time, to centre ourselves on God in whom we find our strength and delight. It has been described as 'wasting time with God' or 'day dreaming with God', which is not to say that it has no purpose or value!

A simple way of helping us to pray like this involves preparation and finding a focus. Preparation might mean getting comfortable in a chair, or going for a

walk, finding a steady rhythm of motion and breath. Focus could be a word or phrase from the Bible, perhaps the name Je-sus, as one breathes in and out. It could be a picture, a candle flame, stroking a feather, listening to music, or the sounds around you. It could be imagining Jesus and you together, in one of the gospel stories. It could indeed be a crucifix, the sign of the immense love of Christ in which the world is held, and our little lives are cherished and find meaning.

Revd Rosy.