Crosstalk photo competition 2020

Take your camera with you on your daily exercise walk and capture “God’s Beautiful World”
Winners will be announced in the December edition
Submissions welcomed throughout the year and may be featured on our colour pages
Email your entries, with a brief description of the subject, to the editor. Good Luck!

The latest two entries are from Pippa Pritchard; the one below was taken in Leamington during a lockdown walk and the evocative image shown inside the back cover page was captured in Norway where Pippa and Dennis were on a 25th Wedding Anniversary celebration cruise.
Dear Friends,
I don’t know how many of you have had a birthday during these days of lockdown but if you had it was probably a little different to normal. So far we have had two birthdays (including a 21st) here at the Vicarage under the restrictions of social distancing and in all likelihood two more before there is any significant let up.

Birthdays are usually great opportunities to gather together for a party. Greetings are exchanged, hugs given, presents handed over and candles blown out. How things have changed! The simple idea of blowing out candles will probably be one of the last things we re-introduce as we make our slow journey back to normality. Face masks will continue to become an increasingly common sight as we do all we can to avoid the coronavirus Covid-19.

There is a certain irony then that the Bible tells us that birth of the Church begins with the sound of a violent wind. This of course mirrors the Genesis story in which God breathes into Adam the breath of life. As Adam becomes a living being filled with breath of God’s Spirit so too the Church is given life as the Spirit breathes and emerges into the world.

How strange, therefore, to celebrate the birth of the Church while we avoid at all costs going into the building while social distancing precautions are still in force. ‘Breathe on me breath of God’ might not be sung with such enthusiasm this year as we shelter behind out masks.

But of course, as we have been stressing since lockdown back in March, the Church is much more than the building. The Pentecost event was not about the construction of buildings and the creation of places of worship but about a people energised and equipped to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
It would be another 300 years before purpose-built buildings were erected. In the meantime, the followers of Jesus met in small Spirit-filled groups breaking bread together, serving the needs of each other and the wider community and advancing the Kingdom.

There is no doubt that God is in this time and Pentecost this year will be memorable hopefully for helping us focus on the people of God and on what new opportunities might emerge when this is our prime focus. So I pray that we will continue to prioritise our gatherings online, via Zoom, over the telephone or the garden fence. We are the body of Christ and God’s spirit will continue to energise us even during this period of lockdown.

May you continue to stay safe and well but also be filled with God’s Spirit to grow his Church and further his Kingdom.

God bless,

William

Warden’s Words

Our church and buildings may be closed but our worship, prayers and support for each other continues. However the buildings cannot be left unattended and as the Warden with the responsibility for the fabric of the building I pop in once a week to check that nothing untoward has happened. It’s also important that we keep an eye on the Church of England website as this is updated frequently – in fact from no public services but the Vicar could hold services, it changed to not even the Vicar for Services, and then changed again to no one was allowed to enter unless it was for health and safety purposes (and only one or two at the most). A couple of weeks later the rules changed again and now the Vicar can enter for streaming services and private prayer – accompanied by a person from their household.

So it is very difficult to make any plans, but what we do know from the Government’s COVID-19 Recovery Strategy is that if all goes well churches might be allowed open from July at the earliest. But this as part of the conditional and phased plan to begin lifting the lockdown and there will still be some restrictions. We are beginning to make plans for when this happy day arrives.

In the meantime there are other things to occupy us – we are seeking a new Church Architect as we will need to undertake a Quinquennial review by the end of the year; we are also looking at
quotes for ongoing roof and gutter maintenance; and we are considering ways of changing some of the finance systems. Zoom is proving a useful tool to keep in touch and as well as William meeting regularly with Maureen and I on Zoom, we have also had Standing Committee meetings and a PCC meeting is in the pipeline. More enjoyable however was the coffee morning that we held to celebrate VE day with 34 people in a sea of red, white and blue – all chattering away. It was such a good experience that we are planning another!

Although neither of us is in the over 70’s category (yet!) I am staying at home as much as possible as Robin (the better half!) cannot leave the house even for exercise and has been in lockdown since 14th March (when we should have had our African Vision Malawi Coffee morning). So the garden is looking wonderful, the cupboards are very tidy, and we have run out of paint and DIY bits and pieces. I have taken up bread making and laundry bag making (although not as many as Charlotte Sanders). We have been lucky enough to get grocery deliveries and enjoying trying new recipes. Even the most confident online shopper can make mistakes – this week we had a double delivery from Iceland and I am still trying to work out how I managed to do this (the biggest problem was the 32 pints of milk we received!)

The online services have been an unexpected bonus and night prayer has become a regular and quiet oasis at the end of the day.

It struck me that probably even 10 years ago connecting with each other by video would have been unimaginable. But of course in fiction this has been around for years and I just wonder how many of you remember which TV programme this picture comes from!

We may now have to ‘Stay Alert’ but please do take extra care and keep safe.

Carol Innes
Paul Wakem kicks off our new series

PLACE TO VISIT - A hairdresser!!! Probably like a lot of people I want my hair cut, it is a mess and could do with a jolly good cut and tidy up. Sue is also desperate to have her locks cut and have her hair go back to the normal length. A lot of barbers will be busy in July assuming that the lockdown has been lifted.

MUSICAL / OPERA - Les Miserables. It wins hands down. I was not too impressed by the film, but the stage musical is stunning, fabulous. Sue and I have seen it seven times in London, and once in Birmingham. I have the DVD of the 25th Anniversary Concert from the O2 Arena and we have two recordings stored on the TV box. I fear we may not be going to see it again in London for quite sometime due to the social distancing regulations.

SPORT TO WATCH / PLAY - Watching football and playing bowls. I miss watching Chelsea home games, having been a season ticket holder for the past 25 seasons and I fear it will be some time before I return to Stamford Bridge due to the social distancing regulations. I think they will be playing behind closed doors for a considerable time. I miss playing bowls. I am a member of Lillington Bowling Club and everyday walk past the green and it looks perfect, ideal for a roll up but again possibly not this summer.

And this from Roderick Clark

FICTION BOOK - The Scent of Water by Elizabeth Goudge: In the mid-20th century, the author wrote a series of expansive novels with exquisite descriptions of characters and scenes and a deeply Christian undergirding. In this book, a spinster retires from London to a small village, where her influence helps to heal several painful human situations.
NON-FICTION BOOK - The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages: When I came across this in Warwick University Library, it was immediately for me the "pearl of great price" - I had to have it! It contains descriptions of all the languages evidenced before AD 500, mainly from Europe and the Middle East. Later, when I discovered at a lecture one day that its (American) editor was in the same room, I just grabbed a piece of paper and asked for his autograph!

CINEMA FILM - The Inn of the Sixth Happiness: This 1958 film tells - in a very romanticised way - the real-life story of Gladys Aylward, a poorly educated Christian woman who was determined to go to China as a missionary. At the end, she is successful in saving a party of children stranded during the Chinese-Japanese War of 1937-45. The theme music is particularly moving.

CLASSICAL MUSIC - Banks of Green Willow by George Butterworth: This glorious orchestral idyll evokes the English countryside (rather like Vaughan Williams' Lark Ascending). Butterworth died in the First World War just three years after composing it.

POPULAR SONG - Moonlight in Vermont, sung by Frank Sinatra: I could have chosen one of many songs from the Great American Songbook (popular numbers of the 1920s to 1950s) but I have plumped for this wonderfully smooth one by the incomparable Sinatra.

STAGE PLAY - Dear Octopus by Dodie Smith: This 1938 play covers the Golden Wedding Anniversary weekend of a middle-class couple in their large country home. It intertwines many plotlines involving the problems of different members of their family and brings most of them to happy conclusions.

MEAL - • Breaded Brie • Sweet and sour duck • Sticky toffee pudding with ice cream • Fruity cider

Editor's note: Thank you Paul and Roderick. I hope that you may have inspired more readers to spill the beans on their favourites.
Readers will know that this slot is usually filled by Richard Taulbut. Richard will be back next month, but this time we have a change; the following was written by Margaret Rushton, who is a committee member of Lillington Local History Society.

**Thomas Pratt**

Thomas Pratt was a 19th Century Leamington builder based at 34 Clarendon Street (next door to Powell’s shop). He owned a sand and gravel pit on Cubbington Road, where the Free Church and the Holt Field now stand.

He was responsible for building the late Victorian houses that form Farm Road, Manor Road, Lime Avenue, Vicarage Road and South Bank, which runs along Cubbington Road from Elm Road to the junction with Lime Avenue.

He built, and sometimes demolished houses in Leamington too, and was involved in some recycling, - as the properties in Vicarage Road can attest. He re-used wooden beams (nos 15 and 17) and some doors, - no 7 has Georgian 6-panelled doors, whereas others have standard Victorian 4-panels.

Vicarage Road houses are built of local brick, - manufactured at the brickyards between Campion Hills and Lillington Road. They are roofed with Napton tiles, most of which are stamped with the Windmill logo. The first houses to be built were numbers 15 and 17, started in 1901. Documents at the County Record Office show that Thomas Pratt bought part of Sarah’s Close and applied for planning permission to build two villas, opposite St Mary Magdalene’s Church. Once these two were built and sold, he bought the next plot, and applied for permission to build, and so on, until in 1908 he reached
Cubbington Road and completed the row with no 1 for the Maudsley family.

Thomas Pratt also worked elsewhere in town: a box of papers relating to the Shrubland estate shows “T Pratt, Builder” listed in the monthly expenditure accounts, for repairs to Shrubland Hall, when it was in the care of Matthew Wise’s executors, and leased from 1925-1937 to Miss N Gurney Callier, as a Girls’ Boarding School.

The first Thomas Pratt, born here in 1844 was a plasterer, working for local building companies. He and Lucy, his wife, had three sons, Thomas, George, and Herbert, and a daughter, Lucy. All three sons joined the family business, but it was Thomas junior who eventually took over as head, expanding the business whilst his father continued his involvement in public affairs. He was a town councillor for Leamington North East for many years.

**PANDEMIC POTPOURRI**

Thank you so much to the many readers who have contributed their experiences of Covid-19 and the lockdown.

**We start with this from Barbara Howes**

**Lock-down in Lillington**

Bonjour! Tout va bien? Wie geht's? Does Brockenhurst or Kinoulton or Lillington appear most important in the Domesday Book?

These are the questions that have helped Roger and me stay relatively sane during the lock-down, as we pick up our old rôles, and even some of our old material, teaching on-line our four grand-children plus one second cousin. It's lovely to see them so often, although keeping a lively five-
10 year old focussed for 30 minutes of French is quite a challenge! I certainly need *un café bien fort* afterwards.

Following that we definitely need our "power walks", and never have I appreciated the beauty of suburbia so fervently as this spring. We have several favourite routes which offer surprising variety, not just in the gardens and scenery we see, but also in the likelihood of bumping into, or rather, waving to, different members of the church community.

At the beginning of lockdown we enjoyed the *Magnificent Magnolia Route*, enhanced by the *Rallying Rainbows*. Now there are the *Candles of Cloister Croft's* horse-chestnut trees with a chance to peep into the lovely garden at James Hirons and to admire all the art-work the residents have put up at windows there. Then there is the *Verdant Verges and Vistas Route*, along Leicester Lane and Kenilworth Road. Finally, when we really want to get away from it all, as is inevitable at times, we try to get *Up, Up and Away* on the heights of Newbold Comyn.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to have these "escape routes" and hope that you too can enjoy at least some corners of them from your own gardens or windows, taking similar pleasure from living in Lovely Lillington.

**Ellie Hucklesby writes movingly about “the youth of today”**

For just over 4 years, after many years working on the children’s ward at Warwick Hospital, I have been supporting student nurses on their placements in the community and in paediatrics. However just before I took a week’s annual leave at the end of March, I was asked to go back to the children’s ward to support the students there by working with them to free up time for the regular staff.
If a week in politics is a long time so is a week in a Covid pandemic. When I returned from leave it was to find that the children’s ward had far less patients and was better staffed than in all the time I had worked there, as much routine work had halted. In addition, the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) had announced emergency standards for student nurses and that no student would be on a traditional placement but those in 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} year of training could “opt in” to paid work in the NHS. So, I have spent the intervening weeks with my team members unravelling what this all means and working with the universities and colleagues from other hospitals to help with this process of change. I have not yet been needed to work on the wards. If you hear the phrase “the youth of today” in derogatory terms please think of these young people who have opted in to work where they will be exposed to patients with Covid, where they will experience things that are new to all of us so that even the most experienced health care workers are not able to guide them but have to learn alongside them. They are choosing to go where things change on a daily basis and they will need to adapt. These are the nurses of the future and in this crisis many of them are showing courage and a willingness to learn resilience and to care for those who will have no visitors and who are scared and anxious. For me, as for many, every day is different. My role is undefined now and I go to work often not knowing what the day holds. In all this I thank God for his constancy, the support of his church and the many lessons I am learning. My main lesson? Deal with today and leave tomorrow in God’s loving hands. “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”
A member of our congregation shares how the pandemic has had a positive effect.

2020 was to have been the year I re-invented myself. For nearly two years I had lived with and cared for my mother. As time went on, it got so that I hardly dared leave the house, plain cooking and gardening my only relief.

Mum slipped out of this world on 20th October, timing her exit perfectly. She was 98 with the unexpected cause of her death a lung problem: a prime candidate for Corona Virus. Dying when she did, she gave us the consolation of twelve days at her bedside and a decorous, crowded funeral.

So then I moved back to my house in Leamington. I would re-create my life through the renewal of old friendships, volunteering, travel, culture high and low, church-going. Then along came Corona Virus and once again I hardly dare leave the house and it’s back to cooking and gardening. This time without someone else to do it for.

Am I down-hearted? I am not!

For one thing this is a time above all others for counting blessings. For another, though I yearn for my dear old Ma every day, I know that she’d run her course. Though she never understood Brexit (despite my many attempts to explain), she would certainly have understood Corona Virus. Keeping her safe and allaying her fears would have been a losing battle for both of us.

And now I find that social distancing has validated my life-long experience as a singleton.

The perception is that people who live alone are sad and sorry and have a second-best life. But isn’t the single state just one state of many: married for life, serially married, co-habiting, and polygamous? It’s neither better nor worse, happier nor sadder. A good-enough life is a construct, whether we’re single or partnered. The last few weeks have verified for many that we can be sane and happy on our own resources.

I know I’m better placed than some. There are friends and relatives at the end of the phone. Not being 70 till September (more good
timing), I can escape to the allotment, where distant conversations can be had over hedges. I can get out on my bike, where formerly tight-lipped MAMILs now greet me with a cheery wave.

But still there’s loads of time alone – and it’s all right. I’ve known loneliness and this isn’t it.

I’d go so far as to say that the Great Lockdown has made us less lonely, not more. There’s a sense of a virtual company, bearing a load together.

**Pippa Pritchard has fun and games in lockdown**

We love playing family games with my step daughter, her partner and our grandchildren. We often buy the children board games we can all play together. Last year we discovered a new type of game to play after the kids had gone to bed - Escape room. These are board games where you are locked somewhere, such as a pyramid, and have to escape through a series of locked rooms by deciphering cryptic messages. The first time we played was on holiday (anyone remember what those were?) - it took us two nights to complete and we were up until midnight trying to work it out. We had marginally improved by Christmas, but not much!

Since we've been in lockdown, there's been no opportunity for such games, so we've been holding twice weekly family quizzes over Facetime. We take it in turns to ask the questions. Last night, we were on the receiving end of our grandchildren's choice of general knowledge questions (e.g. can a hippopotamus fit a Ferrari in its mouth?), followed by guess the famous faces and name the TV theme tunes!

They have been a lot of fun as well as competitive. We're quiz masters for the next one, so I'd better go and prepare some challenging trivia!

**Crossword answers.**

**Across:**
1 Care 3 Paradise 8 Null 9 Profaned 11 Legalistic 14 Closed
15 Stores 17 Missionary 20 Covenant 21 Thai 22 Trade-off
23 Eden

**Down:**
1 Conflict 2 Religion 4 Arrest 5 Affliction 7 Eddy 10 Allegiance 12 Preached 13 Assyrian 16 A son of 18 Scot 19 DVLA
The Revd Rosemary Pantling tells us about a day in the life of a hospital chaplain.

From the moment I arrive at the hospital, things are different now. The first thing I do is change into scrubs, those pyjama-like clothes you see on Casualty. The Bishop has kindly paid for some clerical polo shirts to wear under them which can be washed at 60°. Until those arrived we had to keep reminding people who we are as we don’t look like chaplains anymore.

Then those of us working today meet online for Morning Prayer. We only have one of us at a time in either Warwick or Leamington Hospital, with the rest of the team working from home. During the morning one of us, usually our Lead Chaplain Frances Tyler, logs in to a daily communications update to keep us all in touch with the latest information on how things are going and what we all need to know.

If at Warwick I then check the chapel (or the Oasis room at Leamington), still a refuge for peace and prayer for staff, but also one of our designated staff Wellbeing spaces, with some refreshments on a trolley in the corner. We have kept our rag tree from Lent, on which folk tie a red ribbon to offer up their worries and concerns. Usually each year we transform this into an Easter tree with flower cards to take away – we will do this when we reach the Eastertide of celebration at the end of the pandemic. We also have a display of hearts, knitted by members of a community group, which staff can take for themselves or others as a token of thanks and love. They can also be given to patients, with the possibility of an identical one given to relatives, as a small tangible connection at a time when being apart is so painful.

Then we check our list of those who want a visit to see who is still in. Many fewer than normal, as usually our great volunteer team go out twice a week on wards to visit everybody and pick up folk who would like us to visit regularly. Now we rely on churches, relatives and
staff to let us know who would like a visit. Then to the wards. Straight to the desk first, to ask the staff how they are all doing, how it is at home, giving a chance to offload to us. Mostly they are just really pleased that someone has taken a moment to ask. Then if there is no one on that ward to visit, we ask if they think anyone might like to see us. Sometimes there is – someone distressed, someone nearing the end of their life.

If we are seeing someone, on with the PPE. Gloves, apron, mask and visor. Getting used to it now, it’s sort of feeling more normal. It’s a blessing, as I can feel confident getting close if I need to speak loudly in a deaf ear, or hold a hand if I need to. But also a nuisance. The mask muffles the voice a bit, I have to work hard to enunciate clearly and to smile with my eyes alone through the visor. It can take several attempts to explain who I am and no I’m not here to take them to the toilet!

But then we can still have a meaningful encounter, the sense that listening is valued, that a person has had a chance to express fears or frustrations. And often the opportunity, when appropriate, of offering that conversation to God in prayer, of maybe hearing the voice chiming in with the familiar words of the Lord’s prayer, of giving a blessing. And just occasionally of having someone say it has helped, that they are glad we have come and please come again.

Meetings with colleagues continue to happen, but online. We have been proud of ourselves how quickly in those first hectic couple of weeks we got to grips with all those new ways of meeting remotely. Our IT colleagues have done an amazing job keeping us all connected and enabling so many to work from home and log in to the hospital system safely.

In the afternoons we are often delivering post – email messages sent by friends or relatives to post4patients@swft.nhs.uk, printed out by staff and brought to us for delivery. Such a joy to bring a letter from a son or daughter, a picture from a grandchild, photos of family or gardens or pets. A recent highlight of my day was seeing staff peering through the window of a side room in delight as a colleague held an iPad up to the face of a frail elderly man, and they watched him smiling from ear to ear, raising his hand to wave at his son on Skype.

At the end of the day, I change back out of the scrubs, which go straight into a lovely drawstring bag sewed by one of the many community groups making them for us, ready for the washing.
machine the moment I get home. And then take a moment in the chapel, to offer over to God all the conversations and encounters I have had, all the difficult situations I cannot resolve, but can put in the hands of the One who can.

Our job is different, many things have changed. But we have so much to be thankful for. That we work in an NHS Trust which values the work of chaplains and understands that we are there for everyone, whoever they are and whatever beliefs they live by. That we are able to help support our frontline staff and keep them going for the long haul, however long that may be. That we have in some small way helped to bring comfort and hope to patients cut off from the usual support of visitors and loved ones. That so often as we recall our day, we see that God has taken us along the right stretch of corridor, to the right ward, at just the moment when we were there to have that significant conversation with the person who most needed to know that they are valued and loved.

And thank you to all of you. You may not have seen me at St Mary Magdalene very often, even before all this, but I know our work is underpinned by your prayers for myself and our team and that means a great deal. Blessings to you all.

**Charity of the Month**

**Our charity for June is Netherfield** – Graham Cooper reports

£475 from the church’s charity fund will go this month to Netherfield which has been a mental health provider for 30 years. It is based in Pound Lane and is one of our nearest centres for people who need support and has good relationships with the local community; over the years it has broken down many misconceptions and barriers associated with mental health problems.

Netherfield aims to provide social support and rehabilitation for people who suffer from mental or emotional stress, in a relaxed and therapeutic environment, to support members' relatives and to provide a link between the community and statutory services. Its philosophy of care remains to encourage its members to develop their personal skills and to regain confidence and independence up to the limit of their potential.

Like other organisations, Netherfield is having to face the challenges brought about by coronavirus and hopefully our contribution will help it to press head with its valuable work.
Lockdown lingo - are you fully conversant with the new terminology?

Coronacoaster
The ups and downs of your mood during the pandemic. You’re loving lockdown one minute but suddenly weepy with anxiety the next. It truly is “an emotional coronacoaster”.

Quarantinis
Experimental cocktails mixed from whatever random ingredients you have left in the house. The boozy equivalent of a store cupboard supper. Southern Comfort and Ribena quarantini with a glacé cherry garnish, anyone? These are sipped at “locktail hour”.

Blue Skype thinking
A work brainstorming session which takes place over a videoconferencing app. Such meetings might also be termed a “Zoomposium”. Naturally, they are to be avoided if at all possible.

Le Creuset wrist
It’s the new “avocado hand” - an aching arm after taking one’s best saucepan outside to bang during the weekly ‘Clap For Carers.’ It might be heavy but you’re keen to impress the neighbours with your high-quality kitchenware.

Coronials
As opposed to millennials, this refers to the future generation of babies conceived or born during coronavirus quarantine. They might also become known as “Generation C” or, more spookily, “Children of the Quarn”.

Furlough Merlot
Wine consumed in an attempt to relieve the frustration of not working. Also known as “bored-eaux” or “cabernet tedium”.

Coronadose
An overdose of bad news from consuming too much media during a time of crisis. Can result in a panicdemic.

The elephant in the Zoom
The glaring issue during a videoconferencing call that nobody feels able to mention. E.g. one participant has dramatically put on weight, suddenly sprouted terrible facial hair or has a worryingly messy house visible in the background.

Quentin Quarantino
An attention-seeker using their time in lockdown to make amateur films which they’re convinced are funnier and cleverer than they actually are.
**Across**

1 See 23 Across

3 Where the thief on the cross was told he would be, with Jesus (Luke 23:43) (8)

8 Invalid (4)

9 Blasphemed (Ezekiel 36:20) (8)

11 Adhering to the letter of the law rather than its spirit (Philippians 3:6) (10)

14 Shut (Ecclesiastes 12:4) (6)

15 ‘This is how it will be with anyone who — up things for himself but is not rich towards God’ (Luke 12:21) (6)

17 Mary on Isis (anag.) (10)

20 Agreement (Hebrews 9:15) (8)

21 Native of, say, Bangkok (4)

22 Deaf fort (anag.) (5-3)

23 and 1 Across ‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the

Garden of — to work it and take — of it’ (Genesis 2:15) (4,4)

**Down**

1 Struggle between opposing forces (Habakkuk 1:3) (8)

2 James defined this as ‘looking after orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world’ (James 1:27) (8)

4 ‘The one I kiss is the man; — him’ (Matthew 26:48) (6)

5 ‘Be joyful in hope, patient in — , faithful in prayer’ (Romans 12:12) (10)

6 St Columba’s burial place (4)

7 Swirling current of water (4)

10 Loyalty (Isaiah 19:18) (10)

12 ‘God was pleased through the foolishness of what was — , to save those who believe’ (1 Corinthians 1:21) (8)

13 Camp where the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men one night (2 Kings 19:35) (8)

16 ‘There is still — — Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet’ (2 Samuel 9:3) (1,3,2)

18 David Livingstone was one (4)

19 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (1,1,1,1)

Answers on Page 11
Let me show you the skills used in traditional Folk Art decorative painting.
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Communion Services will be live-streamed each Sunday at 10 am and each Wednesday, also at 10 am
Evening Prayer at is at 7 pm each weekday evening
Go to the church website at www.lillingtonparishchurch.org and click on Online streaming

Keep us, good Lord
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Well, of course, nothing very much. But we do have one event to report on; the virtual coffee morning in commemoration of VE Day. The screen shot from your editor’s iPad only showed nine participating devices on each screen, but there were a total of nearly thirty. Most devices showed more than one person, so probably forty or fifty participants.

![Zoom screenshot of virtual coffee morning](image)

**POETRY CORNER**

**St Sofa’s**

We worship at St Sofa’s now  
Since Covid came to stay  
We don’t dress up or do our hair  
But still we come to pray!  

Our Vicar is a clever chap  
A Zoom with his IT  
And so we sit down ev’ry week  
And meet up virtually!

Our Parish Church stands empty  
With praise she does not ring;  
But still her people gather round  
To pray, and praise, and sing!  

The virus is a nasty thing  
Yet it has helped us see  
The church is NOT a building  
But folk like you and me!

*By Nigel and Carol Beeton*
Richard Taulbut, inspired by Roderick Clark’s article on “God & Coronavirus” last month, writes:

Good Lord Deliver Us

I started to write this piece to try to answer some of my own questions about the sudden appearance of coronavirus. If the kind of questions I find myself asking are questions you were asking too then I hope it may be some use to you. I began by wondering what our ancestors might have made of this.

On the orders of King Henry VIII and under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, Myles Coverdale prepared an English translation of the Bible, which Cromwell ordered to be set up in every English parish church in 1539. By 1541 nine thousand copies had been printed. However, services continued to be said and sung entirely in Latin until 1544, when a new English Litany compiled by Thomas Cranmer was issued, as the king launched a war with France, to be used on all Sundays and festivals.

The text is drawn from the Latin of the Roman Church and from Martin Luther, but the style and phrasing is new. Like the very similar Litany we can still find in the Book of Common Prayer, it does not mince words, beginning:

O God the Father of heaven: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

And presently requests:

From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us.

This Litany is included in the first English Prayer Book of 1549, and again in the book of 1552, when this next prayer first appears, for use in the time of any common plague or sickness. Again, a very similar prayer is still in the Prayer Book:

O ALMIGHTY God, which in thy wrath, in the time of King David, did slay with the plague of pestilence sixty and ten thousand, and yet remembering thy mercy didst save the rest: have pity upon us miserable sinners, that now are visited with great sickness and mortality, that like as thou didst then command thy angel to cease
from punishing: So it may now please thee to withdraw from us this plague and grievous sickness, through Jesu Christ our Lord.

The reference to King David is from the second book of Samuel, chapter 24; and also in the first book of Chronicles, chapter 21; with an enlightening note at chapter 27 verse 23. The Lord promised to make the Israelites as many as the stars in the heavens. The Lord’s strength should have been enough for David, but David weakened and chose to take a census, to ‘number Israel’. He got his answer, there were thirteen hundred thousand able-bodied men over twenty years of age in Israel and Judah.

But the Lord was angry, and sent his prophet Gad to give David a choice – three years’ famine in the land, or three months’ flight with the enemy at his heels, or three days’ pestilence. David chose to place himself in the hands of the Lord, ‘for his mercy is great’. So the Lord sent a pestilence throughout Israel and seventy thousand of the people died, but, as the Angel stretched out his arm towards Jerusalem, the Lord repented of this evil and said, “Enough! Stay your hand.” The angel was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. There David built an altar to the Lord, and the place would become the site of the Temple of Jerusalem.

Our 16th century ancestors were not ashamed to view the Lord and his actions in this way, and there is plenty more in similar vein through the Old Testament, from Noah’s Flood onwards, when only eight were saved, aside from the creatures two by two. When the waters subsided, God promised never again to destroy all living creatures by the waters of the flood (Genesis 9:11) and set his bow in the heavens to remind himself and us, but his promise did not extend beyond destruction by a flood of waters.

The flood was sent as a punishment for mankind’s wickedness. It was not capricious and it fell on those who deserved it. The same cannot be said for the plagues visited on the Egyptians in the time of Moses. Pharaoh was obdurate, but the plagues fell on all Egypt. The first nine plagues might be said to be a painful nuisance (though tough on the cattle), but the tenth is of a different kind. “On that night I shall pass through the land of Egypt and kill every first-born of man and beast” (Exodus 12: 12). God’s reasoning to Pharaoh through Moses had been this – “Israel is my first-born son. I have told you to let my son go, so that he may worship me. You have refused to let him go, so I will kill your first-born son” (Exodus 4:22).
Now this is simply vile. No decent argument can be made in support of this. Either God is wrong or the Bible is wrong. Dispensationalist excuses favouring the Chosen People ahead of the rest of all creation only make this more repulsive.

Only one thing could ever put this right. The One that will put everything right. And thank God the Bible does not end at the twelfth chapter of Exodus.

Evil is what arises in the world through the wrong choices of men and women. God permits wrong choices while he waits for right choices. The right choice is to love God and to love our Neighbour. If our choice is not free then it is not love. And how should we know this God? Through his Son Jesus Christ. That Old Testament stuff – we need to see that with Jesus. And who is Jesus? Well that could be a lifetime in the knowing, but to start, Jesus wants to be my friend. That is the Good News. The Good News we can share without apology or embarrassment.

And where are we now? What is this plague in the world? How can it be?

Bad things happen – an earthquake, many diseases, a flood. Though wrong choices may make bad things worse, bad things cannot all be attributed to wrong human choices, so these events are not ‘evil’.

If there is only one God and there is no other eternal being beside him, and God created the world and everything in it, how then are bad things not his fault? What other explanation is there? If I credit God with the nice things I understand, who do I credit with the nasty ones I don’t understand. If I say, ‘thank you God for trees and flowers,’ do I say thank you for earthquakes and malaria? Can I decently thank God for choosing to spare me, knowing that my neighbour has not been spared?

Well as for me, I do not expect God to intervene in the operation of his physical universe, or to change the rules by which it runs. I do not pray for rain, or ask for a sunny day for the church fete, (but I might ask to choose a day that is going to be sunny). Certainly God created the physical universe, but in creating he also separated and made boundaries. He separated the light from the dark, the day from the night; he separated the waters below from the waters above,
earth from heaven; he gathered together the waters below, and separated the dry land from the seas. To change the course of the physical universe, he must bring the world to an end and start again, and in his mercy he is not ready to do that (2 Peter 3:9). Though I must add that sometimes God finds a way. He turns water into wine (John 2:9). Miracles do happen.

I have found these approaches helpful -

This physical world is ours to serve and preserve (Genesis 1:28, 2:15).

God has to some extent separated physical from spiritual. This is a mystery, but it is only for a time and not for ever. There is judgement, but there is also mercy, and in Christ nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39).

God is spirit, and in the realm of hearts and minds we can and should expect God to act when we pray rightly (John 4:24; Matthew 6:6).

Jesus came that we should have life, and life in all its fullness (John 10:10), not a half existence clinging to life for fear of dying (Mark 8:35).

So did God send this virus or any other physical affliction as a punishment because he is angry with us? Can we pray God to take them away?

We can pray for that, we can try praying for anything, and our ancestors would have done so earnestly. Were they mad? Or deluded? But are we so much cleverer now? However, I do not believe that general ritual confessions, claiming to confess sins we were not aware of committing, and therefore cannot hope to amend, are of any value.

We are on surer ground if we trust that when God made the world he made it for us, and wants us to have what is best for us because he loves us, no matter how things might look for a time from our limited point of view; and that in Jesus Christ he has already done everything necessary for us to know him, and as we know him the physical and spiritual join back together.

And if we will accept our need of his grace, and strive to love him and love our neighbour, always we have his promise of life in all its fullness, in this world and the next.
Fortunate feline!

From our star reporter
Roderick Clark

A Lillington cat with “religious inclinations” has survived an adventure in which he got trapped and unable to move for more than a week. Oscar (aged 4) disappeared from his home in Farm Road on Easter Sunday and was found stuck between two outbuildings between nearby Vicarage Road and Elm Road – a fallen drain may have been to blame. Oscar had grown “very skinny” and probably stayed alive just on rainwater.

Oscar is well known for spending a lot of time in nearby Lillington Churchyard, sometimes trying to enter the church or The Octagon. His disappearance was advertised through notices both on social media and on lamp posts, and he was missing for twelve days.

His mewing was eventually heard by his rescuers, who freed and tried to grab him - but he escaped. They alerted his owner, Zoe Moore, and guided her and family members to the area, where they managed to collect him. With a diet of chicken dinners recommended by a vet, he is now back to full health, though a little slimmer.

John Nutt writes:

I enjoyed Rev William's address during the online service on Sunday 3rd May when he told us about Mr and Mrs Carte who named their son Orson and, even better, the young man who called his sister's daughter and son Denise and Denephew.

My father had a sister called Nora and I often wonder how carefully my grandparents considered the juxtaposition of her Christian name with her surname.
On the road to Emmaus

Godfrey Carr writes:

We have heard a good deal about the road to Emmaus in our services recently and it has set me wondering about Jesus as a walker. How far did Cephas and the other disciple and Jesus cover on their walk and how does that compare with the achievements of our church walking group. Well according to Luke they walked some sixty stadia from Jerusalem. After diligent research I found that one stadion equals 6 plethra of 100 podes which, though intriguing, does not help much. Pressing on I found that one plethron equals 101 modern feet or 100 ancient Greek feet (podes the plural in Greek for the word ‘foot’). It appears that feet were slightly larger in ancient times.

Doing the maths (with a calculator!), the three walkers covered 6 x 6,000 feet which gives us 36,360 feet or 6.8 miles or 10.56 kilometres. The walking group would manage this distance but some would complain loudly. Thus all credit to our three travellers, especially as the two disciples did the distance twice. What the walking group would not manage is the distance that is given in a number of ancient manuscripts of Luke which is 160 stadia or 18 miles (28 kilometres) and it would have been a big effort on the part of Cleophas and his companion.

As a result of these variations it is not straightforward for the modern would-be pilgrim. It was certainly near or on the road to Tel Aviv. One possible candidate which is situated at the shorter distance quoted in versions of Luke is present day Motza, or rather an ancient settlement near it called Qalunya (arabisation of colonia) and a
place where the emperor Vespasian settled 800 veterans of the Roman army. It had a mainly Muslim population and is nowadays in ruins, having been destroyed in the battles between the Israelis and Arabs in the 1948 war. There is, however, another town at the longer distance of 18 miles, Emmaus Nicopolis, which since very early times has been seen as the biblical Emmaus. I have wondered for some time why there is no pilgrimage route and very recently a pilgrimage trail has at last has been established. To make it practical as part of a day’s hike it is only part of the way, some 11 miles from Abu Gosh to Emmaus Niciopolis. The creators of this route are the Israeli Tourist Ministry, the Jewish National Fund and the Saxum foundation. The latter is a Catholic charity with a base in Abu Gosh which runs a visitor centre in Emmaus. There is also a religious order, the Community of the Beatitudes, which is founded on Franciscan lines and takes care of the actual site.

After looking more closely at this episode in Luke it is clear that we can all create our own road to Emmaus on which to walk with Christ (there is, of course inevitably, a town called Emmaus in America!), and the idea is explored in a book by Jim Forrest called ‘The Road to Emmaus – Pilgrimage as a Way of Life’. The whole story remains both mysterious and inspiring, and for this reason has been a favourite topic of painters e.g. Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Duccio, Melone (see previous page) and many others, including Picasso, has inspired a variety of musical compositions, and even prompted Carl Jung to point out that it bears strong resemblances to many myths and stories in various cultures about a companion on a walk who disappears once the goal is reached.

A final whimsical thought: would we recognize Jesus if he joined us on one of our church walks, and if so how, and if not, why not?

**Book Review**

Amanda Stevens tells us about one of her favourite books, “Laughing Gas” by P. G. Wodehouse

Laughing Gas was written in 1936 and unlike many of Wodehouse’s novels is not set principally in an English country house but the febrile and glamorous world of 1930s Hollywood in its heyday.

The novel has two protagonists. The 28 year old narrator: “Reginald Swithin third Earl of Havershot if you want to be formal but Reggie to my pals” and Joey Cooley a “Little Lord Fauntleroy type” and “idol of
American motherhood” who is on a five year contract with Hollywood film mogul T. P. Brinkmeyer and in fact lives with him and his domineering sister Beulah at their mansion “The Garden of Hesperides”.

The worlds of Reggie and Joey collide when Reggie, who is on a mission to rescue his alcoholic cousin Egremont “Eggy” from the corrupting influences of Hollywood, and Joey, meet in the waiting room of a dental surgery where they are both to have teeth extracted. They are put under gas at the same time by their respective dentists and immediately swap bodies.

The resulting chaos is too complicated to recount in full. Throughout the novel, however, Wodehouse exposes the fakery and superficiality of Hollywood; its producers, stars and followers. The Brinkmeyer residence is resplendent with garish paraphernalia and staffed not by real groundsmen and butlers but would-be stars posing as them.

The famous film star April June with whom “real Reggie” had fallen in love on the train to California transpires not to be the angel of his dreams but scheming, bullying, mercenary and over-rated. The restricted and circumscribed life Joey is forced by Beulah to lead as a child star is cruel. He isn’t allowed a dog because it might bite him; to play games because he might get hurt; to go in the swimming pool because he might drown or to eat anything but prunes because he might put on weight.

“Laugh out loud” comic moments come aplenty. There is the moment when Joey in Reggie’s body seeks to revenge himself on Beulah by pushing her in to a swimming pool hours before the planned unveiling of a statue of Brinkmeyer. Then the kidnap of “Joey” that goes spectacularly wrong when it turns out to have been a misjudged publicity stunt. A very fine example occurs when Reggie in Joey’s body enters April June’s house and proceeds to drink whisky and smoke a cigarette. A journalist arrives to interview April but is so astonished that she takes a photograph of “Joey” and interviews him
instead. The photograph and revelation that he always “has a snifter” at this time and prefers to smoke a pipe end his career dramatically. The story ends happily with the two bodies returned to their right owners; Reggie getting engaged to the right girl; Eggy joining the Temperance movement and marrying its leading proponent and Joey returning to his beloved mother in Chillicothe, Ohio that he has pined for throughout.

I have loved “Laughing Gas” since reading it for the first time when staying with a family in Paris as a teenager. I was homesick and it was a life-saver. I have always thought of it as my cheering up novel and recently re-read it. A great distraction from lock-down. I hope it will prove so too for anyone I’ve persuaded to read it themselves. (Please note that it can on occasions reflect the attitudes of the time it was written). Although out of print it is fortunately available on Amazon.

An Update on what is happening with Love Lillington from Christine Butler

Assurance that two important components of our Love Lillington Initiative remain active and are working throughout this pandemic.

Prayer
We have a network to pray for people in trouble or need in Lillington. Please contact Caroline Carr on thecarrs01@virginmedia.com if you have details of anyone needing our prayers (you will need their permission) or if you would like to join this group and support people’s prayer needs, on receipt of emailed details from Caroline.

Money
We continue to offer Love Lillington Grant Funding to help with one-off items. Referrals are received from community workers.

The clients we can help must live within the Ecclesiastical Parish of Lillington. grants4lillington@gmail.com Our Grants Administrator continues to receive referrals and is busy setting up new contactless systems to enable our help to reach all the people who need items. You can still donate to the Grant Fund personally, in the usual way, if you wish to support it.
**Action**
Currently our normal action team work is unfortunately suspended as we are unable to work in people’s homes and gardens and meet with them personally.

**GOOD NEWS**
As opportunities to raise funds for our Grant pot are not going to be available for the foreseeable future (concert, coffee mornings etc.) we have made an application to the *Warwickshire County Council – Councillors Grant Fund 2020/21 (COVID-19 Support Fund)* and I am pleased to report that we have been successful with our application. We acknowledge and give thanks to WCC and Cllr Sarah Boad’s contribution for enabling us to top-up the Love Lillington Grants Fund in this way.

**Knit & Natter**

**Carol Innes reports:**

Our knitting group usually meets on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month in the Octagon and whilst we cannot meet at the moment we have been busy knitting for two projects.

Firstly we are knitting angels ready for Christmas that we can distribute around Lillington – nearer the time obviously – and this will be ongoing as we hope to have hundreds to share in our community the Good News of the birth of Jesus.

Secondly we are knitting Ear Savers. What are they I hear you ask? Well many Care staff are wearing face masks with elasticated sides that slip over the ears, and can make the ears very sore. So an ear saver sits at the back of the head and the elastic is popped over buttons instead. A very simple and effective way to help our carers.

Knitting is a proven way to help both mental and physical health. A 2007 study conducted by...
Harvard Medical School’s Mind and Body Institute, found that knitting lowers heart rate by an average of 11 beats per minute, and induces an “enhanced state of calm,” similar to that of yoga.

So Keep Calm and Carry on Knitting!

If you would like to join in with either of our knitting projects then contact Carol Innes on 07758 857740 for more information.

Godfrey Carr has information about a very common flower in our gardens

I imagine that many of us have, or have had, some plants of *Alchemilla mollis* in our gardens. Alchemilla is an attractive and useful foil for other more spectacular plants and can also be pretty in a vase of cut flowers, again as a foil for more showy blooms. Nevertheless, I think it is true to say that it is often taken for granted and it can become a nuisance if it self-seeds too freely.

In the Middle Ages, however, it was much more highly prized. There are various theories as to how it got its name, one being that Alchemilla is derived from the Arabic work Alkemelych (alchemy) as it was thought to have mystical qualities and was used in magic potions. Alchemists certainly valued it highly as they believed that the water that collected on its leaves after rain or from dew in the early morning was the purest form of water. They gathered it to use in their experiments to turn base metals into gold, although as far as I know, none were successful! The common name, Lady’s Mantle (from the German *Frauenmantel*) also denotes the value put upon the plant, as it was associated with the Virgin Mary, the lobes of the leaves resembling the scalloped edges of her robe.

A member of the Rosaceae family, it was (and apparently still is) much used as a medicinal herb, having astringent and styptic
properties because of the tannin it contains. It was described as being ‘of a very drying and binding character’ and Culpepper writes: ‘Lady’s Mantle is .... one of the most singular wound herbs and therefore highly prized and praised, used in all wounds inward and outward . . . ‘.

And there is more from Godfrey:

*Revelation in the Greenhouse*

Looking at the row of tomato plants in my greenhouse I suddenly had a revelation. I was the midwife (husband) to this lot. Without my attentions - providing containers, soil, heat and water - they would not have an existence and might have lingered as seeds in their packets, as indeed some of them already had, for several years or for ever. Now they were flourishing and taking on an identity of their own – some bigger, some smaller, some leaning one way, others another. I had brought something unique into the world, which was now not only busily taking in carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen but also demanding further attentions – more water, a bigger pot, plant food.

I have read that orchids have a way of manipulating humans to their own ends, but even the common tomato has needs that cry out to be met. They will have had their side shoots regularly removed but in due course will still completely fill the greenhouse. If an already arranged holiday in September goes ahead, then a replacement carer will have to be found. All being well, they will yield a generous and tasty crop. In the late autumn I will have to remove their weary skeletal remains. Over the spring and summer they will have communicated with each other and with the other plants in the greenhouse and have fought off pests and diseases; all in the only limited protected world they will have known. They will have been a part of my life over six or more months and like me will have been part of the world’s rich diversity for a spell. During this period of lock-down they will have been an abiding source of interest, satisfaction, some small pride (with the odd disappointment!), and even companionship. So much for so little from so small a packet!
A short story from the Bible

The Philistine and Israelite armies faced each other. For 40 days, the gigantic Philistine champion, Goliath, taunted them.

But David didn’t stop... We shouldn’t be cowards. I will fight him!

I have killed lions and bears with God’s help.

Then go ahead. You can wear my armour.

Goliath couldn’t believe what he saw.

Do you think I’m a dog that you have come with a stick?

I have come to fight you in the name of the All-powerful God. The Lord always wins his battles.

As Goliath came forward...

David slung his stone and hit him on the head.

Goliath fell down dead.

The Philistines ran away, chased by Israel’s army.
When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins he sat down and wept. For days he fasted and prayed before God. Finally the opportunity came for him to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, but it was not going to be easy...

READ Nehemiah’s story in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, chapters 1-7

Here is Nehemiah’s list of all the things that needed to be done to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Fill in the missing gaps on the tower to help rebuild the wall.

- Pray
- Rubble
- Repair
- Restore
- Build
- Work
- Stone
- Timber
- Walls
- Floor
- Roof
- Celebrate
- Gate
- Beam
- Bolt
- Bar
- Step
- Tower
- House
- Pool
- Finish
- Dedicate
- Door

How many gates were repaired? Who re-built them?
How long did it take to finish the walls?
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Bluebells in the churchyard

Another Photo
Competition entry
from Pippa Pritchard
The pandemic appears to encourage the creative juices in our readers. Again, I have been astonished by the quantity and quality of contributions to our magazine. Thank you all very much. Keep them coming. Amongst the categories of article I have suggested are: “My favourite..... book, music, meal, drink, film etc.” See last month’s edition for the full list. More of your pandemic observations are also welcome. And something new for you – write a pangram. Courtesy of The Times, here is one to get you started: Anyone beating coronavirus deserves everybody’s fullest gratitude. Happily industrious journalists keep leading morning newspapers offering pertinent questions regarding short-term unlocking. Very wisely, xenophobia yields zilch. If you can make yours relevant to our church, all the better. Keep well.
Jeff Burgess, editor.

These sentences appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:
The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'
Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
Don’t let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

A limited number of this edition of Crosstalk will be printed and posted to members of the congregation who do not have access to the on-line version. I apologise to the many who normally have it delivered.
## CONTACTS

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