

*St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield*

## **MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER**

*May 2020 ~ a church newsletter during lockdown*

Dear Friends

How are you? Life seems surreal at the moment: our usual patterns and rhythms have altered, causing us to change the way we live. We are getting used to standing in queues to shop two metres distant from one another, we are getting used to speaking to friends and family only online or via phone and we are getting used to feeling incredibly happy when a neighbour walks past our house.

As we face our future, we do so with a sense of caution and worry because it still seems unknown. How long will we be in lockdown? How long do we need to wait? We ask where Christ is in the waiting: waiting seems to be something this season calls us to do.

At that first Easter, followers of Christ watched and waited, first at the cross and then behind locked doors, as they struggled to understand what was happening. Jesus was alive! Could this be true? They met together when words failed them and the pain was too much. They met together as hope was rekindled, to pray together, to sing together and gradually out of the horror and destruction of Good Friday a new community was born that would transform the world. How do we gather together now? How do we draw strength from each other when we can't physically leave our homes and worship together in our church buildings? How do we find the strength to get up each morning, to find the hope to lead that Christ-like new life?

We look to Jesus and remember that God connects us: we are still the church, dispersed but still together. Our hope is found in the empty tomb and the resurrection that is given to all Creation. We as a community are being transformed in our homes: yes even in our gardens, studies and front rooms we are still in the presence of the Risen Christ! We will recover from the waiting? Yes! Resurrection – the promise of new life is what the Easter Season is all about. After the waiting, through the pain and isolation, new life will come. We are Easter People and we will share this message of hope and new life to our friends and neighbours in whatever way we can: through phoning, through asking our neighbours if they need food, through prayer and online services and through the giving and receiving of love and care for each other.

Love, Skye.

**'Risen Jesus, show us how to be an Easter people, even in this difficult time; give us the patience to wait, the compassion to care for our neighbours and grace to be a symbol of hope to the world. Amen.'**

### **Coffee after Church Service**

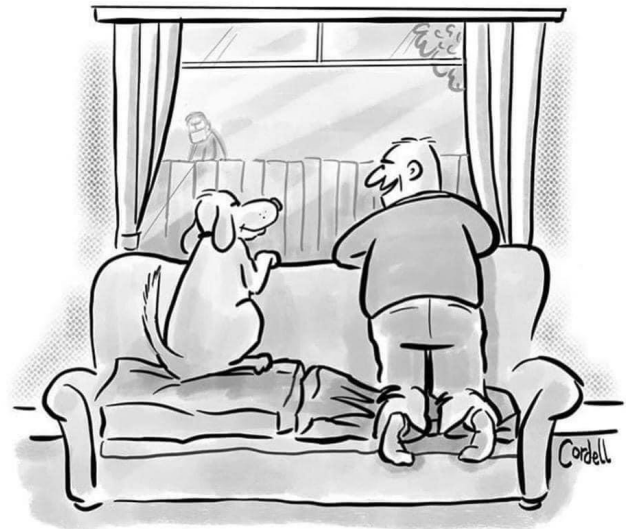
We have set up a WhatsApp group that has been meeting for virtual coffee after virtual church. We get our beverage and then connect to Zoom at 11am for a chat. If you would like to join us, please contact Judith (764693) and she will explain how and add you to the group.

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*"Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when someone walked past the house."*

Book Review: what to read in lockdown?

### **The Mirror and the Light by Hilary Mantel.**

This is the third of her books about Thomas Cromwell at the court of Henry VIII. It is 800 pages long and not a word wasted, so not for the fainthearted. It is written from the perspective of Thomas Cromwell, as though the reader were a little worm in his head, privy to his thoughts and an observer of what he sees. It chronicles the period from the King's third marriage, to Jane Seymour, to his fourth, to Anne of Cleves. The king is desperate to ensure the continuation of his dynasty; Thomas is at his most powerful but totally dependent on the king for his life and livelihood. Many people resent his power and (spoiler alert!) some finally betray him. Cromwell must steer the irrational, egotistical king through a quagmire of international conspiracies, social unrest and religious uncertainty. He describes his work as "playing chess in the dark, on a board made of jelly"

For younger readers I recommend **The Good Hawk** by Joseph Elliott of TV's *Swashbuckle* fame. Joseph wrote this book while on the Isle of Skye. It is a new fantasy fiction book for young people of 10 years and up and is exciting but rather gory, so some will love it. It is set in Scotland after a plague has wiped out most of the population. Very topical. Don't go socialising just yet. This is the first in a series and I am looking forward to the next one!

Recipe: what to cook in lockdown?

### **Welsh Spiced Honey Loaf**

A simple cake using store cupboard ingredients:

- 1/4 pint (150 ml) boiling water
- 4 oz (100 g) caster sugar
- 4 level tablespoons runny honey
- 2 teaspoons mixed spice
- 8 oz (225 g) plain flour
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

Method

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 3, 325°F (160°C)
- 2 Boil the water and stir in the honey.
- 3 Line a 2lb (1 kg) loaf tin.
- 4 Sieve the flour with the salt and add the sugar and spice. Using a wooden spoon, add the melted honey and water, beating until bubbles appear. Add the baking powder and bicarb.

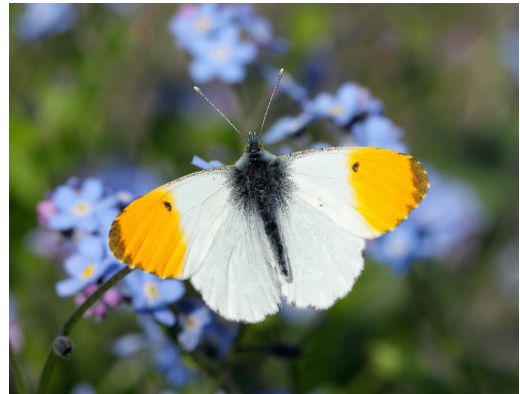


5 Pour into the bread tin and bake for about 45 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the loaf comes out clean.

6 Serve the loaf warm or cold, spread with butter or cream cheese.

Nature notes: what to see during lockdown?

**May is a month of bounty.** With the birds in full song, why not go out early for your daily exercise and experience the dawn chorus? Swallows are returning



and later in the month screaming parties of swifts. Look out for orange-tip butterflies and hedgerow plants such as frothy cow parsley and red campion. If you have a garden, try leaving a small area to go wild and see what grows or comes visiting. Remember to provide water (a large saucer will do) for visiting birds, insects and hedgehogs.

And finally: what to quote?

### **May and the Poets by Leigh Hunt**

There is May in books forever;  
May will part from Spenser never;  
May's in Milton, May's in Prior,  
May's in Chaucer, Thomson, Dyer;  
May's in all the Italian books:—  
She has old and modern nooks,  
Where she sleeps with nymphs and elves,  
In happy places they call shelves,  
And will rise and dress your rooms  
With a drapery thick with blooms.  
Come, ye rains, then if ye will,  
May's at home, and with me still;  
But come rather, thou, good weather,  
And find us in the fields together.

### **Memorial Garden**

The Diocese has now granted a faculty enabling us to extend the area available for interment of ashes in the Memorial Garden. Work to lay the gravel needed might begin during the latter half of May, closing the garden for a short period. Once we know dates for this we will display a notice giving details. Contact Eileen Palayiwa for more information.