

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER

August 2020 ~ a church newsletter during lockdown

Dear Friends & Neighbours,

August is traditionally the month of holidays, breaks and down-time, but this year it feels very different. For schoolchildren there won't be the usual anticipation of the end of term, and although home schooling will stop, I imagine life in August will feel very much the same as it did in July. For those of us who usually anticipate time away, this year will also be very different, as most look to holiday at home. For all of us, whether we've worked through lockdown, lost work or been furloughed, there is still a need for a break. The emotional toll of the pandemic and the continuing sense of an uncertain future have left many people feeling quite exhausted and in real need of rest. We need a change of pace and space to recharge our batteries, a time when we can metaphorically pull off the road of everyday life, stop and just *be*.

God understands our need for rest and knows we need downtime. There's nothing selfish in making time for ourselves: God designed us that way. Jesus regularly took himself away from the crowds to rest; he also took his disciples away to quiet places where they could just be. I know it's not necessarily easy to do, physically to find the time and space, but there are three Bible passages which I find really helpful.

Firstly, in Matthew 11:28 Jesus says; "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest." *Come* ...it's an invitation to talk to Jesus about how we feel and what's going on in our busy lives; an invitation to offload and let go of our weariness.

Secondly, Psalm 23 speaks to us of God's love, care and presence with us through all circumstances. The opening verses from the Good News translation put it like this; "The LORD is my shepherd; I have everything I need.² He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water. ³He gives me new strength. He guides me in the right paths, as he has promised." It's a wonderful picture of what rest can look like when we allow God to lead us. I don't know about you, but the thought of lying down in fields of green grass near pools of fresh water sounds idyllic; I can almost hear the sound of the water.

Thirdly, Psalm 46:10 says; "Be still and know that I am God." I have these words on my notice board and they prompt us to find a place of quietness within ourselves, to find the rest that the mind, body and spirit need. It's God's encouragement to pause, to take a holiday from our busyness or find a Holy Moment. The words *Be still* translated from the Hebrew literally mean *Let go*. It's about handing God the reins of our lives – even just for a while – and allowing Him to take the strain for us as we let go of our burdens ... whatever they might be.

So, the invitation to each one of us is to 'Come', to allow God to 'lead us to quiet spaces' and then to 'let go'. As we do so, we will find ourselves refreshed, restored and renewed, as if from a holiday. Whatever you do this August I hope that it's a really blessed time, that you find some space to rest and to be, that perhaps you might even discover something of those "fields of green grass and quiet pools of fresh water." I pray you may even discover God is there with you as you 'let go'.



How HIGH is your Sunflower?

Sunflower Competition @ St Nicks
Send your photo and height measurement and contact details to
administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk or post it to Marston Vicarage,
Elsfield Road, OX3 0PR (box outside the Vicarage)
DEADLINE for entry is the 31st August

All can enter, its FREE for all ages (1st, 2nd, 3rd prizes)



God Bless, Skye

Revd Skye - Tel: 202988 - joskso@yahoo.co.uk
Alison Edwards - Tel: 580354
administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk
Website - stnicholasmarston.org.uk
Facebook – [marston@stnicholasmarston](https://www.facebook.com/marston@stnicholasmarston)

Coffee after Church Service

A group 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.

Building work at the Church

We are excited to tell you that work begins on 3 August to rewire the church and replace the heating and lighting with new, much more efficient systems. We anticipate that it will take at least 8 weeks and during that time the church will be closed.

At the end of August/beginning September a new path to the Memorial Garden will be constructed. There may be one or two days when access will not be possible but we will post details on the wall outside the Garden, nearer the time.

St Nicholas' virtual Holiday Club

St Nicholas Church's virtual Holiday Club is available each morning from 17 - 21 August via a private YouTube channel. There will be stories, cooking, crafts, dance, songs and science experiments. Suitable for all ages! To register contact geoff@geoff-hale.com or St Nicholas Church website



Nature notes: what to see during lockdown?

August is a quiet month with song birds hiding away as they undergo a moult. The swifts leave our skies and head south. But there is still much to enjoy. Butterflies and moths are plentiful and large dragonflies appear. Look out for the inquisitive southern hawker, a frequent visitor to gardens in late summer searching for insects. They spend most of their life under water as nymphs, emerging for a final burst of life on the wing. In hedgerows and shady spots you may see the bright red (poisonous) berries of cuckoo pint, also known as lords & ladies or Jack in the pulpit.



And finally: what to quote?

August Midnight by Thomas Hardy

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter--winged, horned, and spined -
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands . . .

Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.
- My guests parade my new-penned ink,
Or bang at the lamp-glass, whirl, and sink.
"God's humblest, they!" I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.

