

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

## **MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER**

*August 2021 ~ a church newsletter during the pandemic*

### **The gift of friendship**



Can illness ever be a blessing? It rarely feels that way at the time, but a recent period of ill-health has given me space to reflect and to observe. Observe the birds? Yes of course, I'm always aware of what they are up to: adults are mostly in post-breeding moult and singing less, while mixed-species flocks of young tits and warblers roaming the countryside; but no, this time I mean to notice something else.

The support I have had from colleagues, students, friends and family, not to mention our wonderful NHS, was quite overwhelming. In these busy times each one of us lives in more than one community, maybe many, whether family, church, work colleagues or communities of shared interest. What all these communities have in common is a sense of mutual dependency; that's to say that every one of us both supports others while depending on others. When we are well, it's easy to lose sight of our dependency on others, but whether we realise it or not, our communities are truly circles of friends.

At the start of my illness, when I realised that I couldn't meet my obligations, reluctantly I had to turn to others. Perhaps it was my vanity that made me stress over this, but through the love of friends, as the weight of expectation was lifted off me, I felt a great sense of peace and calm restored, a new sense I rarely feel except when I'm with the birds. It's the peace of Psalm 23, and the experience of blessing through community reflected in Psalm 133:

<sup>1</sup> How very good and pleasant it is  
when kindred live together in unity!  
<sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down over the collar of his robes.  
<sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion.  
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,  
life for evermore.

Most of us are so embedded in our communities of mutual support that we fail to recognise the blessings that are our circles of friends. When that happens, coming to believe in the need for self-reliance alone can lead to great stress as we focus on our own inadequacies. The great Greek and Roman philosophers, whose writing influenced early Christian thinking on love, understood that true friendship had no motive other than desire for the virtue, the wellbeing, of the other. Christian writers recognised that love and true friendship, founded on trust, were one and the same, since both were rooted in the love of God that they experienced through their communities. As they recognised that the love of another started with the love of the self they reflected on the teaching of Jesus.

Reminding them of their Jewish prayer foundation, which calls one to love God with all your heart, soul and might, Jesus reframes God's commandment telling them to love each other as he has loved them, and to love their neighbour as their self. Here is established the community of faith in friendship: Love yourself, love your neighbour as yourself, and love yourself and your neighbour as God himself has loved you. Exploring further, St Paul immortalised community's insights into the nature of friendship in the second letter to the church in Corinth: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Friendship requires only that we open ourselves to its possibilities; that we live with the awareness that comes through mutual support, trust and respect as human beings; and that we seek to create a world that supports friendships, between individuals, communities, and nations (and species). Much is changed when we understand faith as friendship.

Revd Prof Andy Gosler

Rev Skye Denno  
202988 or joskso@yahoo.co.uk

Note that Skye's day off is a Tuesday but you can contact our Pastoral Officer Eileen on 725423.



Here at St Nicholas, we will be offering a mixture of online and in-person services. All the details can be found on our website - [stnicholasmarston.org.uk](http://stnicholasmarston.org.uk)

Or you can call Alison at the parish office on 01865 580354.

Wednesday 9:30am Holy Communion in-person services at St Nicholas Church  
Thursday 8:30pm Compline online will continue LIVE on Facebook

**Sunday 1st August**

9am Short Communion Service at St Nicholas Church. The service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**. - (St Nicholas Church, Marston Oxford).

10:30am **Green Church - led by Andy Gosler. (Weeding/clearing the memorial garden)**  
Starts with prayer at the Memorial Garden and ends with tea & coffee in Marston Eco Hub

**Sunday 8th August**

8am BCP Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church\*

10am Holy Communion in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*  
The service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**.

**Sunday 15th August**

8am BCP Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*  
The service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**.

**REFRESH - 4pm PRAISE at the Vicarage.**  
**Outside service with singing & ends with tea & coffee in Marston Eco Hub.**

**Sunday 22nd August**

8am BCP Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*

10am Holy Communion in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*  
The service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**.

**6pm in-person PIMMS, HYMNS & POEMS** at St Thomas Church (Elsfield) with singing.\*

**Sunday 29th August**

8am BCP Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*

10am Holy Communion in-person Service at St Nicholas Church.\*  
The service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**.

\* **Restrictions are still in place during August so please wear a mask & keep your distance from other groups.**

## **Public Announcement for the rest of July and August.**

With the current rise in COVID cases in Oxford, the PCC along with the Vicar felt it wise to keep restrictions in place.

- This means we will continue to wear masks inside the church and keep our distance from one another.
- Booking for services will not be needed, although we will reintroduce it if numbers grow significantly.
- Congregational singing will return with masks on please.

I realise this is still a stressful and confusing time as we make choices based on our own circumstances. Some of you will be ready to bin the masks and I know others are still nervous about returning to in-person services. Be kind to yourself, there is no hurry to 'be' or to 'do' anything. God is with you and keeps us together even when we feel disconnected.

Remember we will continue to LIVE stream our services when we can and do contact Alison (our administrator) 01865 580354 if you would like more information on upcoming services or look at the website - [stnicholasmarston.org.uk](http://stnicholasmarston.org.uk)

Much love and Blessings to you over the Summer Holidays, Skye



# **FREE FOOD LARDER**

## **At the Giving Garage!**

**Marston Eco Hub (OX3 0PR)**

**Strength comes when we work together as a Community!**

To help over the Summer Holidays, the **Food Larder** will be based at the Giving Garage on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Here are the dates and times....

**Wed 21st July - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Sat 24th July - 11-1pm**

**Wed 28th July - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Sat 31st July - 11-1pm**

**Wed 4th Aug - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Sat 7th Aug - 11-1pm**

**Wed 11th Aug - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Sat 14th Aug - 11-1pm**

**Wed 18th Aug - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Sat 21st Aug - 11-1pm**

**Wed 25th Aug - 10:30-12:30pm**

**Fresh food will be delivered on Wednesday mornings but on both days we will have a supply of dried goods (tins and packets) as well as toiletries.**

**The food is free to all, without questions being asked.**

**Come with a few bags and take the food you need for you (and your family).**

**Free Refreshments will be provided.**

**Further details - Tel: 01865 580354 &  
administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk**



# GREEN CHURCH

*Outdoor services of gentle reconnection  
with our roots*

On the First Sunday of the month

*Meet at 10:30 in the Memorial Garden of St  
Nicholas Church for welcome and prayer,  
guided community creation-care activities,  
and coffee at the Marston Eco Hub  
(Vicarage OX3 0PR)*

More details on our church website at  
<https://stnicholasmarston.org.uk/>

# Blessing Boxes



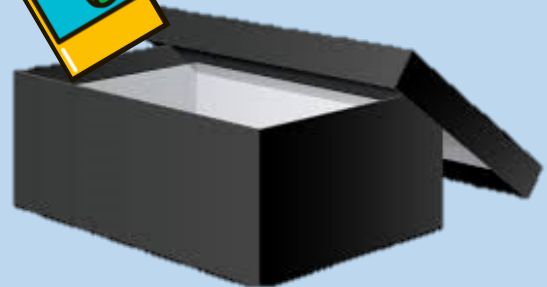
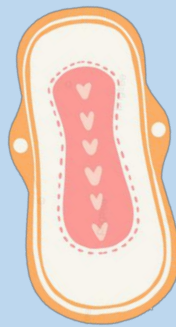
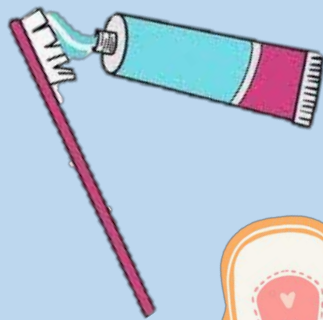
**St. Nicholas  
Marston**

In partnership with St  
Nicholas' Primary School



We need shoe boxes and gift bags which we will fill with toiletry items such as:

- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorants
- Shampoos
- Shower gel
- Bubble bath
- Pull up nappies
- Sanitary towels
- Washing detergent



These boxes and bags will then be distributed to local families

Please drop off donations at the font in St Nicholas church (OX3 0PR)

### Coffee Pot

We shall meet again for a simple Coffee Pot on Mon 23 August from 10.30-12 noon. For further details please contact Eileen Palayiwa via 725423 or eileen.palayiwa@yahoo.com.

### Over 50s

The Over 50s are seeking a new leader. Please contact Skye if you would like to know more.

### Ride and Stride 2021

Oxford Historic Churches Trust will be holding their annual Ride and Stride on 11 September this year. If you would like to ride, stride or act as a St Nic's welcomer (for a short stint), please contact Judith Piggott on 764693.

### And finally...



### Nature notes: what to see during August?

August is a quiet month marking the end of the breeding season for birds. Swifts leave our skies and head south, with swallows remaining for another month. There is still much to enjoy in nature. Hedgerow berries turn red and blackberries darken to a rich purple. Butterflies and moths are plentiful and large dragonflies are on the wing hunting for prey. Look out for the inquisitive migrant hawk, 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.



### What to quote?

#### The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass, the one who is eating sugar out of my hand, who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?



### What to make?

Healthy Granola

Ingredients:

2 tbsp vegetable oil

4 tbsp honey or maple syrup or other sweetener

1 tsp vanilla bean extract or essence

350g porridge oats (not the quick cook ones)

100g mixed seeds

120g mixed nuts eg walnuts, brazil, hazel, almond or any you have in the cupboard

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp salt

Method.

Heat the oven to 160C /fan 150C/ gas 3.

Line 2 baking trays with non-stick paper.

If the nuts are large, put them in a plastic bag and bash with a rolling pin to reduce their size.

Mix the oil, syrups and vanilla in a large bowl.

Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well.

Tip onto the baking sheets and spread out the mixture.

Bake for about 25 - 30 minutes. Stir halfway through.

Remove from oven and spread onto a flat tray to cool.

When cold, serve with milk or yoghurt

and fresh berries. The granola can be stored in an

airtight container for up to a month.

### Marston Messenger and Marston Times

The next issue of the Marston Times will appear in September as a printed version, delivered by hand to all households in the Parish. There will also be copies in the church for people outside the Parish to collect. Four printed issues will be delivered free each year (in September, December, April and July). The other eight monthly issues will be available via the website. The plan is not to send them via a link on email (as we have done with the Messenger) but to assume people will download them from the website at the start of each month.

**If you presently receive the Marston Messenger in the post** and would like to continue receiving the Marston Times in this printed format, please let

Judith (764693) or Eileen (725423) know and we can arrange this.

Similarly, if you do not live in the Parish and would prefer a hard copy to be sent to you in the post, please phone Judith or Eileen. Donations towards the cost of postage gratefully received. Thank you.

### Old Marston Parish Council

During the pandemic, please be aware that you can still find the Parish Clerk's minutes of each meeting via [www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk), Facebook or Twitter.

**PARKINSON'S<sup>UK</sup>**  
CHANGE ATTITUDES.  
FIND A CURE.  
JOIN US.

# WALK FOR PARKINSON'S


Oxford, Wytham  
Woods

19, September, 2021

[events.parkinsons.org.uk/  
walkoxford](http://events.parkinsons.org.uk/walkoxford)

0800 138 6593

#WalkforParkinsons

 Frank and  
Evelyn Brake  
**CONNECT  
FUND**  
Doubling  
donations

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom.  
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