

*St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield*  
**MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER**  
*May 2021 ≈ a church newsletter during the pandemic*

Dear Friends

Today I've been thinking of those moments of unanticipated joy: the unexpected, rather than the planned. By their very nature they're not something we seek: they just happen, reminding us of our lack of control of the world around us, but in a good way! Of course it's not just big things that bring us moments of joy; in fact it's much more often that something small changes our mood entirely. I'm sure I'm not alone in having a day transformed by an unexpected phone call or email or just by something someone says in passing. I'm not sure if 'expect the unexpected' is actually a motto that makes any sense; perhaps 'always be open to the unexpected' or 'don't hold on too tightly to your plans' might be better. However you put it though, it has certainly been my experience of life and of following God. As someone wise told me recently, "Always remember to tell God your plans; he loves a good chuckle".

So if matters take unexpected turns, both good and bad, what are we to do about it? Surely the point is that such things are out of our control? Well yes, but as with everything, we still have a choice to make about how we respond when the unexpected happens. I think we need to remain open to enjoying and seizing the good, even when, according to our carefully laid out road maps, these things might seem to be taking us off course.

I know that for many, receiving the Messenger during this past year has brought joy, but for some the Marston Times is still missed; not everyone receives the Messenger. As a result of thinking differently (see above!) after a fabulous meeting the editorial team has decided to produce four bumper hard copies of the Marston Times each year, most probably in April, July, September and December. These editions will be printed and distributed to the entire parish, **free** of charge. A digital version of the MT will be distributed for each of the other eight months, as the Marston Messenger has been for the last year. St Nicholas' Website will be its main location, but anyone who would prefer a hard copy can pick it up from one of our churches or may request one and it will be posted, again as has been done since May 2020. Donations from any reader, in lieu of subscription charge, will of course *always* be warmly welcomed!

As we move forward, another new idea is partnering Steph Best from St Nicholas school in creating 'Blessing Boxes.' Basically I need shoeboxes and recycled gift bags and then toiletry items, such as toothpaste, tooth brushes, deodorants, shampoos, shower gel, bubble bath, pull up nappies in different sizes, sanitary towels in different sizes, washing detergent and other toiletries. Each box or bag will be given to a family to help during a time which is increasingly difficult for many. More on this project in the next edition of the Messenger.

At this time of the year, along with other Christians, I'm thinking about one of my favourite parts of the Bible, the story of the first Pentecost (23 May in 2021). This is the moment when the disciples receive the Holy Spirit and are transformed, able to do all sorts of things that were previously unimaginable. I still believe that the Holy Spirit works in all sorts of unexpected ways today but sometimes we're so sure of our plans we can ignore all the amazing possibilities that are there in front of us. Of course we must be practical and plan, be good stewards of what we have and where we find ourselves, but it would be so sad if that meant shutting ourselves off from the joy of the different, the excitement of the slightly crazy and the wonder of chance. So may you be blessed with a bit of unexpected joy and possibility this month and may you seize it with both hands. Skye x

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.



# FOR MAY 2021

As we look ahead and follow the guidelines and as we journey through the Roadmap, we know some of you are keen to return to in-person worship and some will be unable, or too anxious to attend, preferring to stay online. So 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 the parish office on 01865 580354.

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

## Sunday 2nd May

10:30am **Green Church - Bird walk led by Andy.**  
Start with prayer at the Memorial Garden and end with tea & coffee in Marston Eco Hub (Vicarage) & Online Communion Service on YouTube

## Sunday 9th May

8am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church & Online Communion Service on YouTube

## Sunday 16th May

8am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church & Online Communion Service focusing **Christian Aid** on YouTube

**NEW to St Nicholas Church 4pm FELLOWSHIP AND PRAISE.**  
**Outside service with singing & end with tea and coffee in Marston Eco Hub (Vicarage)**

## PENTECOST Sunday 23rd May

8am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion in-person Service at St Nicholas Church with Jr Choir.  
(Booking is essential) Also the service is **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**



## TRINITY SUNDAY 30th May

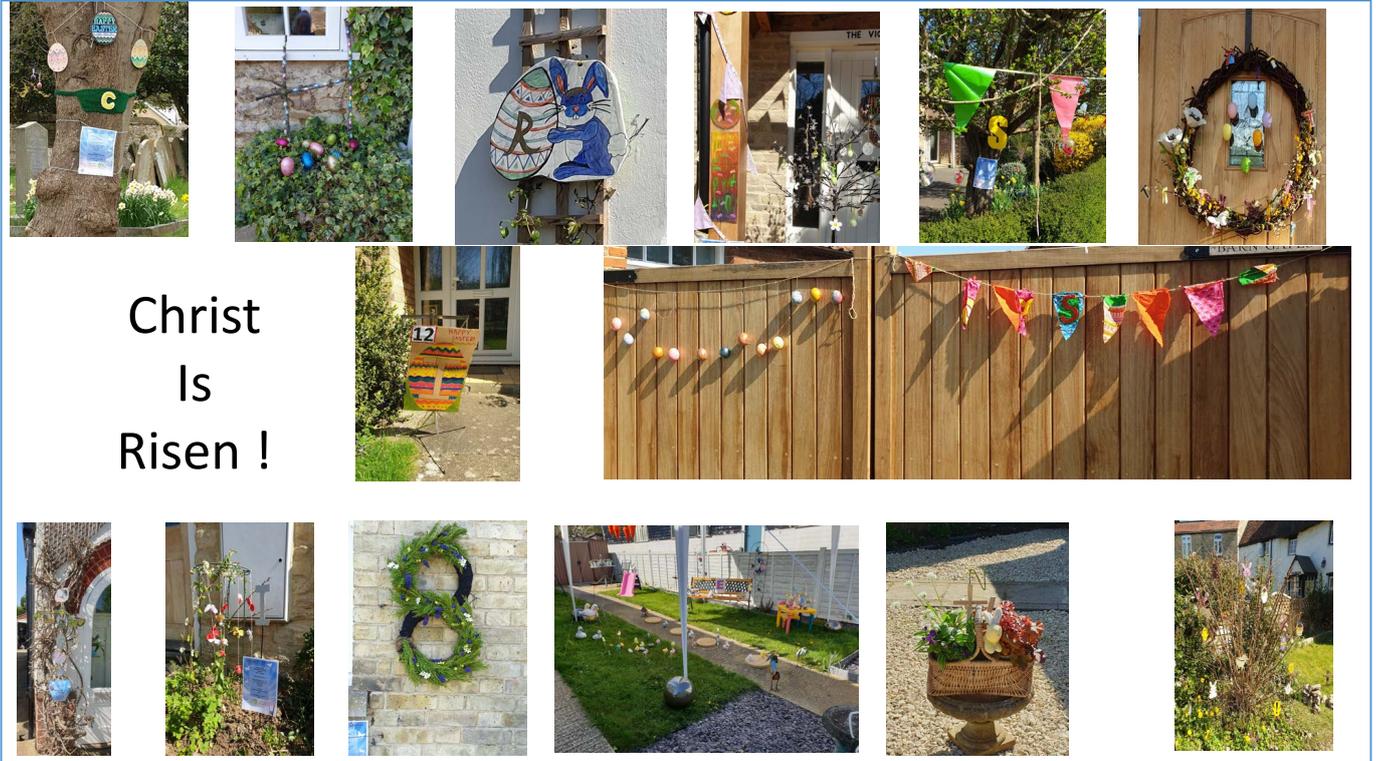
8am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, in-person Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Celtic Holy Communion in-person Service at St Nicholas Church and services ends with tea and coffee in churchyard. **LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube**

**Elsfield have their first in-person service** on 30 May at 10am: celebrations for Trinity Sunday. It will be a Communion service with tea and Coffee served afterwards outside.

**Skye would also like to remind you that** ACE will continue online for 1 May and 5 June at 10:30-12:30 on Zoom - Meeting ID: 843 0683 7159. Passcode: 874251. Bring your coffee and a craft of your choice or just bring coffee and a piece of cake! Feel free to stay for the whole time or just for ten minutes!

All the letters featuring in our Easter Trail, in case there were any you couldn't find....



Christ  
Is  
Risen !

## Please support our Foodbanks.



Please put your donation in the box  
outside Marston Vicarage Refill  
Station (OX3 OPR)  
Or with Allan & Judy at 81 Crotch  
Crescent

All tins & packets of food are welcome but the  
following items are needed the most:

- Jams/other spreads, \* Sugar
- \* Tins Vegetables (not tomatoes or pulses)
- \* Tins, Pkt Puddings
- Tins Meat, Tins Fruit
- Cereal, Biscuits
- Bottled Sauces
- Coffee/Hot Chocolate
- Practical Toiletries

**\* Starred items most critical**

When donating food please  
ensure that items have a  
'sell by date' of at least 3 months  
and is clearly marked.  
THANK YOU



St. Nicholas  
Marston

## Come and join us for Holy Communion



On Wednesdays at  
9:30am in  
St Nicholas Church

(Please wear a mask and keep 2m apart)

All are Welcome

# What are you looking for?

Answering deep questions of faith



## Come and See some MORE

**We don't always give time to listen..  
Perhaps you have questions about  
the Christian Faith, the Bible or  
about church services?**

**You are warmly invited to come along to  
our open monthly online space to ask any  
questions about the Christian Faith or any  
question regarding why and how we do  
church. I would love to hear from you!**

**Rev Skye**

**[vicar@stnicholasmarston.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stnicholasmarston.org.uk)**

**Tel: 01865 202988**

### **Love Marston Love Life**

Our long-awaited community event from Churches Together is planned for Sunday 5 September. Make a note of the date! We hope it will be bigger and better than ever, and a time for celebration for the whole of Marston with stalls, music, bouncy castles, games, spoken word etc. But we need your help to make it a success.

Can you assist with the admin, run a stall, provide a marquee or gazebo, distribute publicity, sing or play an instrument, help with the stewarding, pray for good weather or any other of the myriad items which we need? Please get in touch today! Contact Geoff: [geoff@geoff-hale.com](mailto:geoff@geoff-hale.com) Tel 248260/07789 964373 or Neil: [neil.j1.barker@gmail.com](mailto:neil.j1.barker@gmail.com)

### From Skye

We had a meeting this morning to look at the sound and recording equipment in church with a view to live streaming. More information will come to you at a later date as it's clear we need a short term and long term plan to get things up and running. A large number of people from different age groups and backgrounds have written to me to let me know how important online resources are and that we need to continue to offer this, post pandemic. I shall be writing more in our next edition but if anyone would like to give money towards new equipment, then we would love to hear from you.

### From Oxfordshire Library Service

We are delighted to announce that Old Marston library reopened on 19 April. Borrowing will be on a Click & Collect basis temporarily, due to limited space for social distancing. Details of Click & Collect are available on our website or by calling the library on 726823.

Safety measures remain in place for the protection of customers, volunteers and staff.

All library loans have been extended to 10 May, at which point all loans will be due for return or renewal. No library customers will be penalised as a result of having to self-isolate, or being unable to travel to return library loans. We look forward to welcoming all of our customers back to the library!

### Anyone for Pi (or Pie)?

#### Answers to last month's quiz:



- Which US singer had a hit in 1971 with *American Pie*? **Don McLean**
- Who wrote the novel *Life of Pi*? **Yann Martel**
- What are the first 3 digits of the mathematical term Pi? **3.14**
- In what year and where was the book *The Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* set? **1946 on Guernsey**
- From which town did the Pied Piper drive the rats? **Hamelin**
- What is the name of the black, white and blue member of the crow family? **Magpie**
- How would a black and white horse be described? **Piebald**
- What type of plant is commonly called Cherry Pie? **Heliotrope**

### Another date for your diary...for Marston's Open Gardens 2021

We are considering holding a second Open Gardens afternoon on Sunday 27 June, 2-6pm. Tickets, teas, plants and a map of all the participating gardens will be available at the Church Hall; proceeds to St Nicholas Church and Divya Shanthi. Would you be interested in opening your garden for this good cause? Please contact Maureen Davis via [mrd532@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mrd532@hotmail.co.uk). No extra work needed: just open your gate!



### Reflections of Life: Experiences of God in our lives through images of Creation

by Maureen R Davis, Butterfly Press

(£6.95) sold in aid of Divya Shanti



As we emerge from the chrysalis of lockdown, Butterfly Press has published a timely and delightful book by Maureen Davis,

which I can heartily recommend to anyone who loves Nature and the good Lord. Maureen is a keen gardener and loves to walk in the countryside.

She uses topics from the natural world such as Flowers, Trees and Birds to organise her observations, alongside quotations from the Bible, hymns and psalms. In the difficult times of the last year, I think we have all realised how important the annual cycle of nature is in helping us all face the challenges of life and faith.

Maureen's book helps the reader think more deeply about what we sometimes take for granted. As she writes, "So let's get dressed for the weather outside: The cagoule of righteousness, overall protection from attack...the sou'wester of salvation, the added promise of grace... all fastened together with the threads, joints and rivets of prayer.."

James Lawrie



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

May is the ideal month for experiencing one of nature's spectacles, the dawn chorus. Many birds, including robins, blackbirds and thrushes, begin to sing before sunrise when the air is cooler and their songs travel further so do set your alarm early.



Swallows have arrived and swifts appear in early May – listen for their screaming parties overhead. Wayside flowers to see this month are frothy white cow parsley, green alkanet (a tall, bristly plant with starry blue and mauve flowers) and oxeye daisy. Look out for the holly blue butterfly, a common garden visitor, and first blue butterfly of the year to emerge.

### What to quote?

#### A Sonnet for Spring by Bob McKenty

Ah! Spring is here. The rabbits quit their dens,  
The dormant grass begins once more to grow.  
The trees release their airborne allergens.  
It's time to tune the Toro and to mow,  
To fertilize and lime and thatch and seed  
As-groveling on dirty, servile knees—  
You pluck the dreaded dandelion weed  
And rub your itching eyes and start to sneeze.  
Wherever grass encroaches, you must edge,  
And don't forget to stir the compost heap  
And trim the junipers' unruly hedge,  
While forfeiting a needed hour of sleep.  
Those poets penning praise to spring and tillage  
Are domiciled in lofts in Greenwich Village.

### Near the end of April by William Stanley Braithwaite

Near the end of April  
On the verge of May –  
And O my heart, the woods were dusk  
At the close of day.

Half a word was spoken  
Out of half a dream,  
And God looked in my soul and saw  
A dawn rise and gleam.

Near the end of April  
Twenty Mays have met,  
And half a word and half a dream  
Remember and forget.

### What to cook?



#### Rhubarb Relish

##### Ingredients

250ml apple cider vinegar (cheapest is Aldi's)  
100g light muscovado sugar  
300g chopped rhubarb  
60g chopped raisins  
1 tsp grated fresh ginger  
Seeds from 1-2 cardamom pods.

##### Method

Do *not* use an aluminium pan!  
Sterilize 1 – 3 jars, depending on size.  
Dissolve the sugar into the vinegar over a low heat.  
Add rhubarb, raisins, ginger and cardamom seeds.  
Simmer for about 20 minutes until thick, stirring occasionally.  
When cool, put into jars. It is quite sharp but mellows a little after a few weeks and will keep for up to 3 months in the fridge.  
Serve with ham, chicken, pork or cauliflower curry.

#### 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.

