

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield
MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER
September 2020 ≈ a church newsletter during lockdown

Dear friends & neighbours,

1 September sees the start of the Season of Creation in the Anglican Church. We look to renew our relationship with creation and our Creator God through celebration, and appreciation, of the gifts of nature and the beauty of our world. We consider how God created the World and continues to sustain everything in it. We also think about how humanity has been tasked by God to 'steward' the earth. We reassess the job we have done in looking after and nurturing the natural world.

It's easy to look around our beautiful countryside and overlook the fact that there is something seriously wrong with the climate and the weather. This year we have had some warnings of more extreme weather ahead for us and for our children. Whether you believe that climate change is caused by human activity or not, what is now indisputable is that the climate is changing and these changes will be negative for most of the planet.

Other events of this year have shown us that all inhabitants of this planet are connected and our local or national decisions will affect everyone, everywhere, sooner or later. We can't take a purely local view on climate change. We have been encouraged to eat less and move more to help us resist the virus but in reality, decreased consumption and increased exercise benefits the planet as well as our waistlines and our mental health.

Keep going with the wonderful work I hear about in Marston and Elsfield: continue to help your neighbours; continue to grow and share your own fruit and veg. Recycle. Eat local produce. You are blessing yourselves and the planet with these new ways of living.

As we reflect on the fruits of nature, we must also remember our farmers who have worked tirelessly for many months and have grown our food for us. Farmers belong to the category of key workers, and over the last few months many people have become aware – some for the first time – of the vital role UK farms play in feeding our nation, just as food shortages in the early days of lockdown reminded us how fragile the supply chain can be. As we pray and reflect during September on our relationship with God's creation, we should give thanks for all that our farmers do on our behalf.



Marston community gardeners handing out allotment produce to local residences with the aid of the new electric car

For those who sometimes struggle to find words to speak to God, I end with a short prayer for our Creation to pray at home.

Holy God, earth and air and water are your creation,
and every living thing belongs to you:
have mercy on us as climate change confronts us.
Give us the will and the courage to simplify the way we live,
to reduce the energy we use,
to share the resources you provide,
and to bear the cost of change.
Forgive our past mistakes
and send us your Spirit,
with wisdom in present controversies
and vision for the future to which you call us
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

God bless, Skye

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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

The work is moving along to plan. The main electricity cabling is being installed and new pew heaters are now in situ. We are waiting on delivery of the lights fittings and storage heaters. The expert came to look at the pews to determine their importance: talking to him was quite fascinating and extremely illuminating. We will give details once we get his report. Finally, work constructing the path to the Memorial Garden begins on 7 September. This may involve closing the garden for a couple of days but we will put up a notice with details at the entrance of the garden.

St Nicholas' virtual Holiday Club

Holiday Club 2020 was a little different this year: instead of being in the parish Hall, it was on YouTube! Families who lived in Marston but also those in other parts of the UK and in different countries were able to join in. The theme this year was Build a Better World and holiday clubbers shared their ideas on line as well as their crafts, quizzes and baking. We were treated to lovely Bible stories using great props, including Playmobil characters and Joel's hat. We joined in the songs sung by The Meredith Trio and the Denno Family (both definite rivals to the Von Trapps), accompanied by Duncan on guitar and Geoff on keyboard. Joel demonstrated daily exercises in a great pair of shorts! There were wonderful film clips from charities such as Mary's Meals, providing food to children who would not otherwise eat or attend school. These were a great way to prompt our children to consider the lives of others less fortunate than themselves and those that help them. Science experiments - and explanations - by members of the Burd family were brilliant. Who knew that it takes 5 potatoes to light a bicycle lamp? Geoff and Gill Hale and all on the Holiday Club team worked so hard to bring the programme together: many congratulations to them. Contact Geoff (geoff@geoff-hale.com) for the link, if you would like to see any of this year's presentations.

Ride and Stride 2020

Due to the Covid 19 situation the annual Ride and Stride will not be able to take place as normal. The Historic Churches Trust has suggested that we try other activities that could be sponsored, for example: a sponsored walk in the local area; sponsorship for your usual daily exercise routine or doing a practical

task like knitting or gardening, sponsored per item knitted or square yard weeded. I'm sure you can think of other things to do. Anyone interested should contact Linda Inness (lindakayinness@gmail.com) or look at the Trust web site for the sponsorship forms.

Nature notes: what to see during lockdown?

September is a month of abundance with hedgerows awash with berries, from red haws to purple sloes to luscious blackberries. Why not pick some blackberries (they are high in vitamin C) and make a crumble or jam? Look for shiny brown horse chestnuts as they burst from their spiky green cases. Butterflies to see this month include comma, red admiral and speckled wood. Swallows depart on their long journey to southern Africa. You may see them congregating on overhead wires before they leave. It's incredible to think that such a small bird can cover about 200 miles a day on migration.



And finally: what to quote?

September by John Updike

The breezes taste
Of apple peel.
The air is full
Of smells to feel -
Ripe fruit, old footballs,
Burning brush,
New books, erasers,
Chalk, and such.
The bee, his hive,
Well-honeyed hum,
And Mother cuts
Chrysanthemums.
Like plates washed clean
With suds, the days
Are polished with
A morning haze.

