St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER

March 2021 ≈ a church newsletter during the pandemic

Holding Hands

How is your anxiety level? On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the most anxious, where would you place yourself right now? Where would you have placed yourself a few weeks ago? And a few months ago?

I suspect, like myself and millions of others around the world, it has looked very much like a graphic equalizer on a sound system. Never static; fluctuating and dancing a chaotic dance, messing with our emotions and perspectives; we're fine one minute and like jelly the next. It is just the way it is at the moment and it's okay to be on the anxiety rollercoaster but it's even better to be on that rollercoaster holding hands with someone who won't let go, who gives us strength, courage and endurance. It's better to be held by someone who will see us through, who promises, truthfully, never to abandon us and who plays out their outpouring of love as Jesus demonstrated on the cross.

In Psalm 73, David recognises that, through all his turmoil, God is not just beside him but holding his right hand. Imagine that feeling; a firm grip not only holds us up but leads us to safety and a place of firm footing. In Hebrews 13, Paul quotes God, saying, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So, we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid."

As we follow the unfolding roadmap out of lockdown and our journeys begin to change in this coming month, there will be many things which still cause us to feel uncomfortable. Our graphic equalizer of anxiety will continue to dance wildly. Remember God's promises and his presence; God does not leave us to flounder but instead offers us a hand and a tight grip as we move forwards.

With Lenten blessings and hugs, Revd Skye Rev Skye - 202988 or joskso@yahoo.co.uk

JOIN US ONLINE
THIS HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2021

PALM SUNDAY - 28th of March.
An All Age Celebration. Available from 8am via St Nicholas YouTube

HOLY WEEK

Monday - 29th of March.
Morning prayer via Zoom at 9am (Meeting ID: 857 8139 7404 & Passcode: 127615)

Tuesday - 30th of March.
Quiet Day led by *David Cole* via Zoom (Email Skye to reserve a FREE place)

Wednesday - 31st of March.
Bible Chat with Skye and Joel LIVE via FaceBook at 10am (then on YouTube)

Maundy Thursday - 1st of April.
Take Away Supper and informal Communion at 6:30pm via zoom.
Bring yourself and a Takeaway of your choice.
(Meeting ID: 891 7634 4508 & Passcode: 123301)

GOOD FRIDAY - 2nd of April. Churches Together *Stations of the Cross*.
Available from 8am Via St Nicholas YouTube

EASTER DAY - 4th of April.
6am Sunrise Service - LIVE via FaceBook
10am Family Communion - details TBC

Website:
stnicholasmarston.org.uk

YouTube:
Go to you youtube.com
St Nicholas Church,
Marston ,Oxford

FaceBook:
St Nicholas' Church, Marston

Phone: 01865 580354.
Email:administrator@stnicholas marston.org.uk

Marston and Elsfield Benefice

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PUBLIC NOTICE - regarding In person services

Following on from the Government Announcements on the 22nd February and the Roadmap detailing a slow release of restrictions, our Ministry Team and PCC have made the decision to *remain Online only until the 12th of April.*

I am hopeful that we may be able to do a special OUTSIDE service for Easter Day at St Nicholas Church and this will be confirmed on Palm Sunday, please keep an eye on our Website or phone the office number nearer the time.

This decision to remain online only is not ideal and I know will be a source of disappointment to some, as we all hoped that when schools opened on the 8th March, our churches may have been able to do the same. However, we believe it is wise to take things slowly, being mindful of the efforts of the NHS and all the volunteers who are making sure we are vaccinated and safe. We will review this decision on the 12th April, believing it maybe possible then to begin in-church services again.

We will continue to offer our ONLINE services via YouTube (St Nicholas Church, Marston ,Oxford) on Sunday mornings, available from 8am and at 10:45am you can join the church family for coffee via Zoom.
On the St Nicholas Church Facebook page you can join *Bible Chat* on Wednesdays at 10am LIVE or Compline LIVE on Thursdays at 8:30pm; all can be watched later on Youtube. New in 2021, we host a LIVE Compline service on Zoom on Sundays, at 8.30pm. (Meeting ID: 849 4508 2189. Passcode: 973812)

Both Church buildings are OPEN for PRIVATE PRAYER (9am-6pm).
(Please only enter one household at a time and at St Nicholas Church please use the star sheets provided so we know where to clean)

If you, or someone you know would like help in accessing our worship, or if you are in need of pastoral care, please do not hesitate to contact us. (Tel: Ox 725423, administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk)
May you know God's blessing, peace and light as this time.
Revd Skye Tel: Ox 202988, vicar@stnicholasmartson.org.uk
Please do look at our Website stnicholasmarston.org.uk

zoom YouTube St. Nicholas Marston COME AND SEE

Quiet Day in Holy Week
Tues 30th March 9:30-3:30pm

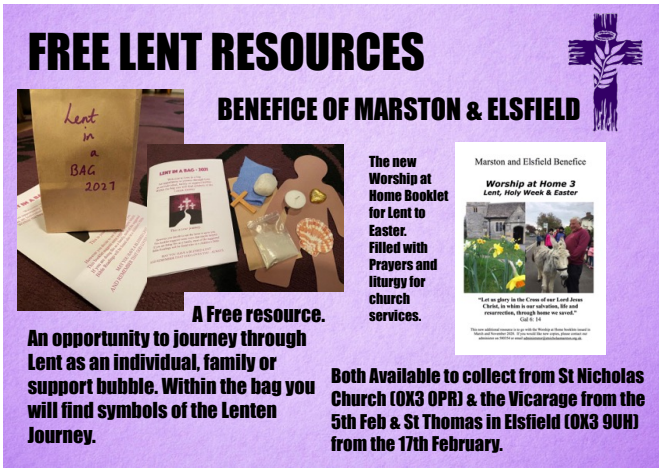
A Celtic Lent - A time of Contemplation and Preparation
Quiet day lead by David Cole (Brother Cassian)
www.waymarkministries.com

Contact Skye to reserve a place - vicar@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Draft outline of the day
(only short parts will be online via Zoom)

9.30am - Introductions
Followed by teaching session
10.45am - Break
11am - Activity
12noon - Midday prayer
12.20pm - Lunch
1.15pm - Teaching session
2pm - Break
2.15pm - Contemplative activity
3pm - Questions and reflections
3.30pm – Finish

"The book takes the reader through the 40 days of Lent to the celebration of Easter through the eyes and beliefs of Celtic Christianity. Drawing on primary sources of pastoral letters, monastic rules and the theological teaching of the Celtic church, David presents a different perspective on the cross of Christ and draws us to see our own life journeys with a new and transforming vision."



Benefice of Marston & Elsfield

Maundy Thursday

Takeaway Supper
& Informal Communion

On Thursday 1st April
At 6:30pm

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Bring yourselves & the Takeaway of your choice!

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Meeting ID: 891 7634 4508. PASSWORD: 123301

Please support our Foodbanks.

Please put your donation in the box outside Marston Vicarage Refill Station (0X3 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

Skye would like to remind you that ACE - Arts & Crafts in Elsfield is still on! We meet via Zoom on the first Saturday of the month - next dates are 6h of March and 3rd of April 10:30-12noon. 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!
Meeting ID: 843 0683 7159 & Passcode: 874251

What are you looking for?
As we head down this rather long tunnel many of us are are reflecting on our faith. Come and See is an invitation to everyone and anyone who feels adrift in this pandemic, whether or not they know anything about the Christian faith. As a Benefice we are running an online course for Lent on Friday evenings: this month on 5, 12 and 19 March. There is no expectation to attend every week: it is there for you. If you would like to know more please do look at the Diocesan/our Benefice websites, or email me via *vicar@stnicholasmarston.org.uk*

If you are interested but don't have online access, then do ask me for a weekly handout sheet and a mentor to give you support.
Don't forget that, as a Benefice, we have a prayer list which is prayed through daily. Do let us know your prayer requests.
We are here for you.
Rev Skye x

Tel: 01865 202988

Diocesan website - oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see
Benefice website - stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Our Easter Trail
The Route Map will be published in April's Marston Messenger and available in the Porch from 4 April.

Our Easter Tree
Our Easter trail will begin and end outside St Nicholas Church by the big tree at the entrance and we would like to hang lots of knitted, crocheted, hama beads or painted Easter eggs on this tree (anything as long as egg shaped and sized and they have a handmade element). We have a number of people working on it but if you would like to help we have patterns available in the church or contact Judith and she can email one to you. The eggs will be put on the tree on Easter Saturday.

And finally….

Nature notes: what to see during March?

March heralds the start of Spring and new beginnings. The days lengthen noticeably and after the Spring equinox on 20 March there will be more day than night. The winter thrushes depart our shores and early migrants such as the chiffchaff (named after its song) arrive. Songs birds are tuning up ready for the breeding season. On warmer days look out for butterflies emerging from hibernation, including the distinctive butter-yellow brimstone. Spring flowers to see include lesser celandine, coltsfoot, dandelion and primrose. The buds on hedgerow trees are swelling and unfolding. Frogs spawn appears in ponds and ditches.

Old Marston Parish Council

During the pandemic, please be aware that you can stlll find the Parish Clerk's minutes of each meeting via www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk, Facebook or Twitter.

What to quote?

Today is the day … by Robert McCracken

Today is the day when bold kites fly,
When cumulus clouds roar across the sky.
When robins return, when children cheer,
When light rain beckons spring to appear.
Today is the day when daffodils bloom,
Which children pick to fill the room,
Today is the day when grasses green,
When leaves burst forth for spring to be seen.

What to cook? A Mother's Day breakfast!

Scotch pancakes with berries

Ingredients:

175 g self-raising flour
1tsp baking powder
50g caster sugar
1 egg
scant 200ml of any type of milk
oil for greasing
(Vegan option: omit the egg and add tablespoon of warmed coconut oil but I have not tested this)
For berry coulis
A few handfuls of frozen or fresh berries
1-2 tblsps orange juice or grated zest and juice of 1 orange

Method:

First make the coulis by warming the berries and the orange juice gently in a pan until soft. Put to one side.
Turn the oven on low (to keep the pancakes warm).
Put all the dry ingredients in a good size bowl and mix. In another bowl, beat the egg and milk together. Make a well in the centre of the flour mix and pour in the egg mixture a little at a time beating well between each addition.
Alternatively, put all ingredients into food processor and blitz until combined.
Heat a frying pan or griddle with some oil and when hot, drop about a large tablespoonful of mixture in: fit in as many as you can into the pan. When bubbles appear on the top of a pancake, use a palette knife to turn it over carefully and cook the other side for about a minute or until golden. Remove from the pan and put in warm oven until you have used up all the mixture.
Serve with fruit coulis and maple syrup, maybe some cream…whatever you fancy. If you are making this for your mother, don't forget to clean up afterwards.

A Mother's Day light for someone you love

You will need: white tissue paper, cellophane sweet wrappers, a clean jam jar, PVA glue, a battery light, scissors, ribbon, small paintbrush. Cut the white tissue paper to fit round the jar. Cut hearts or other shapes out of the cellophane. Add a little water to the glue and spread it on the jar. Carefully wrap one layer of tissue paper round the jar. Press the cellophane shapes on top. When the glue is dry, very carefully paint more glue over the jar. When that is dry, tie the ribbon around the neck of the jar and put the light inside. If you do not have a light you can write a message to put inside.