

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER

October 2020 ≈ a church newsletter during the pandemic

The Lord says,

“Do not cling to events of the past

or dwell on what happened long ago.

Watch for the new thing I am going to do.

It is happening already—you can see it now!”

Isaiah 43:18-19

It is commonly thought that the book of Isaiah divides into three sections, one written before Israel's exile in Babylon, one written during exile, and the last one post exile. Some of the people were taken from their homeland while others remained, but both groups suffered the debilitating effects of being a conquered people. The verses above were written in Babylon, by an author looking back to their previous life. Our experience of the past few months has led to many of us feeling like the writer of Isaiah: exiled, separated from church, family and each other.

The prophet tried to create an imaginative space in the minds of the people so that their conception of the past could transform their understanding of the present and, thus, the future: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” In a seemingly hopeless situation, the prophet calls on the people not to lose heart but to look with anticipation for the signs of God's approaching redemption, for the “new thing” that is coming.

After planning and careful consideration, we are anticipating the return of worship to our church buildings both in Marston and Elsfield from the beginning of October. Regulations and guidelines are constantly changing so please, if you have online access, do look at our website for update information or call Alison our administrator who is available weekdays (Mon-Fri) on 01854 580350. No it will not be like the good old days, not for a long time; this is a ‘new thing’, so we must create a new, imaginative space to worship in.

At St Nicholas Church our weekly Wednesday Communion service will return at 9:30am. On the first Sunday of the month we will have a traditional Communion service at 9am, followed at 10:30am by an outdoor church nature activity (Gardening, bird walks, litter picks etc). On all other Sundays in the month there will be an 8am BCP service and a 10am service. The later service will be recorded LIVE on St Nicholas Facebook page and then uploaded to YouTube. At Elsfield, our monthly service (held on the fourth Sunday) will resume at 10am. Both church buildings will be open for Private Prayer. Please do bring a mask with you to all the services and please pre-book with Alison as we are only allowed a certain number of congregants.

I am also very conscious of the language we use when we talk about ‘church’. As we have discovered over the last six months ‘church’ is not just the building. Some of you will feel anxious returning to a church building; that is fine, please do stay at home. Church has been your dining room, your sitting room, maybe even your garden or bedroom; do use our at home worship resources and, if possible, our online services. I know others of you will feel that what we are offering isn't enough; that is fine too, but for now this is what we can do with the restrictions imposed and the resources we have available.

As we step out in faith, I hope you will join me on the next part of our journey out of exile.

God bless you, Skye

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Website – stnicholasmarston.org.uk

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Zoom on Sunday 15 Nov 2020 at 11.30am.

Please contact Alison Edwards, Church Administrator if you would like:

- 1) the Zoom link to attend the meeting
- 2) to vote, receive any papers presented or raise something but cannot attend the meeting
- 3) to have a hard copy of the Annual Report posted to you or emailed to you. Copies can be obtained from the website and there will be copies left in church when it reopens
- 4) to nominate someone for the PCC, Deanery Synod or Church Warden roles
- 5) be added or removed from the electoral roll. The electoral roll will also be revised for this meeting, If you wish just to remain on the roll, no action is needed.

Alison can be contacted via 07783 024432 or email administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

St Nicholas Church Parish's Living Advent Calendar

We hope to run our Living Advent Calendar again this year: from 1-24 Dec at 7pm each evening, one place/house within the parish will reveal its suitably decorated window. We are not sure what we shall do for a ceremony this year BUT we hope to do something and will tailor it around the rules at the time.

As before, a list of 24 addresses will be published in the December Marston Times or Messenger and posters will put outside the church and around the parish.

If you would like to provide a window please contact Judith Piggott on 764693 for further details. You can also take part by attending in the evenings or taking time to wander round and admire the windows over the Christmas season: they will be there until Christmas Day and hopefully longer! Judith

Maureen Davis would like everyone to know that her Book of Meditations on God in Creation is now available (£6.95): all proceeds to Divya Shanthi.

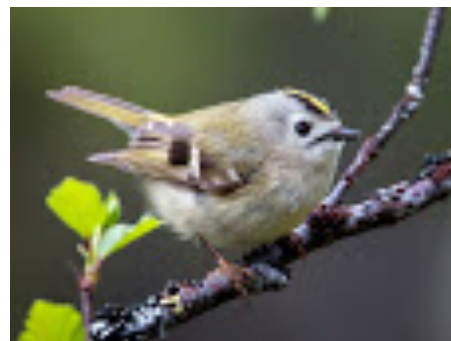
Our Christmas Bazaar – but not as we know it.

No surprises that we shall not be holding our usual bazaar in aid of Divya Shanthi..BUT you *will* be able to order and buy many of your Christmas favourites. A list of goodies available and how to get them will be in the next Messenger. These will include gifts, home made jams, boozy Christmas cakes (small but lovely) brownies, party cakes, sponges and home made soup. The Flower Fairies will also be making their wonderful wreaths and table decorations. All proceeds to Diva Shanthi.



Nature notes: what to see during October?

Dewy mornings, sparkling spiders' webs and fabulous fungi – October has arrived! Garden birds are more active so don't forget to feed them and provide fresh water. Autumn migration is in full swing with birds arriving and leaving. Winter thrushes (redwing and fieldfare) arrive this month. You may hear the soft "seep seep" call of redwing at night as they fly overhead. Goldcrest, our smallest bird, weighing just 5.5gms, journey in vast numbers across the North Sea to winter here. There could be one in your garden. Look out for honeybees, wasps and butterflies feasting on ivy blossom.



Poetry: what to quote in October?

Aberdeen Train by Edwin Morgan

Rubbing a glistening circle
on the steamed-up window I framed
a pheasant in a field of mist.

The sun was a great red thing somewhere low,
struggling with the milky scene. In the furrows
a piece of glass winked into life,
hypnotised the silly dandy; we
hooted past him with his head cocked,
contemplating a bottle-end.

And this was the last of October,
a Chinese moment in the Mearns.

