



# St James', Haslingden

## PARISH BULLETIN

### MAY 2020

As we're unable to produce, print and deliver the usual magazine at the moment, we hope that you will enjoy this amended and abridged version. Please do share!

Please remember that our clergy team are always available – at the end of the telephone, text message, email or even face-to-face on line. Please don't worry about getting in touch.

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## CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION UPDATE

Sadly, since last month's newsletter/bulletin very little has changed for the life of the Church. Our buildings remain closed which makes everyone feel a bit despondent. However, *church* has taken on a new lease of life, albeit virtual and remote. Fr David and Fr Stephen continue to share worship filmed in their homes on Facebook and YouTube. If you have internet access and haven't yet had a look then please do have a go! It will be worth the effort! Simply type into a search engine (Google, for example) 'St James Haslingden Facebook', or 'St Thomas Musbury Facebook' and we'll appear as the first result. If you need help – please ask!

Over Easter even more 'viewers' than usual tuned in and on Easter Day the morning Eucharist (complete with fire, blessing of a new Paschal Candle, hymns and all outdoors) was viewed by over 1,000 people! There are conversations now beginning to take place in the Church of England about how we might embrace some of this on-line interest once we're back in our church buildings.

Very sadly the national death rate has increased dramatically. At the time of writing our clergy have not conducted any funerals connected with the Coronavirus although there have been more funerals than usual. These are able to take place either at the graveside in the cemetery or in the crematorium chapel. In each case only up to 10 mourners are able to attend which makes bereavement an easier greater challenge than under normal circumstances. We hope that in future months we will be able to offer families opportunities for memorial and thanksgiving services in church.

It is still the case that baptisms and weddings are postponed. We do not yet know when any of these restrictions will be lifted.

# CLERGY LETTER

*Fr David writes...*

Well, it happened. It didn't rely on any of us and it still happened.

Easter. Christ is alive! Happy Easter!

To be fair it has been quite possibly the strangest Easter on record for any of us. We all remember snow at Easter, the years when we've not been able to find a daffodil, the year the lilies wouldn't come out in the pedestal arrangements but not one when we couldn't go to church. In days of old when the Holy Communion was seldom celebrated in church Easter was one of the days when everyone would be expected to attend and receive. When church statistics are gathered it is attendance at Christmas and Easter services which set the bar. Not this year.

When I first went into church to check over the building we were still in the midst of Lent. I have to admit that I found it a really sad and upsetting experience. Church felt abandoned. On the site which has absorbed prayer and praise for at least 736 years on a weekly, if not daily basis, for the building to be still and silent was desperately sad. More recently I returned for the weekly check (all is/was well, by the way) and decided that I would re-dress the church for Easter. Down came the purple hangings and up went the white and gold. The building felt transformed. No longer abandoned but simply waiting. Waiting for the people of God – us – to return. And return we will, even if we're not sure when.

The season of Easter was an *in-between* time for Jesus' disciples. Jesus had been crucified and buried, he had risen and then, as the Gospels tell us, appeared on several occasions before the Ascension and then on to the Day of Pentecost. The disciples locked themselves away, fled Jerusalem, doubted and huddled together. Like us, they had no choice but to sit it out and wait. They didn't know if they would be picked off next by the Roman authorities or if they'd escape persecution. At this terrifying time of the Covid pandemic we are not so different. The waiting is hard going and particularly if you're prevented from venturing

further than your front door or garden gate.

People in the parish who would usually be out and about, doing and being busy are experiencing a very different sort of time.

I suspect that saying it's a bit like the disciples isn't really much comfort if you're stuck inside for weeks on end. There are, after all, only so many jigsaws and crosswords we can attempt in a week and only so much (very little in my case) daytime television we can bear. The story of the Easter season can bring us some hope, if we allow it.

In the Gospel accounts (perhaps this is a really good time to read them from beginning to end) Jesus *keeps* appearing. In different places and to different people but he's always there. We can think at the moment of the different ways in which Jesus appears to us in the course of a day or week. Perhaps in a chatty card received in the post, a bag of shopping left for us on the doorstep, a 5-minute chat with a carer or neighbour over the fence. All of these things which suddenly seem to punctuate our day are embodiments of love and care and, if the Christian story teaches us nothing else, it's that *God is love*. When we experience something of love we experience something of God.

I'm keeping a list on my desk of people I've been able to keep in contact with during the lockdown. I'm pleased to say that it's steadily getting longer. I've been using cards, postcards and notelets that have been lingering in my desk drawer for years. I'm doing my best to get round as many folk as possible. I'm partly hampered by my appalling handwriting so I only do a few each day. I've also received some letters and cards in the post and I know how much joy it brings to receive something. Perhaps we can all take to letter writing again. I'd really encourage it.

However we show it, however we receive it, we need to know that we're loved. And we are. All of us. And this will pass.

With my love and prayers

*Fr David*

## On the Covid Frontline

*Nigel Beeton works in Radiology in a hospital in the East of England. During this time of the coronavirus crisis, he is writing a weekly diary of his life at the hospital.*

And so it goes on, day after day, week after week. I have had a long career in radiography, I started with the race riots in the early 80s. I have dealt with coach crashes and multi-vehicle pile ups, I have seen plenty of tragedy and trauma, quite enough for a lifetime.

A major accident is terrible for those affected, and hard work for those dealing with it, and for a time everything is very abnormal. But then comes the standing-down phase, staff are debriefed, and the hospital returns to normal, even as we reflect on those whose lives will never be the same.

In my whole career I never considered the possibility of 'abnormal' going on for so long. I almost can't remember a time when we weren't keeping a significant distance between ourselves and our fellow human beings, wearing scary looking kit if we have to come close. A time when we didn't have to insist that patients attended alone, but could still have their nearest and dearest to support them in their hour of need.

This is one of the most distressing aspects of this coronavirus. It has driven us apart at such a frightening time that we just want to cling onto those we love. Spare a thought in your prayers for those who live alone, who do not have loved ones in their homes simply to hug them when they are scared.

But I pray earnestly for those who are torn even from their nearest family members when they develop severe symptoms. The ambulance comes and they simply do not know whether they will ever see their families again; do not know if they will ever again feel the comfort of a hand to hold or the touch of another person's lips on them.

It is so, so hard for the staff caring for them as they approach death, when they can only relay messages from family and are themselves separated from the patient by PPE. This tears at the very souls of nurses who do what they do because they care about comforting their fellow humans.

It is not so intense for radiographers but it is multiplied by the numbers that are seen on every shift. Thank you for your applause each Thursday evening, it is VERY much appreciated, but as I applaud I do so for people who go back to work on each shift facing not only a virus that has the potential to kill them, but also significant and repeated emotional trauma.

It is difficult, under these circumstances, to understand or even to forgive those who fail to do their bit to stem the spread of the virus. Given what these nurses, radiographers, and other care staff are facing each and every day, is it really so hard to simply stay at home? Given what these poor patients and their families are going through, is it so hard to follow the rules.

## Take comfort



'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God'. (2 Corinthians 1:3)

"In the light we are largely unconscious of our limitations, but when the night descends, our helplessness takes hold upon us and make us cry out for God. Faith is a faculty which needs the dark in which to thrive. When we see our way, we have no need of faith, but when darkness falls then faith receives her opportunity." (Marshall Broomhall – early missionary to China)



*The twins had been doing Messy Church at home.*

## 2020: WHO's Year of the Nurse

When the WHO (World Health Organisation) decided to make 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, they based it on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1820.

But with the arrival of the coronavirus, it is a remarkably apt year to celebrate all that nurses do for us.

As the ICN (International Council of Nurses) says: "All around the world, nurses are working tirelessly to provide the care and attention people need, whenever and wherever they need it. Nurses are central to the delivery of health care; nurses are making an invaluable contribution to the health of people globally."

Nursing as a vocation goes back to the Early Church. When plague struck the Roman world in the third century, it was Christians who tended the sick and dying, often at great personal cost. Their self-sacrifice made a huge impression on Roman society. Centuries later, in medieval Europe, it was the monastic orders that provided health care.

Still centuries later, during the Crimean War (1853-56) Florence Nightingale saved thousands of lives when she transformed the field hospitals, hugely improving the standards of care for wounded and dying soldiers.

In fact, Florence Nightingale deserves the credit for establishing the modern profession of nursing and its structures of training. Although of course medical science has advanced since her time, the

basic ethos of nursing care remains today close to Nightingale's vision.

Nursing is frequently described as a vocation, and it is one to which many Christians are called. Nightingale wrote of being 'called' by God, after having had a vivid religious conversion as a teenager. Writing in February 1837, she stated: "God has spoken to me and called me to His Service."

Four years before going to Crimea, she studied at a Lutheran religious community in Germany which trained deaconesses in medical skills, nursing, and theology. Many of the ideas that Nightingale adopted for her nurses came from that religious community.

Thus, Nightingale's training programme was not solely devoted to secular medical sciences. Her student nurses were required to attend chapel, and her nurses read prayers on the wards.

Nightingale wrote many letters of spiritual encouragement to her students. To one, she wrote that Christ considered it an "honour to serve the poorest and the meanest... He will not give His crown except to those who have borne His cross... Enduring hardship is what He encourages and rewards."

The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, trained and worked as a nurse before being appointed to senior positions in the Health Service. She was Chief Nursing Officer for England between 1999 to 2004.

She says: "I became a Christian as a teenager and wanted to follow Christ with my whole life. Rather than having two careers, I have had one vocation: to follow Jesus Christ, to know Him, and to make Him known."

Certainly, of all the professions, nursing has one of the strongest claims to being rooted in the Gospel. Christian nurses implicitly witness to Christ in caring for others.

*Each week we pray for all who work in the NHS and there are surprising number across our two churches. If you know someone, maybe someone in your family, who's working in the health service, or as a carer, at this time, please let Fr David know and we'll add their first name to our prayer list. – ed.*



**Hail thee Festival Day!  
Blessed day that art hallowed for ever.  
Day where our God ascends  
high in the heavens to reign.**

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them – to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands – and blessed them.'

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And

they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

## PRAYER RESOURCES



**Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us  
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
you taught us to love our neighbour,  
and to care for those in need  
as if we were caring for you.  
In this time of anxiety, give us strength  
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,  
and to assure the isolated  
of our love, and your love,  
for your name's sake.  
Amen.**



# Warden's Words

*Kaye Ridings fills us in with news and updates*

## SPRING FAIR & FUNDRAISING

The date of our Spring Fair has passed and, sadly, we were unable to meet our many friends. We hope that by Christmas we will be able to have our annual *Christmas and Craft Fair*. We rely on the income from these events to help run our church. Bills still have to be paid even though the church is closed and we have direct debits which have to be met each month. So please keep filling your weekly envelopes and bring them in when we are able to open again. Please save all your gifts, goods and donations for the next fair and let's make it bigger and better than ever!

*Fr David adds ... if you are part of our envelope giving scheme and are concerned that your gift is not reaching us at the moment then this would be the best time EVER to change to giving by Standing Order. Please contact our treasurer, Julie Davis to sort this out. You'll find her contact information at the end of this bulletin.*

## CHRISTIAN AID

This is the month for the Christian Aid collection but because of the virus we can no longer deliver and collect envelopes or put them in church for your donations. Please keep Christian Aid in your prayers as their work is needed more than ever at this time. If you feel able, send them a donation or go on line [caweek.org](http://caweek.org).

## WALKING DAY

We had such a wonderful Walk of Witness last year with our three churches joining together, then having a Picnic in the Park. As with most things, all arrangements have had to be cancelled. Please keep our community in your prayers.

The Raft Foundation



Resourceful Action for Transformation

## RAFT (Food Bank)

This organisation is in need of our support more than ever at this time. They are receiving more and more demands on their resources as more families face hardship. Our weekly bread stall in church is something we're missing but it also means that the money we raise isn't reaching Raft.

As a church we have been able, during this period of difficulty to make a financial gift to Raft so that they can purchase essential food items from bulk suppliers. This decision was made by the Standing Committee when we met virtually a few weeks ago. If you would like to help Raft financially then you can either donate on line ([raftfoundation.org](http://raftfoundation.org)) and use the PayPal button on their homepage or you can send them a donation to RAFT FOUNDATION Hardman's Business Centre, New Hall Hey Rawtenstall BB4 6HH.

## CHURCH FLOWERS

### *in remembrance*

One of the things we are unable to do whilst not being in church is to mark anniversaries of loved ones with flowers. We know that this is a really important way to remember and give thanks for many of our congregation. I have placed two vases by the church door and you are welcome to leave flowers in memory of loved ones there. Please remember to bring some water!

## KEN & MARGARET HOLDEN

We send them all our Best Wishes for their Diamond Wedding Anniversary and are very sorry that they've had to miss out on a big celebration.

*As we go to print at the end of April we have learnt of the death of Elaine Brown. Many of you will remember Elaine from her faithful membership of our church community and particularly as part of the kitchen team. Elaine's funeral will be held on Tuesday 5 May at 1pm. Please keep her family and all her friends in your prayers.*

# KEEP IN TOUCH!

*The clergy are always available for a chat, for guidance and advice.  
Please don't hesitate to contact them – they'd be delighted to hear from you!  
Please also feel free to email any ideas, suggestions or pieces to include in the May bulletin if we need one!*

*Other key contacts are here too.*

**Vicar of St James, Haslingden & St Thomas, Musbury**  
Fr David Stephenson, 07539 264279 frdavidstephenson@gmail.com

## **Associate Priests**

Rev' d Judith Balkwell 01706 223652      Rev' d David Allsop 01706 224663

## **Churchwardens**

Roy Pinkerton 01706 214569      Kaye Ridings 01706 216398      Arnold Wade 01706 220496

## **Treasurer**

Julie Davis 01706 212019

## **PCC Secretary**

Miriam Taylor 01706 222478

## **Safeguarding**

Ann Burton 01706 227137      Adrienne Taylor & Kaye Ridings



Most of our on-line *traffic* comes through *Facebook* at the moment. Whilst we've been streaming our services along with those with St Thomas' and St Peter's we have had hundreds of people joining in. Some of this *audience* are regular members of our congregation. Some are from further away and some who don't usually come to church. We are reaching lots of people and offering them support, comfort and a spiritual dimension to what's going on at the moment. This may well have really positive implications for when church is open and services are taking place. Imagine if we could continue to reach out to people in this way and encourage their faith and their prayers...

Have you found our other churches on-line? Please remember to share!

<https://www.facebook.com/StThomasMusbury/>

St Peter's can be found here on Facebook and YouTube  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/100325453637132/>

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQAnxjrjb\\_KL3hVqmlfjbVw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQAnxjrjb_KL3hVqmlfjbVw)

During the lockdown I have been rediscovering many prayers from my past and discovering some new ones - or at least new to me. I use these at the end of both Morning and Evening Prayer and take great comfort in them. Here are some which I hope you might find useful in your daily prayers, too.

*Fr David*

**Psalm 121** *King James Version*

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,  
from whence cometh my help!  
My help cometh from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.  
He will not permit thy foot to be moved;  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither  
slumber nor sleep.  
The LORD is thy keeper;  
the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
The sun shall not smite thee by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil;  
He shall preserve thy soul.  
The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy  
coming in from this time forth, and even for  
evermore.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Watch thou, O Lord, with those who wake, or  
watch, or weep tonight, and give thine angels  
charge over those who sleep. Tend thy sick ones,  
O Lord Christ; rest they weary ones; bless thy  
dying ones; soothe thy suffering ones; pity thine  
afflicted ones; shield thy joyous ones, and all for  
thy love's sake.

*St Augustine (354-430)*

God to enfold me,  
God to surround me,  
God in my speaking,  
God in my thinking,  
God in my sleeping,  
God in my waking,  
God in my watching,  
God in my hoping.  
God in my life,  
God in my lips,  
God in my soul,  
God in my heart.  
God in my sufficing,  
God in my slumber,  
God in mine ever-living soul,  
God in mine eternity.

*Carmina Gadelica (19<sup>th</sup> century)*

Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia.  
He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.  
As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia.  
Pour for us to him thy prayer, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.  
**For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.**

O God, by the Resurrection of your Son, our  
Lord Jesus Christ, you have brought joy to the  
whole world: grant that, by the help of his  
mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys  
of everlasting life; through Christ the Lord.

Thanks be to thee, O Lord Jesus Christ  
for all the benefits which thou hast won for us,  
for all the pains and insults  
which thou hast borne for us.  
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,  
may we know thee more clearly,  
love thee more dearly,  
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.

*Richard of Chichester (1197-1253)*