

PARISH NEWS

FEBRUARY 2021

From the Parsonage - In Praise of Praise

The pandemic has stopped many people from doing what they'd normally be doing and from mixing with the people they'd normally be seeing. One impact of this isolation can be a loss of confidence, combined with time to think and question what is the value and meaning of what they do. For some it can be hard to find the motivation to get going again. People are helping others in lots of different ways and it's good to repeat what we already probably know, that a little can go a long way. And when practical help isn't needed or can't be offered, words can.

We have recently celebrated the Baptism of Christ in the church calendar, the event which marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry. As he rose out of the waters of the river Jordan the Bible records that the voice of God was heard to say, 'This is my Son, who I love; with Him I am well pleased'. It's significant that the start of Jesus' ministry begins with these words of encouragement, that the words 'love' and 'well pleased' are heard by Jesus before he starts his amazing work. Jesus' life changes dramatically at this point.

Sometimes it can seem like there is no one we can turn to for words of encouragement. Everyone is busy with their own lives and some people begin to question if they have anything of value to offer. Some people simply are not hearing words of encouragement.

We need to be aware of three dangers; always judging others negatively and making them feel that they 'could do better'; giving the impression that our own time and work leaves no time for others and is more important and valuable; failing to appreciate the gifts of another person because they are different from our own. And there is one important condition when offering encouragement. It's important that praise is rooted in something tangible and real, that some thought is really given to identifying what we appreciate and why we are responding with encouragement. Revival after lockdown will be greatly helped by a few simple carefully chosen words of encouragement that help people get over obstacles and gives them energy to believe in and achieve their objectives.

Peter Blee

Church Services and Morning Prayer

We're not holding public worship at present. But our churches remain open for private prayer and reflection every day — except for Arlington church which is open only at the weekends. Revd Peter Blee is available to talk and to offer help in any way possible - Tel: 01323 870512 or email: peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk. During Covid restrictions, for service times, etc., please check on the website – www.sussexdownlandchurches.org.uk or www.berwickchurch.org.uk or subscribe to the benefice's 'Sunday Link' by emailing benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk / telephone 01323 811136.

9.00 am Sunday Holy Communion

This is streamed live from Berwick Church on YouTube and a link is sent out*. It is also recorded and can be watched when convenient. (You can search online for 'Peter Blee YouTube').

10.00 am Sunday Morning Prayer (Zoom meeting*)

9.30 am Wednesday Morning Prayer (Zoom meeting*)

* Please request a link from the Benefice Administrator benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Berwick Church – Faculty Application

Now that the new floor and interior at Berwick Church has been experienced by parishioners and others, the PCC have decided to request permission to retain the flexibility and visual quality of the open space by replacing the existing pews (which are half Victorian and half 20th Century) with stackable pews. This will allow different configurations of seating for different services, events and activities. It will increase the accessibility and allow greater freedom of movement.

Public Notice:

NOTICE IS GIVEN that we are applying to the Consistory Court of the diocese for permission to carry out the following: The replacement of the existing Victorian and 20th Century fixed pews with stackable pews made by Treske. The existing pews to be sold and the memorial plaques on the 20th century pews to be retained and archived.

Copies of the relevant plans and documents may be examined at St Michael and All Angels, Berwick, BN26 6SR.

Details of the application are contained within the Statement of Need which can be found at:

<https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org/FAS/ApplicationPublicNotice.aspx?Id=54425>

If you wish to object to any of the works or proposals you should send a letter or email stating the grounds of your objection to

The Diocesan Registrar at Chichester Diocesan Registry, Minerva House, 5 Montague Close, London SE1 9BB.

ChichesterRegistry@wslaw.co.uk so that your letter reaches the registrar not later than 13/02/2021.

A letter of objection must include your name and address and state whether you live in the parish and/or your name is entered on the church electoral roll of the parish or any other basis on which you have an interest in the matter.

The Cuckmere Pilgrim Path

7.00 pm Thursday 18th February

Revd Peter Blee will be giving a Zoom talk about the Cuckmere Pilgrim Path hosted by the organisation 'Art and Christianity'. To listen to the talk you can purchase a ticket at www.artandchristianity.org Tickets need to be purchased at least 4 days in advance. In his talk Peter will describe the route and ideas surrounding it including: Jonathan Chiswell Jones pots, the history guide being written by Kevin Gordon and an artist in residency by stone carver Thomas Sargeant.

The COVID Crisis

The COVID crisis continues into 2021 and it is an extremely difficult time for us all. Whether you know someone who has had the virus, or had it yourself, or you have been affected financially or psychologically with the restrictions, no one has been untouched.

The vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel and locally we have started the vaccine roll out. The over 80's are the first group to be called and all patients, whether your GP is taking part in the programme or not, will be called forward by the hubs so please be patient as we are getting through everyone as quickly as possible. At the moment there are large scale hubs in Brighton and Eastbourne covering the constituency as well as a smaller hub in Lewes. You will be called forward by the hubs and usually called the day before a slot and asked to attend. The aim is to get all over 80's called by the end of January for their first dose and then they will move through the other priority groups which we expect to get called by March.

The Pfizer vaccine needed to be kept at -70°C and this is why only large hubs could administer the vaccine initially. Now we are moving to the Oxford vaccine GP practices, pharmacists and mobile teams are now getting started and so you will see more vaccination hubs starting up as this vaccine is much quicker and easier to give. Both vaccines require two doses, so it is important you return for your second dose.

While you are waiting for your vaccine it is important, we all do our but to keep safe. Social distancing, hand washing and wearing your mask will not just protect you but your family and friends also. Hopefully as we see Spring coming, we will have brighter days ahead.

Maria Caulfield, MP

Cuckmere Buses - Lockdown Update

Our hope and intention is to continue to provide a minimum of one return service per week to all of the places we currently serve and, where driver resources allow, to continue with as many services as we can do reliably. Driver safety must be paramount, followed by passenger safety and our planning is being developed on that basis.

We are keeping our website up to date (www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk) and have placed notices on our buses.

Susan de Angeli

February Gardener's Diary

Spring is getting closer, so we need to start thinking about what to do in the vegetable garden during February.

Keep your egg boxes for chitting your seed Potatoes, which can now be placed in a cool dark place so they can start sprouting. Broad Beans can be put into pots and then in the greenhouse, cold frame, or indoors on the windowsill. When they are strong enough plant them in the garden.

Sow Onion, Leek and Tomato seeds in trays and again put them in the greenhouse or similar to germinate.

Shallots can be planted into the garden now if you have good drainage, if not wait until it is drier; they will soon catch up.

Rhubarb crowns should be covered to encourage early pickings.

As the weather has been kind to the garden this winter hopefully everyone has spread their compost and dug it in. A tip for early sowing, if you have an area prepared, is to cover it with black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for spring planting.

Please stay safe in these awful times.

Keith Winter

Family Support Work (FSW) – Update

Here we are at the start of a new year and another lockdown. I'd like to thank all of you for your incredible support throughout 2020, particularly at Harvest and Christmas, when we were amazed at the quantity of donations we received for our foodbank and Christmas presents. Because of this we were able to give over 120 Christmas hampers to families throughout Sussex, with special treats to help them make Christmas a little bit more special. The presents for children were amazing and each child received handpicked gifts suitable for their age and interest. For some families these were the only presents the children received, so thank you again for your generosity.

As we enter a further lockdown it is a challenging time for our families. They are still suffering from the impact of last year's lockdown, and now that schools are closed again the worries about home-schooling have resurfaced, so our practitioners are doing as much as they can to support parents during this period. With the cold winter weather making outdoor activities difficult, we know that there are going to be difficult times ahead, but we are committed to doing all we can to prevent families from falling further into crisis.

December's work in numbers

- ◆ 288 individual visits and 205 support calls with families supporting 48 grandparents, 336 parents and 421 children.
- ◆ 22 supported meetings with other agencies carried out remotely.
- ◆ 4 online group sessions held.
- ◆ 518 food deliveries made.

Prayer points

- ◆ Thanks for some successful funding bids that were confirmed just before the Christmas break and will give us some security until the end of our financial year.
- ◆ Pray for all those families we support who are struggling with their mental health.
- ◆ Strength for our practitioners who are having to support families remotely during the lockdown, that they don't become overwhelmed and are able to take time to rest.

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

News from King's Academy, Ringmer

Sadly, we said farewell to Stephen Green as he retired after being at the school since 1998. He put Ringmer on the map nationally with his dedicated eco work, inspiring thousands of students over the years to be more sustainable. He even received a personal congratulations letter from Sir David Attenborough himself! We, too, wish Stephen all the best... we miss him already.

School has started with even more challenges than the previous year, unbelievably. Students are working from home remotely with a normal six lessons a day timetable, most of which are live via Google, and they are able to communicate with the teacher.

The ever-admirable non-teaching staff have been trained to conduct COVID tests for staff coming into school and all the keyworker children that are coming in, as usual, every day.

It's been lovely to see staff pull together and we have welcomed parent volunteers to help with the testing. Hopefully, all this hard work will pay off and things will get back to some kind of normality soon.

Jamie Peacock, Transition and Marketing Manager, King's Academy Ringmer

Police and Bank Callers Scams

Residents can sometimes receive phone calls from people claiming to be from the police or their bank. The caller says they are investigating fraudulent activity on people's accounts. They request the individual's help in investigating the fraud and ask them to disclose their bank details, such as account and PIN numbers. The majority of people identify this as a scam and refuse to part with their personal and bank details. However, some have unfortunately fallen victim to this scam and subsequently had thousands of pounds stolen from their account.

Whilst arrests and convictions continue to be made, offenders are still targeting vulnerable and older people - the majority of those targeted are aged over 60. It is therefore vital that these people are aware of the scam, so please share this information with your neighbours and relatives.

How Does the Scam Work?

The offender calls the victim, purporting to be a police officer, and tells them they are investigating a fraud on their bank account and have arrested someone. They might also claim to be from the victim's bank, again stating they are investigating fraudulent activity on their account. The offender asks for account information, including card, security and PIN numbers. Sometimes the offenders will ask victims to 'key in' their PIN number into the phone – the number is then captured by the offenders. They may also

ask the victim to withdraw a large sum of cash from their bank or building society. If they make this request, they will explain that the money is required as it needs to be forensically examined. They also instruct the victim not to tell the bank why they are withdrawing the money, giving the reason that the bank might be involved in the fraud.

The victim is then instructed to put the bank cards and/or money into an envelope and give them to a courier or taxi, which is sent to the house by the offenders to collect the items. If bank cards are collected, they will be later used by the criminals to withdraw money.

In some cases the victim might become suspicious and doubt the validity of what the caller is saying. If this happens, the offender will suggest they call the police via 999 or 101 or contact their bank in order that the victim can confirm the caller's identity. However, what the victim doesn't realise is that the caller hasn't hung up so the line remains open, even if the victim hangs up, so the victim is put straight back through to the offender who will then pretend to be another person. This 'new' person will then validate the original caller's claims.

EMERGENCY
999 When a life is threatened or there is **imminent danger**

NON-EMERGENCY
101 When you **don't** require an urgent response

(Calls to 101 cost 15p for the entire call from both mobile phones and landlines)

TEXT OR TYPETALK

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired, you can contact us using **TypeTalk on 18000** or by **sending a text to 65999** (due to the nature of SMS texts, we may not receive your message immediately)



What Should You Do If You Get a Call?

If you receive a call you're not expecting, you should be suspicious. The vital things to remember are that your bank and the police would:

- ◆ NEVER ask for your bank account details or PIN number over the phone, so do not disclose these to anyone, no matter who they claim to be.
- ◆ NEVER ask you to withdraw money and send it to them via a courier, taxi or by any other means.
- ◆ NEVER ask you to send your bank cards, or any other personal property, to them via courier, taxi or by any other means.

If you are not happy with a phone call and are suspicious of the conversation you have with the caller then please end the call and report it to us.

Remember, when reporting a suspicious phone call to police, wait at least five minutes before attempting to make the call to ensure you're not reconnected to the offender. Alternatively, use a mobile phone or a neighbour's phone or test your landline by phoning a friend or relative first, to ensure you aren't still unwittingly connected to the offender. If you have concerns about your bank account, visit your local branch.

How to Protect Yourself

Remember to follow the above advice. In addition to this, some phone companies offer call screening services that can be effective in blocking marketing cold calls and bogus callers. Contact your phone company and ask about call screening and caller display services.

How Else Can You Help?

Please share this information with your older relatives and friends: this crime has a devastating effect on people, and we need to raise awareness to prevent further people becoming victims.

Report any calls you believe are suspicious as we may be able to trace where the calls are originating from. Please remember to wait at least five minutes before calling police or use a mobile or neighbour's phone.

Report suspicious activity at cash points. If you see someone spending a long time at a cashpoint, using several different cards and have a hood up or their faces covered, contact then police immediately. Often offenders will use cashpoints in the early hours.

Wealden District Neighbourhood Police Team

Yew

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' famed donkey ride into Jerusalem. Recreating that palm-branch-strewn journey in Britain has been botanically challenging since palm trees don't grow in our climate. Instead, churches gathered sprigs of native yew to provide the ceremonial décor and, in some areas, the Sunday before Easter became known as Yew Sunday. And that's why every churchyard has a yew.

Well, actually, the yew's churchyard connection is because yews are evergreen and can miraculously regrow from a dead stump. The trees were planted as a symbol of everlasting life and a reminder of the Easter resurrection. But hold up; how come over 500 churchyard yews in England and Wales are older than their churches? It might mean that the yews themselves were pagan places

of worship and the churches were built around them. Or they were planted on the graves of plague victims to purify the dead. Or it could be something to do with long bows. Or keeping the waiting congregation sheltered and dry each Sunday.

No-one seems sure where this association started but, whatever the reason, yews look right at home in churchyards. Dark, dense and unmoving, they solemnly preside over the sad ceremonies held underneath their boughs and have seen generations come and go (but mostly go).

Yews themselves deliver death and every part of them is highly poisonous, their leaves, their bark, their seeds. Only the fleshy red arils around the toxic seeds are harmless, encouraging birds to feed on them and disperse the poisonous cargo within. Yet death itself does not seem to inconvenience the yew.

Two rival British yews are advertised as the oldest living thing in Europe, at an alleged 5000 years old. Not many yews in Sussex can rival these great evergreen granddaddies. Most of our whippersnappers are probably just a couple of hundred years old. The problem is it's hard to accurately age a yew. As they get older, their blood red heart-wood rots, leaving them hollow inside and without traditional growth rings. Its heart may no longer be in it but that won't stop the yew from growing.

One of the oldest yews in Sussex can be found in Stedham churchyard near Midhurst. It's estimated to be a mind-boggling 2500 years old. Over in Wilmington, at the foot of the Long Man, a monstrous yew dominates the churchyard. At a reputed age of 1600, the tree is 600 years older than the church. Supported by wooden props and straining against chains, it's as if a travelling circus is exhibiting an aging dinosaur. It's worth a visit to both these old timers. For me, standing in the shadow of a plant that is 40 times older than you is humbling and a reminder that for us mere humans, life is brief.

Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

Benefice Priest

Revd Peter Blee - Rector of Berwick and Vicar of Selmeston with Alciston
The Parsonage, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6SR
Tel: 01323 870512 Email: peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk
Peter's day off is Saturday.

Churchwardens

Alciston - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623
Berwick – Ruth Nares Tel: 01323 811186
Selmeston - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

Benefice Administrator

Stephanie Lewis-Grey Tel: 01323 811136 Email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Parish News Advertising and Distribution

This is coordinated by Jeremy and Valerie Shaw. Tel: 01323 811567.

Parish News

This "digital issue" is also available on the benefice church's website www.sussexdownlandchurches.org.uk and Berwick Parish Council's website www.berwickparishcouncil.org.uk. As the "digital issues" do not include advertising, we intend to include the advertisements in the printed issues until they have appeared in a full 12 month's issues.

The production team is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

Contributions (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin Chilvers by the 12th of the month.

Email: empty.sea@outlook.com; Post: 66 Parkfield Avenue, Eastbourne, BN22 9SF.

You should receive confirmation of receipt by the 15th of the month, but if not, please call him on 01323 507655.

Contributions can also be passed on to one of the coordinators:

Jane Anderson at Old Postman's Cottage, Alciston Tel: 01323 870075.

Valerie Shaw at Selmeston House, Selmeston Tel: 01323 811567.

Laurie Tinsley, Wynsford, Berwick Tel: 01323 870895.

Donations

Financial donations to the Parish News are gratefully received. Cheques payable to "Parish News" can be passed to the Treasurer, Valerie Shaw, Selmeston House, Selmeston, Polegate, BN26 6UD. Alternatively, electronic donations can be made to Barclays Bank - Account No. 70650625; Sort code 20-49-76.

We are very grateful for a donation last month from Dr Ruth Butlin.