

## Coming shortly

Just one of the characteristics of this extraordinary last week is that virtually everything has been cancelled, or perhaps postponed. Consequently, and at the 'time of going to press' we have nothing to put in this section of People & Steeple this week.

With no services for the time being and quite possibly no events either, copy and content for People & Steeple may be in short supply. That said, People & Steeple will continue to be published and over the next few days your editorial team will be giving thought to whether we should continue a weekly presence but with just two pages, or perhaps continue with four pages but publish only every other week.

Or perhaps we will find that there is enough for us to continue with four pages each week. Who knows what can be achieved! Safe to say though, we will be giving this careful consideration and will be ever mindful to keep in touch with our parishes and our parishioners on a regular basis. Your thoughts on that and also on editorial we might include would of course be welcome and you can share these with Emma, our Group Administrator on her email address:

[admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk](mailto:admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk)

<b>The Living Word</b> People & Steeple insert gives Bible readings with commentary to read and think about	during the week for the <i>following</i> Sunday. Extra copies with <i>this Sunday's readings</i> are by the door.
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For more news, see also [www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk](http://www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk) or Facebook

# People & Steeple

News and contacts for the Weobley & Staunton Group of Parishes  
Weobley, Sarnesfield, Norton Canon,

Staunton-on-Wye, Byford, Monnington, Letton

## Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

A month ago, you may have pondered giving up something for Lent... perhaps no meals out, or no chocolate for forty days, but it is unlikely you contemplated giving up "Match of the Day" or watching other sport on TV, and certainly you did not seriously think of giving up "going to Church" for Lent... yet here we are, with the Church of England's responsible demand that all public worship services are now suspended during the current world health crisis, and it is not clear when we will be able to worship together again.

Some pundits seem to enjoy fanning the flames of fear, while others tell us not to worry because it only seriously threatens the elderly and those with underlying health conditions (a fair description of the majority of Church congregation members!) but I want to encourage you to hang on to your faith and to your love of God and "Fear not".

St John tells us "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear". What John is speaking about is fear of God's judgement; but Christ's death on the cross has redeemed us from judgement and given us hope,.. and I would much rather live in hope than in fear. How about you?

Rev'd Charles Overton

### Mothering Sunday

Theme: God's way is sacrificial love

1 Samuel 1:20-28 — Hannah's motherly instinct is to put what is right before what she wants, and so she gives up her son to fulfil her vow

John 19:25-27 — in His dying breaths, Jesus honours His mother, trusting His disciple John to look after her

Colossians 3:12-17 — As people of joy in the Good News of Christ, we carry the kind of love that can let go and forgive.

## The Collect

**22 March 2020**

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

## Prayer focus

### **For healing**

Jan Griffiths (Weobley)

David Games

Pat Clayton

We congratulate Evan and Sarah on their wedding on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

***If you know of anyone who is unwell, please let the Administrator or any of the clergy know.***

### *In our Group of Parishes*

The Weobley and Staunton Group of Parishes serves a rural community and we give thanks for all involved in agriculture, we pray for them, and seek ways to support them.

The Parish of Letton, the Churchwarden Derys Maddox and all the church community

Church Treasurers

*Diocese of Hereford*

Ludlow

Those who serve on the Diocesan Synod and all the other Diocesan Boards and Committees.

### *The wider Church*

All other churches in Herefordshire and nationally and across the world who share with us to proclaim God's love to the world.

*The Anglican Church worldwide*

Pray for the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui.

## News

### **Worship in times of Corona Virus**

As we all certainly know, we are in the midst of the impact of this virus and we have to expect that it will be with us for some time longer. The Prime Minister has said that if we all follow the advice, then he hopes the peak will be reached by the end of June.

The advice for us all is set out clearly in many places (1) and we are very strongly urged to keep to it. The Church is following this advice and this, sadly, has meant suspending all services, including this weekend's Mothers' Day service and Holy Week and Easter services. Weddings and funerals can take place if essential but only on a greatly reduced basis of attendance: for weddings that means the couple, the witnesses and possibly parents.

However, prayer, worship, reading scripture and everything that sustains our spiritual life should continue even if not in the church building. The one exception, and a serious one, is that we will not be able to receive the Holy Communion even in the form of the consecrated bread.

Here are some ways in which we can all continue to be part of the worshipping life of the Church:

- Join in with the Rev'd Marcus Small, Rector of Eardisley each day with daily prayer (2)
- Listen to the Archbishop of Canterbury this Sunday on BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship at 0810 and all local radio stations in England at 0800

- Archdeacon Derek is open to prayer requests twice daily (3)
- The Taize community in France livestream their prayers everyday at 6.30 (4)

And we can use our imagination and creativity to come up with ways in which others can see that the worship of the church is continuing: perhaps posies for people to pick up from outside the church for their mothers; perhaps a large cross outside when Good Friday comes and then decorate it with flowers on Easter Day; and we can pray for our families, communities, those with difficult responsibilities and for victims of the virus and its consequences.

May we know the presence of God in the person of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit in these difficult times.

(1) <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

(2) [https://www.facebook.com/pg/Eardisley-Group-of-Parishes-365700116958080/posts/?ref=page\\_inter](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Eardisley-Group-of-Parishes-365700116958080/posts/?ref=page_inter)  
[nal](#)

(3) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/202978667601059/>

(4) <https://www.facebook.com/taize/>

### **Monnington-on-Wye Clean Up**

A huge thank you to everyone who helped to clean the church after the flooding. It's now in much better heart, as are we after Pat's fabulous cakes. And mustn't forget thanks to Roo the terrier who flushed a baby rabbit out from under the altar!

## Lent Lunches

Sadly, but almost inevitably, we have to report that the final Lent Lunch at The Salmon, Bridge Sollers on April 2nd has been cancelled. This brings our series of Lunches to a conclusion and on a very positive note we can reveal that donations to Forage Aid across the four lunches total £830. And with Gift Aid claimable on some of this sum, Forage Aid should benefit to the tune of almost £950; a terrific sum over just four lunches.

For this, and for the wonderful spirit in which the lunches were hosted, we extend a great big 'thank you' to our hosts for providing us with good fundraising for an excellent charity, a lot of good friendship and, of course, delicious soups!

And last, but never least, 'thank you' for supporting these lunches and donating so generously. Your enthusiastic support is invaluable and we look forward to next year already!

## Finding our new Rector

As many of you know, interviews for the post of Rector of our Group of Parishes were due to be held next Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th. Frustratingly, but understandably these have been postponed until an unspecified date 'in the future'. Our first hope is that this date is in the near future but we can't guess at that, save to say, the Archdeacon of Hereford and our Parish Representatives are in close contact about what might be done to reconvene these interviews at the soonest, safe opportunity.

A great deal of energy has gone into producing the documents and statements that 'sell' our group of parishes to potential new incumbents and we must be thankful to those who put in the hard yards to get this all done. Good candidates have been attracted to apply and we must both hope and pray that they continue to wish to come to the Weobley & Staunton Group when the time for interview is announced once again.

As soon as we know more, we will share this with you and we hope for positive news before long.