



PARISH GIVING SCHEME

With churches closed and no Sunday collections and fundraising activities cancelled for the foreseeable future, our church treasurers are anxious about how to keep the books balanced and the bills paid. No doubt, in time, we will come through this unimaginable trial, but for now church income is radically reduced and signing up for the Parish Giving Scheme is one way in which congregants and friends of our parish churches can show their support.

All seven of our churches in the Group Benefice have a Parish Giving Scheme account and are receiving regular donations (monthly, quarterly for example) - some large, some small, but all invaluable – from supporters who have set up a direct debit in favour of their local parish church. The scheme does the paperwork and as an added bonus this includes claiming the Gift Aid and passing it on to the parish.

To find out more about the scheme you can visit the PGS website at: <https://www.parishgivingscheme.org.uk/> Equally, you could have a word with the treasurer of your local parish who, if you decide to sign up will give you the parish's PGS code, and to get in contact with them do call our Group Administrator Emma Noble on 01432 761896 and she can give you a contact phone number.

Unarguably, these are difficult times, but as we know, while our churches are closed, the Church is still open and anything we can do to help our local parish keep ready for the days when we're back together again will be received with heartfelt gratitude. Do please give the scheme some careful consideration, and thank you of course.

The Living Word People & Steeple insert gives Bible readings with commentary to read and think about during the week for the following Sunday. Also online at thelivingword.uk

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For more news, see also www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk or Facebook

Copy for next week no later than Wednesday to: admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

People & Steeple

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

Staunton-on-Wye, Byford, Monnington, Letton

Sunday 3rd May 2020



A little learning is a dangerous thing

(Alexander Pope 1688-1744)

Three of our readings today display the well-known image of the Lord being our shepherd. It is difficult to live in Herefordshire without being aware of sheep, and the shepherd image is a positive, rather romantic one engrained deep in our English psyche. Those of you who keep sheep probably have a more realistic view from being up all night lambing and from knowing the susceptibility of sheep to disease and wandering off!

When we think of shepherds in the Bible it is all too easy to think of the lush green pastures of Herefordshire with flocks of sheep munching away contentedly. In Biblical times, and even today, being a shepherd in the Holy Land was very much a 24 hour a day job. Today's well-known psalm reminds us how much a sheep needs a shepherd to protect, encourage, guide, move, feed, heal and refresh; ideas reinforced by Jesus and what He says about Himself in John 10.

So our 'little learning' may well be challenged. We are used to shepherds moving their sheep to new places by driving them from behind, often with the help of a collie and/or quad bike. But shepherds in Jesus' time went on ahead, calling for the sheep to follow; pasture was scarce and scattered. The shepherd knew the way to green pastures and how to avoid danger and dark places; behind him the sheep were safe.

Our Shepherd goes before us; He wants to lead us 'for His Name's sake', or to put it another way, He puts His reputation on the line for our well-being. In this Easter season, let us remember that the One who calls us is the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep. In these strange and challenging times, do we listen for and to the Shepherd's voice?

Rev'd Peter Houghton

Theme For the Week

Jesus the Good Shepherd is our entrance to new life

Psalm 23 — "You are with me" is the truth about God the Provider that overcomes fear and anxiety

Acts 2:42-47 — The shared experience of new life in Christ brings real relationship and togetherness

1 Peter 2:19-25 — There is a cost to belonging to the Good Shepherd, as the new life and freedom may be a threat to some

John 10:1-10 — Jesus is the gateway to an abundant, eternal life in which He knows us and we know Him

Prayer focus

For healing

Jan Griffiths (Weobley)
David Games
Pat Claytor

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 Weobley, the Parish Church Council and all the church community.

Those that provide coffee and tea after services.

In the Diocese of Hereford;

Bishop Richard of Hereford: Derek, Archdeacon of Hereford and Ludlow.

Bridgnorth

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.

Pray for the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Communion in Japan)

The Collect

Fourth Sunday of Easter 3 May 2020

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Worship and Prayer from the Diocese

Live Services Every Sunday

Hereford Diocese has scheduled a series of services for every Sunday until May which will be streamed live on Facebook at 10 am each Sunday.

Please find below a list of those scheduled

3 May	Revd Sean Semple	10 am
10 May	Revd Chris Moore	10 am

[Weobley and Staunton Live Service](#)

Weobley and Staunton are delighted to announce that they will be holding another live virtual worship via Zoom this Sunday, 3rd May at 10.30am. The Holy Communion Service will be led by Rev'd Guy Wilkinson with support from the clergy team and others involved in the Benefice. To watch this live service you will need to download the Zoom app and then follow this link;

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81946640814>

The corresponding service sheet can be found (under Week by week tab, then click on Services) on the group website;
www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

Also Facebook - *Weobley and Staunton Group*



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the Coronavirus.

Daily Hope, which is available from today, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. Please share with all those who will find this service of benefit.

News from the Parishes

Our New Rector

There are moments when, in this period of isolation, time seems to stand still, or one day is much like another. In some ways it seems an age ago that we were moving about freely, in out of church on a regular basis and of course planning to interview candidates for the post of Rector for our group of parishes.

Yet, ages ago it wasn't. In fact it was just five weeks ago that we should have been showing candidates around our churches and then making our way to The Palace in Hereford for the interviews. Well, they were postponed as we know, but certainly not cancelled.

Everyone involved in the process of finding our new rector, from the Bishop and Archdeacon in Hereford to the Benefice team here in our Group, is anxious to reach that day when the lockdown and social-distancing guidelines allow us more scope to meet and greet, and interview. It's true to say that we look forward to interviewing a number of candidates as soon as we can and the comforting news is that all those shortlisted have indicated they are content to wait, ready for the call, until the interviews can be rearranged.

Time may have stood still just a bit but the opportunity we felt so positive about remains the same and when the interviews can be re-scheduled that same optimism will be among us again. Until then, keep well and let's hope we'll be letting you know the new dates just as soon as possible.