



Five Crosses
Tintinhull, Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil Marsh,
Thorne Coffin, Lufton
NEWSLETTER
MAY 2020

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Dear Friends,

As I write this we are about four weeks into the restrictions imposed upon us by the government in response to the corona virus pandemic. Life feels very unusual and has taken some getting used to. If it has been strange for me, for many others it has been very much more difficult.

We have been made aware of the most vulnerable in our society. These people – the elderly, those with certain underlying medical conditions – need to be protected from the possibility of infection with the virus. They have been advised to self-isolate and we have all been advised to restrict our activity away from our homes. For those self-isolating life has become very restricted even to the point of being unable to see their families or friends. We feel their pain and the response in all of our communities to support those people by delivering food and medications, by checking on them and ensuring that they are not in need of anything, has been truly wonderful. We have witnessed a marvellous community spirit in response to this crisis.

Others too are suffering in the current situation – parents with young children who live in flats in our cities, whose options for exercise are much more limited than ours, the many people who are unable to work because of the restrictions and whose incomes have shrunk, the self-employed who are unable to work and have seen their ability to feed their families so much reduced.

And, of course, there are the people who have become ill themselves and those who have relatives who are ill and most distressingly those whose relatives have died without their families around them. We might understand why that had to be but we naturally feel deeply their pain and loss.

We have been struck too by the courage and commitment of the staff in our hospitals and care homes, the paramedics and those providing medical support and care in our communities – working on the front line – who by their dedication and willingness to put themselves at risk, often without adequate protective equipment have been inspiring. The Thursday evening applause is heartfelt and genuine. It speaks of our

gratitude when there is little else we can do to say thank you.

Neither should we forget the others in our communities who are working to keep our society functioning as best it can – the farmers, food producers and suppliers, the police, the staff in our schools, postal workers, those who deliver items to our homes and many others.

As Christians this gives us plenty of material for our prayers – and reminds us too that there is much to be thankful for – even in these difficult times. Although our churches are closed for the duration of the emergency (but we've no idea how long that might be yet) you will find booklets, prepared by the Church of England, of prayers for use during the corona virus outbreak in our church porches. Please feel free to pick one up for yourself or for someone whom might appreciate it but is unable to get out. If you find that there are none left please let me know and I'll replace them.

As you know we are not able to meet for worship in our churches at present. Every Sunday, from 9.15 am, I am putting a service online on the benefice website (fivecrosses.weebly.com). You will be most welcome to join us if you wish.

If there is anything that you feel I or the churches can do for you please don't hesitate to get in touch.

With prayers and blessings, Fr Peter

Letter from the Right Reverend Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath and Wells:

A time to 'Love our neighbours as ourselves'

I wonder - are you someone who gets everything ready long before you need to; jobs done well before time; and someone who is never late for anything? Or are you someone who leaves things to the last minute; works right up to the deadline; and catches the bus or train with moments to spare? Or maybe you are somewhere in the middle?

One of the things that Bishop Ruth and I enjoy doing is writing these articles each month for parish magazines and newsletters. It gives us a chance to keep in touch with people across the diocese and to share the things that are in our hearts and minds as the year unfolds. The only drawback is that we have to write these articles well in advance, so that they reach magazine editors and church administrators in good time. The problem is of course that things may change in all sorts of ways between us writing them and you reading them. I am particularly conscious of that this month, as we are in the midst of the Corona virus pandemic. Things are changing very fast and it is hard to know what the next few weeks will bring. That inevitably brings with it a certain degree of uncertainty and some of us, especially those who are isolated and cut off, may be feeling anxious for ourselves or for others.

My hope throughout this time of 'lockdown' is that although some of us may have felt physically isolated from each other, that we have not felt socially or spiritually isolated. Indeed, I have been truly amazed and encouraged by all the stories I have heard of people caring for each other, phoning each other and going shopping for those who cannot get out to buy the food they need. At this stage none of us knows quite how and when this virus will eventually be brought under control. However, I do hope that when we get to the stage that restrictions can be safely lifted and we begin to go out and shop as we did before, that things will be different. Many of us have had difficulty buying the food we wanted. Some of us have had to rely on others for our daily needs. We have had

to learn new ways to pray and keep in touch with others in our churches and communities. We have had to trust, hope, and look out for our neighbours, especially those who are particularly vulnerable. We have been humbled by the courage and dedication of those who work in the NHS and care homes and all who as ‘key workers’ have worked tirelessly to look after and provide for us.

Jesus taught us to ‘Love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind’ and ‘to love our neighbours as ourselves’. My hope and prayer is that as we emerge from this pandemic that we and our communities may be a more compassionate, more generous, more grateful. And may we all have discovered what it is to know in a deeper way the peace and the presence of God.

*May the peace and the joy of the Risen Lord be with you , **Bishop Peter***

A Little News from the Parishes

From the Editor: “I’m just saying hello to all the regular readers of our Five Crosses Newsletter which normally would be posted through letter boxes throughout the five parishes we serve. As we are all more or less staying home the May issue will only be found on line and the web site is included in the leader box of the front page. This time not all of the contributors have been able to send their thoughts in but I hope you’ll find what is included of interest and comfort in these extraordinary times. Keep safe and God Bless you all” (cut of date for June’s issue is 19th May) *Hilary*

TINTINHULL

John Gower writes: “As I write this, in the most unusual of times, the Church is closed with no Easter Services or flowers in the Church. Fr Peter has done brilliantly providing ‘Virtual’ high quality services which can be found on the Benefice website. Out of the evil of the Corona virus has come good. The Village appears to acting by the guidelines and help offered to those who are at high risk is amazing. As far as I know, there have been no Covid-19 deaths in our village. The main casualty has been the restoration project of St Margaret’s. We have heard from the National Lottery Heritage Fund who have decided, in view of Covid-19, to stop the assessments of applications for grants and has closed and withdrawn all current applications. We will, of course, reapply when life returns to normal. I confirm that Friends of St. Margaret’s will continue as this was not a rejection. I should like to thank Ray Cozens particularly for the enormous amount of work he has done for this project but hope all will be well in the end. Our VE celebrations will almost certainly be cancelled because of the restrictions due to this virus which is a great sadness for the 75th anniversary. Regrettably, I have just been informed of the death of Annette Ashby who was, of course, the widow of David who was one of our line of outstanding treasurers at St Margaret’s. I understand that her ashes will be interred here at a later date. A final observation, we are not all good Samaritans as, when Pam and myself go for our daily exercise and see someone walking towards us, we go on the opposite side of the road! We look forward to when this is no longer required. “

Carol Perry wants to remind us all about the Tintinhull, **Village Post Office**. It is still coming on each Wednesday morning between 9.30 and 12.00 and is held in the Working Men’s Club, in Vicarage Street. If you haven’t used it yet you might like to know that you will find its location by going down the side path to the rear entrance

and then go through the door which leads into the skittle alley. There is a bar towards the end of the long room where the Post Office counter is set up, manned usually by Amanda or Jenny who are both very helpful ladies. You can do all the usual transactions e.g. posting parcels etc, paying bills, getting cash out and paying cheques in if you have your sort code and account details with you. Sadly the usual church coffee shop remains closed due to the Corona virus 'lock down', but you might like to include making a post office visit during your Wednesday exercise regime. Let's keep our local Post Office going.

And finally for Tintinhull we have to thank a kind elf for working his spell on a new notice board to replace our Vicarage's old one. This elf goes under the initials TL so look out for him as he might be feeling in the mood to repair something else!

LUFTON

Susan Collins writes: "We are experiencing strange and challenging times and all have different ways of dealing with each day. Those of us who are reasonably well, but retired have become used (in some cases) to structuring our days, embracing new skills and hobbies and finding time to enjoy pastimes put aside so often whilst our careers took over. It usually works for me to be very busy, but I've proved the need to stop more frequently and reconsider what the difference is between our 'needs' and our 'wants'. I have sometimes found it difficult to pray, as if I am a small voice in the darkness, but hoping that God will hear us through that mist of isolation. I pray for all humanity, for those living alone, or in wretched accommodation, for those who are homeless, those fighting illnesses and the millions of refugees worldwide.

We are very fortunate to live in a small hamlet (just about), with a garden to keep us busy and fields around us, where the countryside changes each day. The local farmers are extremely busy and so are our bees. We learn a great deal from the bees – their survival instinct, against the odds, their cooperation and reliance on each other and each their designated tasks. We've been blessed with good weather, after the long wet winter which really lifts our mood and assists the wildlife. We are missing our routine of attending our beautiful little Church and taking part in communal worship. However, the wonders of modern technology made it possible to 'virtually' enjoy taking part in The Passiontide Services, Prayer & Reflection sessions and, particularly, the Good Friday Passion narrative. Also the Easter Sunday Eucharist Service. We are thankful that Father Peter is able to master the technology in order to connect our worshippers of all ages, across five parishes to make all this possible. In addition, Her Majesty The Queen, in her speech to the nation, gave thanks more eloquently than anyone else. Thankfully, Her Majesty is the Head of The Church and State and in her broadcast was an example to us all of faith and faithfulness, which should be an inspiration.

On a personal note, we have found some comfort in some services on the Internet and enjoyed the 'Easter at Kings' broadcast on BBC 2. We have found solace in The Psalms, which seem to address every concern. Also, in linking with friends and family living a distance away, on Facetime. Each day I repeat to myself :- 'Fear does not stop death. It stops Life. And 'worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles. It takes away today's Peace'. We look forward to the time when we are all able to worship and meet together and trust in God that this will be possible. In the meantime, we should accept all the advice given to stay safe and pray for all those wonderful NHS frontline workers and all those working to assist us all."