

# St Mary's News

**November 2020**

(into a 4-week Coronavirus lockdown)



## **Includes ....**

**The power of love** - the Revd Tony Rindl

**Walking in the footsteps of saints** - Cath Da Costa

**PCC Update** - Roger Courtney

**Forest Church** - Jenny and Lily Whittick

**.... and more!**

## ‘The power of love ...’

It is now 75 years since the end of the Second World War, and whilst there have been other notable conflicts since then such as the Korea War, Falklands, Gulf Wars and Afghanistan, for the majority of us we have never really experienced in the true sense Britain at war. Thankfully the perceived threat of invasion has been minimal since peace in Europe was declared in May 1945. Today another enemy has invaded our shores. It is an enemy we cannot see, but we are very aware of its threat and deadly consequences.



Whether it is right to make such comparisons, the global pandemic has claimed many victims and has brought significant disruption to normal life. It has also produced a new set of heroes, whether that is Captain Tom Moore (who was also a hero in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) and his charity walk, or our wonderful NHS workers or others who we would today consider to be key workers.

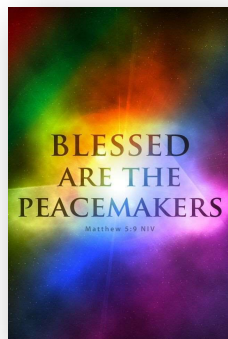
It is perhaps too early to evaluate the true human cost to this new conflict, but it would be fair to say that once again there have been those who have paid the ultimate price for the safety and welfare of others. I don't know whether in years to come they will be remembered in the same way as war heroes from more conventional warfare are remembered. It maybe worth remembering that long after this pandemic is over, like in normal conflicts there will be those who will carry physical injuries and mental and emotional scars. They must not be forgotten and as a nation it will be our duty to value them and to support them in their needs like any other war hero.

Our act of remembrance on Remembrance Sunday includes the epitaph for those who fought in the battle of Kohima, which reads “When you go home tell them of us and say for your tomorrow we gave our today.” Whether it is a conventional war or a battle such as the one we are currently facing with this pandemic, it tends to bring the very best and the very worst out of people. We have seen wonderful examples of bravery and human sacrifice. We have also seen many examples of selfish and stupid behaviour.

I think we all need to reflect on how good people are to act in times of conflict and national crisis, and to live life well in goods times as well as bad. If nothing else in recognition of those who for our tomorrow gave their day.

Remembrance Day is preceded by Bonfire Night, which from 1605 has commemorated the foiled attempt to blow up the House of Lords and assassinate King James. History portrays Guy Fawkes as a failed terrorist who was found guilty of treason. Whilst acts of terror can never be condoned, perhaps this was the inevitable response of a suppressed minority and from other injustices of the time. At the time of writing the outcome of the presidential election in America is unknown, and the Brexit negotiations remain uncomplete. In my opinion both reflect a very turbulent and divisive political climate, and potentially a breeding ground for extremist views. There are many examples from the 20<sup>th</sup> century where such views went unchecked and with disastrous consequences. It is important that we learn the lessons of the past, and I think a fresh approach to how history is taught is needed.

In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” War and conflict comes at a terrible price, and wherever possible peace must be sought. Yet true peace can only be found if it is accompanied by truth and justice. It is vital that we listen to the other point of view. Dr Martin Luther King Jr is quoted as saying; “People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”



In the Church’s year November begins with All Saints Day and is followed by All Souls. Liturgically the Church year ends in with Christ the King, the Sunday before the beginning of Advent when the Church year then begins again. I think there are many ways of defining a saint, but I would say that it is someone who seeks after truth and justice, who seeks to be reconciled to God and to their fellow human being, whilst recognising their own shortcomings and yet inspired by the love of God revealed to us in Jesus

Christ. I think it is important that we continue to be inspired by those who have gone before us. As the writer of the Letter to Hebrews states; “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:1-3)

So in this month of November with all its commemorations and acts of remembrance let us firmly resolve to live life well with the freedom that others have fought hard to secure, and not forgetting the greater freedom won for us in Christ Jesus. Let us remember that ultimately good triumphs over evil because of the power of love.

*The Revd Tony Rindl*



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**We must  
keep on protecting  
each other.**

**HANDS**      **FACE**      **SPACE**

## Walking in the footsteps of saints

It is sad that this year due to COVID19 we will not be holding our traditional Saints and Sausages Event as an alternative to Halloween and a chance to celebrate All Saints Day. Apart from being loads of fun, our Saints and Sausages Event is a great opportunity to learn a bit more about the saints. Saints are generally people who were very wise and of deep faith and by listening to the stories about their lives we can often learn much about how we might live our own as God's children.



On our recent holiday, we visited Lindisfarne, a small island on the Northumbrian coast. Known also as Holy Island, it has been an important Christian site ever since St. Aiden built a priory there in the 7th Century. We reached the island across a causeway, built on the mudflats, which reveals itself as if by magic from the sea during low tide. It took us about three hours to walk around the edge of the island and we were awed by its wild, beautiful and rugged landscape of sand dunes covered in long grasses; stretches of deserted sandy, stone-scattered beaches; and rocky outcrops that speak of a volcanic geological past. A designated national nature reserve, there were a variety of seabirds and waterfowl to see and seals popped up their dark grey heads in the bays as if spying on our movements. Just before sunset we were wowed by the whirling air display of a murmuring swarm of starlings as they swooped and dived in unison in what looked like a choreographed dance above the priory ruins.

In the way of human contribution, there is the pretty village of stone houses above a tiny harbour. On the left as you face the harbour on a hill is the impressive castle and skirting the seaside of the village are the ruins of the



priory itself; at its heart a large modern statue of its founding father Saint Aiden.

Aiden was born during the 7th Century in Ireland and there are many stories about how he lived a Godly humble life, how he cared for people and animals and even about miracles he is said to have performed. He was invited to

the Kingdom of Northumbria by its king, King Oswin, to teach the people about God and eventually he built the first priory at Lindisfarne where he could teach people how to read and write. One such story about Aiden shows what he was like:

King Oswin was very generous, and he wanted to help Aiden in his work. He noticed that Aiden spent much of his time travelling around the kingdom on foot so one day he gave Aiden a horse. Not just any horse – a magnificent horse bred from one of the king’s best stallions and who could walk 30 miles a day without stopping. He even gave Aiden a beautiful, expensive saddle.

It wasn't that Aiden wasn't grateful to the king. The king recognised that Aiden saw it his duty to visit every little village and worried for Aiden’s safety as in those times to travel could be very dangerous as there were many bandits around. He saw that Aiden was a man of learning and leadership and saw in these things Aiden’s importance – and an important person needed a fine horse on which to travel, but Aiden did not see the world as the king did.

Aiden was not afraid of travelling alone and on foot – God had called him to be His messenger and to tell the people about His love for them. Also, not only did he not see himself as important, but he saw his place as among the people. He understood that if the people had to look up to him – and on a horse this would mean literally looking upwards – they would not

speak to him, or share their worries or accept his help and his words of wisdom. Also, he had come to teach the people about God - unlike the old gods who were distant and cruel, this God was real and cared and people mattered to Him. Aiden knew that the best way to show people how much God loved and cared for them was to show this in his own behaviour and so he had given up everything he owned to the church, had dedicated his life to God and trusted God to meet all his needs. He saw it as his mission from God to meet people and to spread the Word. The horse was not helping Aiden in that mission.

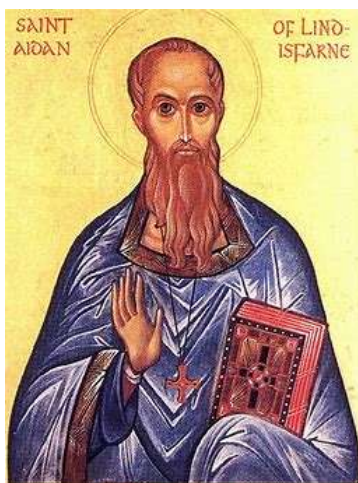
What was Aiden going to do with the horse! The king was very powerful, and you didn't insult kings by refusing their gifts and besides the king had given him the horse out of friendship. Aiden felt he had no choice other than to take the horse. He began the journey back to Lindisfarne on the horse, but the more he rode the more unhappy he became about the whole situation. After a while he noticed a man begging beside the road. The man stood at the roadside, the desperate need his family found themselves in made him give up his pride and cry out to all who passed by for help, but apart from a few tossed coins no one helped him. Suddenly a man on a horse stopped beside him, got off

his horse and that man was Aiden. Aiden asked the man why he was begging beside the roadside. With tears in his eyes, the man told his terrible and sad story - he told of how he was a farmer, but how as he was away selling his goods at market robbers had broken into his farm, stolen everything he had, burned his home down, had killed his wife and that now he and his five children had nothing left and were starving. He had tried to find work, but no one wanted to employ him.



Aiden looked the man in the eye and told him he would help him. The man was astonished when Aiden gave him his horse and saddle telling him to go into the next village and sell them for money – for as Aiden told the man: “You have a greater need for them than I do.” It took the man a while to realise that Aiden meant it and left leading away the horse with hope and gladness in his heart. Aiden was glad too for he knew that there were some things that were so much easier to do on foot.

It is always good to stop now and then to re-evaluate how and why you do things, whether this is following a break, through prayer and reflection or learning about how others have followed God before you.



As we made to leave Lindisfarne, I saw this prayer on a door of one of the churches there:

### **A Prayer for this season**

God of all creation  
Who inhabits every season  
Grant us your peace

When we are frightened  
Gift us the knowledge of your presence



When we are ill  
Gift us the cradle of your love

When we are overwhelmed  
Gift us your vision and perspective

Gift us compassion  
For those who struggle

Gift us wisdom  
To know how to love our neighbour

Gift us integrity  
In our words and in our actions

Sustain us  
Teach us  
Use us

As we walk through this season  
With the One  
Who will never  
Have to self-distance

Amen

God Bless



*Cath*  
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## PCC Report – Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October

The PCC met for a fourth time by Zoom, with the meeting beginning with a service of Holy Communion and a welcome for the new members elected at the APCM on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

*Elections* The meeting being the first after the APCM, there were the usual appointments and elections: as Vice-Chairman (Alison Saunders), as Treasurer (Helen Baldwin) and to the Standing Committee (Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Roger Courtney as Chair of the Buildings Committee). Tony expressed his gratitude to Alison for being willing to extend her service as Churchwarden to the next APCM and emphasised that there was an urgent need to identify her successor and also Helen's successor who would need to be in post for the 2021 financial year, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> January. In addition, it would be very good if a Minutes Secretary (who did not need to be a member of the PCC) came forward so that members of the PCC did not need both to contribute to the discussion and take minutes.

Committees were also reviewed, with the PCC noting that new members would be welcome and did not need to be members of the Council.

*APCM report* The Council received the minutes of the APCM and considered the issue that had been raised at the meeting about aspects of financial management. The Finance Committee were asked to bring proposals to the Council.

The Vicar referred to his comments at the APCM about the report on failures of safeguarding in the Church of England and emphasised the need for strict adherence to guidelines at St Mary's. Full information on the church's policies and relevant contact details were on the Website. He expressed thanks to Claire Edwards for being the focus within the church for this very sensitive subject.

*Reopening of the Church* Tony confirmed that the subject to any changes in advice the intention was to recommence Sunday services on 1<sup>st</sup> November with the aim that members of the congregation who had not been able to

participated in the Zoom services would have the opportunity again to experience worship at St Mary's. The service would also be on Zoom and in order that the number attending in person should not exceed the permissible limit those who could participate that way should continue to do so.

The Council were informed that, following a demonstration of the appliance, a 'fogging machine' which would disinfect the floor and lower parts of the walls had been purchased. Its main application would at present be in the Church Centre in order to enhance safety for Pre-School staff and children.

*Buildings* Roger Courtney reported that the artistic design that would complete installation of the sliding door had been discussed with the designer of the glazed screens and a design based on the 'trumpets' of the aisle screens agreed. This would be put to the DAC for approval. He noted also that the government scheme under which the church was able to reclaim VAT on most building-related works ran only until March 2021. While it might be renewed, with the current pressure on public finances this was by no means certain. With the completion of the Church Centre roof, it might be prudent for the PCC now to commission internal improvements such as replacing the damaged ceilings in order to be able to claim back VAT before the scheme ended.

*Finance* Peter Dean reported that, as in previous months, both income and expenditure continued to be below budget but the gap between actual and expected expenditure was narrowing. While 'planned giving' from the congregation had thankfully held up well overall income had been affected by loss of collections and rental income from the Church Centre. At present the situation appeared manageable but with the church reopening and expenditure therefore increasing it would need careful monitoring.

*Roger Courtney*

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## Forest Church



Our first meeting together instead of on Zoom for Kids Church, was Sunday 17 October at the bottom of Cassiobury Park. The idea was to go into Wippendell Woods but the canal lock was a distraction as a barge came in, so we didn't walk far! My daughter writes, "The forest church is very good and I enjoyed it a lot. It was surrounded by nature and tree stumps that we could climb and sit on. Downside is there are a few nettles and I got stung."



First the children made Thank You Cards, drawing their favourite thing they could see, and thanking God for it. There was a Scavenger Hunt, looking for 8 things like "something that makes a noise", "something that changes colour", "something that could create a new plant or tree" and "evidence something has passed this way before". We collected a crackly brown leaf, a conker and a feather!

Story-time and singing whilst sitting high up on tree stumps, was certainly a change from being on a computer screen! Instead



of the 30-minute zoom call, this was a 90-minute excursion which all 4 families seemed to enjoy, and we look forward to the next one!

Will the little houses (of leaves and sticks) the children built, have hedgehogs or squirrels in by then, I wonder?

*Jenny and Lily Whittick*



# AUTUMN SELF-CARE



Rest and allow yourself a break.



Try out a new hobby.

Get creative with pumpkins.

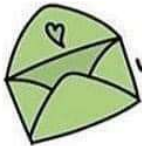
Enjoy your favorite tea.



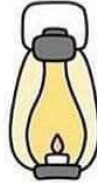
Enjoy warm socks & pjs.



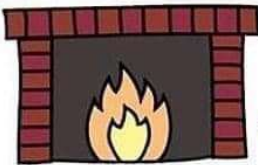
Curl up with a good book.



Write down what you want to let go of.



Embrace hygge.

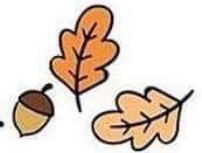


Focus on warmth.

Drink spiced cider.



Go to a Farmer's Market.



Take a nature walk.

BlessingManifesting.com

**Meaning:** Hygge – a quality of cosiness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being (regarded as a defining characteristic of Danish culture)

## Services

We are sorry that the church building  
will remain closed for most of the week;  
it should be open Private Prayer  
but please check before coming;  
Public Worship is ceasing again during November

### Private Prayer

Wednesdays and Saturdays  
12.00noon to 2.00pm  
(but times may change)

We will continue to  
pray, worship and care for each other  
from our homes during this difficult time.

### Sunday

10.30 am Morning Service via Zoom – no service in church  
4.00 pm KidsChurch via Zoom  
5.30 pm Reflection via Facebook Live!

### Wednesday

12.30 pm Reflection via Facebook Live!

### Monday to Saturday

Morning Prayer via the church website

Please keep up to date with what is on offer  
via our Facebook page  
or the website [www.stmaryswatford.org](http://www.stmaryswatford.org)

## Who's Who at St Mary's

*(They all continue to be available via the phone or online)*

### Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl | 01923 225189 / 07792 505480  
tonyrindl.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

### Curate

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby | 07764 738596  
jbrocklesby.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

### Churchwardens

Alison Saunders | 01923 244390  
Peter Dean | 07876 154387

### Children & Families Worker

Cath Da Costa | 07961 564385  
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### Office

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