

Love Your Neighbour

Over the past six months our world has turned upside down, our everyday life has changed beyond all recognition, the things that we took for granted have been denied to us. Life, by and large, has been stripped down and perhaps given us the ability to reevaluate what is important to us. I suspect the biggest adjustment we as individuals and society have had to make is the loss of our freedom. The freedom to go to church, the freedom to come and go as we please, the freedom to go shopping, the freedom to go to school, the freedom to go to the pub, and for some the freedom just to leave their house.

This change to our everyday living and the measures put in place of course have been very understandable as the government try to contain this pandemic. But what about those in our society who have experienced a restriction to their freedoms most days of their lives because of their race, creed or colour? The killing of George Floyd on the streets of America and the rise of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement has highlighted how disenfranchised many black and ethnic minority people feel, not just in America but on the streets of Britain as well. For me as a white middle-aged man in all reality I cannot comprehend how that must feel. But what I do know is that the Bible tells us that in the sight of God we were all created equal and that Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that all may know God's love and freedom.

Therefore, as I heard it very eloquently put by two people on the TV today, who are part of the Windrush Generation, everybody from government to individuals must learn to live their lives treating others as they would like to be treated themselves. Then maybe this disease of racism may start to be eradicated from our society.

When asked what is the greatest commandment Jesus said, "You should love the Eternal, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second great commandment is this: "Love others in the same way you love yourself." There are no commandments more important than these."

Mark 12: 30-31 (Bible translation - The Voice).

Yours in Christ



Revd Steve Spencer - Vicar



**As members of St. Augustine's with St. Luke's, we seek to follow Jesus' command
— to share God's love with our community.**



Sundays are Different Now

One of the changes caused by Covid-19 is the way I worship. Instead of rushing down to church to check the welcome team are in place and copies of the order of service are available, I can settle into an armchair and wonder how easy it is going to be to phone into the 'Zoom' service. If I'm lucky, I can enjoy listening to the chatter and identifying the voices I hear. It's an exercise in concentration when you can't see what is going on – a sharp reminder of what it must be like to be blind.

When the service ends I switch on my TV to watch the morning service there. The church is of course empty apart from the preacher, reader and someone saying prayers. The service is interspersed with hymns recorded when Songs of Praise was there. It is strange to see everyone bundled up in their winter clothes when I am sweltering in shorts and a t-shirt. I sing along, which is good, as I miss our singing group. After lunch I watch the current series of Songs of Praise, so more singing.

Now I realise how lucky we are to have these means of worship. I have found them very personal and hope I will appreciate my church life even more when we get back to normal. Meanwhile my grateful thanks to all involved in keeping our worship at St Augustine's possible.



Ann Hanrahan



The Orpington Video and Film Makers (OVFM) have been meeting on alternate Tuesdays in the Barnard Room of St Augustine's Church since the room was built.

OVFM's extensive film archive already contains a number of films relating to local history that have been made by members over the years. For the past three years they have had a project to make more such films and they are now adding two of these to the films they have already made available for you to view during lockdown. One is about Ivy Millichamp, the last civilian to be killed by enemy action in World War Two. The other is based on some

paintings of Orpington made by local artist Richard Rayner in the 1890s.

To view these films, please go to <https://www.ovfm.org.uk/ovfm-history-of-orpington-project/>

To people who know Orpington it is so interesting to see the paintings and to be able to compare the views with pictures of the present-day town.

Sue Goodger

A Smile a Day in Lockdown

Over the past few months I have tried to do an early morning walk three or four times a week, just round the roads in Petts Wood. Since the wet days of late winter, the gardens have provided a change of scene every day with magnificent magnolias and enviably large rhododendrons. They have made the walk much more than just a tramp round the roads.

However, there is one house whose front garden brings a smile, chuckle or laugh to everyone who passes it. One day, there appeared a mannequin, dressed as a health care worker. Then there was Superman, Batman, Wonderwoman: each day a different mannequin. Then came two nurses in scrubs until the piece de resistance, their 58th display - a full Mad Hatter's Tea party!

Michelle Rockliffe, who has worked with children and young people says, "I just wanted to bring a smile to my family and friends in lockdown."

On her JustGiving page for **Bromley Y**, she says that Mental Health, especially for young people, has been severely underfunded in recent years. Early access to mental health support is vital and **Bromley Y** offer counselling as well as family therapy. She has raised over £2,500 and hundreds of smiles!



Mary Plummer



About Bromley Y

Bromley Y is a long established local agency offering free, confidential counselling to young people between the ages of 0-18 within the borough of Bromley. www.bromleywellbeingcyp.org/

Icelandic Penguins?

In these extraordinary times I get many letters each week from charities I support asking for donations, as all charities are struggling at the moment. One that caught my attention through Facebook was Chester Zoo. They set up the Save Our Zoo campaign after being told to remain closed 'indefinitely' while the UK slowly recovers from the Covid-19 outbreak. They posted a video and set up a crowdfunding link. They need £1.5m a month to survive. They've since raised £2.3m in just a few days.

But an unlikely hero has come forward during the zoo's time of need. The supermarket chain Iceland has adopted the zoo's entire rookery of Humboldt penguins, therefore alleviating some of the financial strain. The Humboldt penguin is one of those 500 or so species at the zoo that is considered endangered, so the work being done at Chester Zoo is more important than ever. The frozen food retailer has also agreed to lobby the UK government on the zoo's behalf, to



amend legislation to allow zoos to reopen with strict social distancing guidance in place. This money from visitors will help the zoo get back on its feet, after its period of closure. In fact the latest news is that the zoo reopened on June 15.

Who better to endorse a load of penguins, right? So, the penguins aren't actually from Iceland - or from the Northern Hemisphere at all, for that matter - but it's still nice that Iceland decided to get involved.

Sue Goodger

Picture Getty/Chester Zoo

Faith journeys - Wisdom from our 'Senior Saints'

During this challenging time, because I have been studying pastoral care and discipleship for my Lay Ministry course, I've been on a journey with some of the members of St A's who do not have access to the internet and are only in touch with us through the telephone on Sundays. I have asked them to talk about an aspect of their faith journey. It's been very rewarding.

Coming to Faith

These 'senior saints' have much wisdom to share with us through their faith journeys. Many of them came to faith through the example of others when young. Christians in education, youth leaders, nuns in a Roman Catholic school, Church Army officers, grandparents and parents all played their part in showing an example of Christ. For one it was 'A conversation, a job, a book, shared music or a poem, a joke sometimes (but not always) labelled Christian'.

Special Texts

Some shared verses from the Bible that they have found helpful and comforting throughout their lives.

Matthew 28:20 'I am with you always, to the end of the age'.

1 Corinthians 10:13 'God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted (or for her the sense of facing trials and carrying burdens) beyond your ability, but he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it'.

The fact that Jesus knows our sorrows and wept himself during his life.

Jeremiah 31:3 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you'

Lamentations 3:22 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness'.

The reckless generosity not fairness shown in some of our best loved Bible stories; the Prodigal son and the Good Samaritan.

Our saintly older members have much to teach us and show us. God has been faithful to them. I'll be continuing on my quest for wisdom from them. These are just a few 'gems' for us to share during the summer months.

Verity Mitchell



Thank you Gifts for our Care Home Staff

Pastoral care is an important part of our Christian witness in the parish and during the coronavirus pandemic the amazing work of the NHS and care home staff has been nationally acclaimed. Our Anna Chaplain, Diana and Johanna, who is preparing to take on the role of Anna Friend, drew to our attention an initiative to give small individual thank you gifts to the staff at our local care homes, Queen Elizabeth House and Ashglade; where, we are pleased to report; all residents and staff are keeping well.

Your response was amazing: tubs of hand cream, lotion, soap and boxes of chocolates appeared in the special box outside the Vicarage, and there were also cash donations

which enabled us to purchase some small items from Body Shop - which included a charity discount!! We gave nearly 35 gifts, thanks to your generosity. Thank you cards were made by some of our younger children and their families and Christine and I delivered the gifts and cards - ringing the bell and leaving them on the doorstep! The staff showed their surprise and appreciation with a smile and a wave. We look forward to the time when we will be able to resume our monthly Sunday services at Queen Elizabeth House and Ashglade.

Hilary Chittock

British Wild Orchids - *flowering jubilantly in June and July, loving the lockdown*

Miniscule relatives of tropical blooms
Seen in greenhouses and smart drawing-rooms,
But exceedingly more rare.
These orchids that I wonder at
Thrive still, in chalky habitat
So, always tread with care.

Some, smaller than a buttercup,
Discretely lift their faces up
To taunt the flies and bees.
Their seeds, concealed in strange disguise,
Attract poor insects' lustful eyes
By artful mimicries.

Yet some are missed by those who pass
As they stand tall by roads and paths,
Or hidden in some ditch.
The lizard orchid, fleetingly
Makes its appearance by the sea
On a golf course at Sandwich.

When specimens are very rare,
Admirers can but stand and stare,
Or take some photographs;
For Wardens guard their hiding place,
So visitors cannot deface
Their havens in the grass.

People, restrained by wall and barb,
From sprays in military garb,
On Open Day each year
May enter, so that they can see
Bedecked in purple finery
The uniform these wear.

Once you start looking, soon you will
Derive, as I do, such a thrill
From spotting these quaint flowers.
Though beauty's not their claim to fame,
You'll learn to love them just the same,
And search for them for hours.

Sally Morris



Bee orchid



Fly orchid



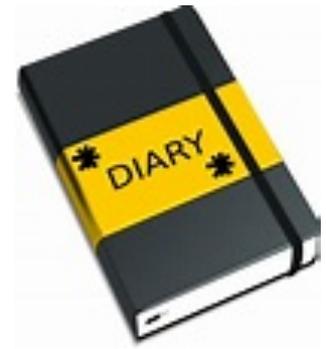
Lizard orchid



Military orchid

My Constant Companion

I guess it is a sign of the age in which we live but recently I have found myself having to learn how to use new technology at an alarming rate. Many of us are now experts on joining the church service via Zoom week by week; A Little Girl I Know has met with her tutor and her form via teams on a regular basis and is getting used to hearing her class friends' voices without seeing their faces. I have got used to finding suitable activities for two of the groups I run that can be done during our weekly online sessions. A Little Girl I Know is now used to seeing her Guide friends and leaders sitting comfortably in their homes instead of their normal meeting place. It has all been a bit strange to say the least.



My beloved diary has sat almost neglected on my desk these past few months. Nothing very much to write in it except the normal morning walk, supermarket shop, brief visits to the grandparents of a Little Girl I Know and work. Unlike so many of my friends I have had to go to work nearly all the way through this pandemic. It has been a welcome distraction and it gave me the feeling that I was doing something to support the children of parents, who are looking after those who have been affected by Covid-19.

A Little Girl I Know and her father have been my main companions during this time. She has tried so hard to keep up with her work, managed to keep her room almost tidy and do her daily exercise. It has been so difficult for all our children, but the end of the school year is almost upon us. A friend recently said that the school holidays should be so easy compared to what we have been through. I'm not commenting just yet on that!



Another companion has been with me for a long time - my mobile phone has been my lifeline. Only a month ago it all became too much for the previous phone and it packed up. It had amongst others things run out of memory. It refused to allow incoming calls, text messages or to let me take photographs... it had to go! After a visit to our local supermarket I became the proud owner of an all singing and dancing updated phone. I am very much back in control of that part of my life again.

My earthly companions, my computer, my diary, A Little Girl I Know and my mobile have kept me going during this time. But I know it is my Heavenly Father who has protected me, and kept me strong at a time when it would have been easy to give up. I will be forever grateful that God has been with me and will never leave me no matter what. Thank you, God, for that precious gift.

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COVID-19 Situation in Kondoa and Mwaikisabe

It has been hard to work out exactly what is going on with the Coronavirus in Tanzania and specifically Kondoa and Mwaikisabe, the Diocese and village linked to Rochester Diocese and St Augustine's with St Luke's. What we do know is:

- Schools and universities were all closed in March
- There have been some cases mainly in large cities such as Dar Es Salaam, Arusha and Dodoma.
- The last time official data was released on April 29, there were 509 cases, with 21 deaths in Tanzania.
- There has been a lot of misinformation, uncertainty and fear
- Churches have remained open but much fewer people have been attending
- On June 7, declaring victory over COVID-19, Tanzania's President John Magufuli said that "the corona disease has been eliminated thanks to God".
- Universities reopened on 1 June
- Schools are due to reopen on 29 June

Overall, life in Tanzania has certainly been disrupted, more it appears by precautions to prevent the Coronavirus than widespread cases. There is obviously nothing like the furlough scheme that we have here in the UK so there is a limit to how long people can afford to be out of work as they have few savings to fall back on.

It does appear that there have been limited cases outside the main cities and life may be starting to return towards normality.

Tanzania in general does benefit from having plenty of space and a relatively young population.

There is no doubt that people have been going hungry and St Augustine's with St Luke's, in response to an appeal, have sent out £1,000 to Kondoa Diocese to help.

We remain in regular contact with Rev John Sinda, the pastor at Mwaikisabe, and they have been praying for us all regularly. John sent us this picture in May which is from a church called Paulo, recently opened, mainly for the Masai tribe. John told us they prayed for St Augustine's with St Luke's and that we would be safe from Coronavirus at that service.



We were planning to visit in the autumn of this year, but this has now been postponed. The overall message is that we should continue to pray for our friends in Kondoa and Mwaikisabe that they will stay safe from the virus and also that the impact from fear of the virus and preventative measures is minimised.

Nigel Pope

A Summer Recipe to enjoy from Valerie

Strawberry Soup



- 1 Cup (250 ml) dry white wine
- 1/3 cup (70g) white sugar
- 2 cups (approx. 325g) chopped Strawberries.
- 1 cup (250 ml) Orange Juice (or try with orange and lime juice)

Method

1. In a small saucepan mix wine and sugar, bring to boil. Let it boil for 5 mins and then remove from heat. Let cool
2. Puree strawberries and wine mixture in blender or food processor until smooth. Stir in orange juice. Chill for at least 3 hours or overnight before serving.

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A message from Steve, our vicar

As we prepare to come out of lockdown, little by little, one of the latest easing of restrictions is to open churches for private prayer. From Monday 15 June we opened St Augustine's for private prayer only. We are working hard

to make this happen - there will be hand sanitisers in dispensers, so that hands can be cleaned on the way in and out of church. And of course, the new norms of social distancing will still apply. Both doors will be open and the ramp fitted to allow access without touching the door frame. There will be a table just inside with paper and pencils. You will be asked for your details, name and address, etc. and an opportunity to request to be contacted by a member of the church if you wish. These will be posted into a sealed box for confidentiality. These may be needed for test and trace purposes and will be destroyed when we are free of the virus.

Our plan is to open the church **Mondays 10am until 4pm** and **Thursday 3pm until 7pm**, this allows time for the church to be cleaned and 72 hours for any germs to disperse. For your information the church halls, kitchens and toilets **will NOT** be open. There will only be metal chairs two metres apart which can then be cleaned and sanitised.

Government guidance changes daily and we will update you further in the Sunday Morning service. There will also be notices outside the church with details.

I pray that this slight easing of the lockdown rules will afford us the opportunity to galvanize our prayer life and to seek God's will for our community.

Revd Steve Spencer - 020 8467 1351 - revsteve.spencer@btinternet.com

July issue: Editor Sue Goodger, Layout Adrian King.

The September 2020 issue will be published on the St. Augustine's and St'Luke's website.

Editor: Ann Hanrahan (Tel 020 8467 5629) Layout: Karen Palmer kajpal@live.com

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