

Bexley Team News

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood
St James, North Cray
St John the Evangelist, Bexley
St Mary the Virgin, Bexley

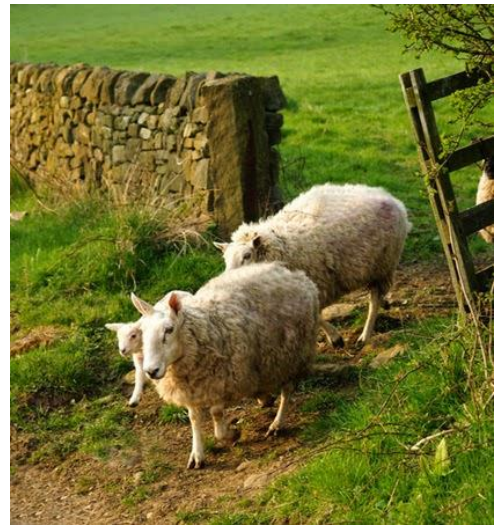
Sunday 3 May 2020 Issue 7

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

PUBLIC WORSHIP HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN ALL CHURCHES & PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Collect

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.



Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament: Genesis 7

New Testament: Acts 2 v. 42-47

Gospel Reading: John 10 v.1-10

Reflection on today's gospel reading

This Sunday is called *Good Shepherd Sunday* owing to the Gospel appointed for today, in which Christ likens Himself to a shepherd and ourselves to His flock.

Sheep are sociable creatures, often seeming to move as one great mass when in huge flocks – in the shared community of the flock sheep provide each other with protection from predators and seem to operate a largely egalitarian structure with social hierarchy being quite subtle (far more so than in a herd of cows): A 'lost sheep' separated from the herd may often panic and stumble into danger. They really aren't designed for self isolation or social distancing. These are animals who live together, move together, and exist together. These are the animals to which Christ likens His Church.

During the Reformation there was great concern about the nature of *the individual before God* – perhaps rightly so as it can be easy when in a herd to lose a sense of personal accountability. Over time however this has developed and talk of spirituality has become intensely personalised: How often do we talk of 'My faith', 'My prayer', 'My God' as if this is something we're doing all on our own? Consider also the hymns and worship songs written in the *I* form (*My Jesus, My Saviour; My God, I love thee not because...*; etc) with those written as *We* (*We have a Gospel to proclaim; We sing the praise of Him who died; and so forth*) – what do they say about our understanding of worship and what it is to be a church?

There is a difference between an act of collective worship and a collection of acts of worship. At the moment we are still able to participate in the latter. On our own and with our households we can still pray,

read scripture, sing and be aware of God's presence, however the sledgehammer realisation of lockdown is that even if we are able to connect by telephone or online we are still separated from the larger flock: 'Virtual Church' is exactly that; *virtual* and the reality of the truly collective worship which binds us together as a flock continues to be denied to us: We feel *out of communion* with one another – How can we be one body when we cannot partake in one bread?

As we may have observed during Lent, and as our Muslim friends are now experiencing in Ramadan, one of the effects of fasting is a greater appreciation of that which is denied. Now as we are denied the intimacy and fellowship of the flock perhaps we will emerge from lockdown with a renewed appreciation for our collective worship, gathered community and the connections which bind us as churches and as a team. Rev'd Edward.

Prayers

Keep us, good Lord under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. Amen.

The Church of England has published a booklet of 'Prayers for use during the coronavirus outbreak'. It can be found on line and downloaded.

Around and about

For a **musical festival** of hope brought to you by the All Souls Orchestra visit www.allsoulsmusic.org
Streamed online to your home Saturday 2nd May at 7.30 pm
Remember the **VE Day celebrations** planned for 8-10th May? The Royal British Legion has developed a virtual programme that allows VE Day to be appropriately marked and the contribution of that generation to be suitably acknowledged. Please visit www.britishlegion.org.uk › get-involved › ve-day-75 Events begin with a two minute silence at 11.00 am on 8th May.

A Curate for BTM. We have received the following message- "Hello, my name is Matt Hodder and I am really looking forward to joining the Bexley Team as the new Curate this summer. For the last three years my wife Jen and I, and our two children Zach (4) and Annie (18 months) have been living in Cambridge. I have been studying at Ridley Hall Theological College which has been a great joy, and we are really looking forward to starting this summer. Before training both Jen and I worked in primary schools. I worked as a teaching assistant and used to run the outdoor learning programmes, and Jen was a teacher in Reception and Key Stage 1. I am thoroughly looking forward to starting in my new role and getting to know many of you over the coming months. Obviously, with the challenging times that we are living in at the moment our introductions might have to be quite creative, but nonetheless it will be great to be a part of the ministry and community with you all. We are praying for you all during this time and will see you all soon, Matt"

Rev'd Ren adds- as far as we can see at the moment, the Hodder family will be moving to Hill Crescent at the end of June, and as much as is possible in the current circumstances we are working on getting the house ready for them.

St Mary's, Bexley

Angela Payne's funeral took place on Friday 1st May. Please remember Angela's son Stuart and also the family of Joan Clifford whose funeral is on Monday 4th May at 3.30 pm. Both Angela and Joan's families are planning to have memorial services at St. Mary's when this becomes possible.

St John's, Bexley

Suspended Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com Social Media-engage with us via Facebook ([/stjohnsbexley](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsbexley)) and Twitter ([@stjohnsbexley](https://twitter.com/stjohnsbexley)).

Help offered/needed

If you or someone you know **needs help** or if you **can offer assistance** please contact-

St. Mary's Bexley contact Christine Wood 01322 270942 chrisawood2003@yahoo.com

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood- contact Rev'd Ren or Kevin Clarke 07791582546 kacrat@btinternet.com

St. James, N Cray- contact Rev'd Ren or David Stevens 0208300 0867 davidstevens112@aol.com

St. Johns, Bexley- contact Revd Edward Barlow contact details below

THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY

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