



Tenterden, St Michael's and Smallhythe
www.tenterdencofe.co.uk

'THE VIRAL TIMES'

Wednesday 1st April 2020

WELCOME!

G'day mate! We have made it to Australia! Ann Robertson has been in touch to say that she is forwarding our daily offering to her friend Edna Mephram, who lives 'Down Under'! Rather like this wretched virus, we've gone global, though hopefully more beneficially!

Another day in lockdown is upon us ... and I think it is fair to say we are beginning to enter a phase where the reality is biting. This is tough and there is no getting away from it. It doesn't even really help to know we are all in the same boat.

Yesterday we had the first funeral we've been involved in since the lockdown took effect. There were just four mourners and despite being siblings they had to sit socially distant. It was hard to watch. As a minister it is important that the farewell is as compassionate and dignified as it ever is – but there is no escaping the reality of lockdown even at this most personal and emotional time. Despite all the circumstances that would suggest otherwise we were able to lead a service that the few loved ones present appreciated and valued.

Reflecting on the experience and how hard self-isolation is, and how much we are missing basic social interactions, it is a good time to remind you all that the clergy team are here for you, as is Irene and her wonderful team of pastoral visitors. If you want someone to chat to please do call and we will listen.

SERVICES AND READINGS

Morning Prayer: Psalm 124; Exodus 9:1-12; Hebrews 12:3-13.

Evening Prayer: Psalm 56; Jeremiah 22:20-23:8; John 12.1-11.

Compline will also be posted tonight.

Remember you can continue to share in our services by clicking on this link:
<https://www.tenterdencofe.co.uk/listen>.

PALM CROSSES

Palm crosses are still available from the porch at the Vicarage, and from the porch at St Michael's. Please do come and collect one during your daily exercise.

MARGARET'S HYMN CHALLENGE

A day or two ago, Margaret Roylance threw down the gauntlet and asked us to come up with some hymns for the times. Several of you got in touch with your choices. Here is the list:

Fight the good fight (Margaret Knight)

Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock (Leni White)

In Christ alone (Ann Wenbourne)

All my hope on God is founded (Edna Harrisson and Sue Gough)

O God our help in ages past (John and Ann Burbidge)

Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness (Tracey Laws)

We walk by faith (Trish Fogden)

Great is thy faithfulness (Ann Robertson)

God is working his purpose out (Ann Robertson)

In heavenly love abiding (Shirley Puckett)

So that's ten! Well done, everyone!

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Here are some more April Fool stories. Tracey Laws heard one at a recent funeral. 'The deceased lady was one for always catching out her husband on April 1st. They had experienced an invasion of ants one year and got rid of them in the usual way. As April 1st approached, she decided to fool him. That morning she carefully opened several tea bags and tipped the leaves onto the floor in a line imitating a row of marching ants. She cried from the kitchen:" Help, we've got ants again!". The poor hapless husband rushed to her aid; only to be faced with a floor covered with tea leaves!'

Katie Boughton was caught by an April fool some years ago, when feeling exhausted after a heavy day in her clinic. 'On entering the house, the phone was flashing with a message to ring this number for a Mr. Lyon! Yes, you have guessed that it was the London Zoo number. A member of my family had set me up, but it made me laugh anyway.'

Trish Fogden recalls that in 1982 'Peter and I were living about halfway between Portsmouth and Southampton. That year the Cutty Sark Tall Ships race was due to start on the Solent in Southampton. The local news announced that the Royal Navy had given permission for HMS Victory to lead the ships out of the River Solent. I very excitedly told Peter when he came home. 'I don't think so,' he said! "She's encased in concrete!" April Fool. I do need to add that I had only moved to the area from Holland in October 1981 and had yet to visit HMS Victory. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it!

And Mary Monckton remembers that 'Years ago we lived in Elmfield and the old post office was up where the sorting office still is. Tim rang his secretary Barbara (who still works for Whitehead Monckton) very early and told her that he'd had a message from the post office saying that all mail had to be collected from there. Could she therefore collect the post before coming into the office? Barbara dutifully queued and when she got to the window asked for the Whitehead Monckton post. The girl behind the counter didn't understand so Barbara repeated what Tim had said. People began to laugh in the queue behind her. Barbara went bright pink - and the girl behind the counter asked if she realised what day it was! Tim had to produce a bouquet of flowers later in the day, and the two have never forgotten the incident!

And here's one from Joy: 'Graham B. studied theology at the same college (Salisbury) and at the same time as I did; he was one of the younger students and was known for his energy and enthusiasm and sometimes slightly outrageous behaviour. He served his first curacy in a London parish and the congregation enjoyed his lively sermons. One Sunday he stood up to preach looking rather solemn. "I'm very sorry," he said, "I've been so busy this week I didn't have time to prepare a sermon, so we'll just have ten minutes of silent prayer and meditation." The congregation sat silently and prayed, or perhaps dozed, for a minute or two, but nearly leapt out of their skins when Graham suddenly jumped up and shouted, "April Fool!"

Julia Vink offers her choice of the two best April hoaxes: the 1977 *Guardian* 'San Seriffe' hoax - a seven-page hoax supplement about a moving island. And the 1957 BBC hoax broadcast about a family in southern Switzerland harvesting spaghetti from the family 'spaghetti tree'. Apparently, hundreds of people called the BBC to ask how they could grow and harvest spaghetti in their own backyards.

The last word goes to Robert Abel. He writes, 'I had only been in my new job for three weeks when April Fools' Day came along. One of my colleagues, a rather pompous young man, expected to be promoted. Another colleague and I had other plans. We got one of the secretaries to type a letter, informing "Mr Pompous" that I would taking over as Account Group Head and asking him to give me all the support he could. We expected him to roar with laughter. Instead he sprang up, red faced and fuming, stormed into the manager's office, thumped the desk, handed in his notice (in no uncertain terms) and stormed out! I'm glad to say, he calmed down and saw the funny side of the joke. Mind you, it had the desired effect of bringing him down a peg or two!'

SORRY, FERGAL!

There was an error in yesterday's Viral Times (surely not, you cry)! There we erroneously reported that journalist Fergal Keane had chosen John O'Donohue's poem *Anam Cara* to help him through bad times. In fact, Fergal had chosen another poem (though we can't find out which one). Fergal, if you are reading this, please accept our apology!

THE CHURCH MAGAZINE

Please remember that the April magazines are in the porch at St Michael's and St Mildred's. You might like to pop in whilst taking your daily exercise and pick one up. Please don't worry about payment at this time (though St Michael's readers could put their money in the box in St Michael's Post Office). If you have a neighbour who would like a copy then please take one for them too.

COMMUNION AND COVID 19



We are pleased to share some good news with you! Along with a few other churches we have been asked to trial a new Church of England initiative. To enable us to receive communion without contamination, they have obtained a few Eucharistic Dispensers from America. The Dispensers are stocked with pre-consecrated communion bread and wine in little containers rather like those that are used to hold milk. The communion wafer is sealed inside the peel-back lid. So you will be able to pop into the porch at St Mildred's and, in return for £1, receive Holy Communion. We'll let you know when this is up and running. This isn't ideal but it's good to see our Church thinking on its feet and adapting to these strange times in which we live.

TODAY'S PRAYERS

Please pray for those who live in Cranbrook Road, Millpond Lane, and Chennell Park Road; also for Stella Queen, Joan Hayes, Minnie Swift and all who have died. Please also pray today for all those suffering from COVID-19, and especially today for our leaders as they guide our response to this disease:

God of all, in whom we live and move and have our being, breathe upon our leaders your Holy Spirit: the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord, that through your guidance, they may direct our steps in the ways of safety, and wisdom, and hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONTACT POINTS

Helping in Tenterden

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<https://www.mytenterden.co.uk/directory/helping-in-tenterden-listing-1774.aspx>

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COMING UP TOMORROW

We hear about some of your ways of marking Holy Week, and Neil shares with us his thoughts on dressing up once a week (you can't afford to miss that)!

PLEASE REMEMBER

Keep Safe, Keep Praying, Keep Connected!