

Our Diocese Together

Uniting the Diocese of Derby during the Covid-19 pandemic

Issue 10 - February 2021



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News

Share your stories with us - communications@derby.anglican.org

St Peter's church, Belper brightening up the daily walk

With many of us exploring our local area on a daily walk, St Peter's Belper has come up with a creative way of communicating with walkers. Posters have been attached to trees in their church yard to provide light relief and 'help beat the winter gloom'. Poster reads

"January and February can be gloomy months - particularly at the moment. Over many decades these trees have witnessed many joys and sorrows in the lives of Belper's residents.

We enlist them now to carry some jokes, quotes, Bible verses and YouTube links to raise a few smiles and hopefully bring some joy and encouragement. With our love and prayers for our community at this time. God bless you, St Peter's."



Daffodils in the window

BBC Radio Derby is encouraging people to put daffodils in their windows. "The flowers signify strength and resilience as well as being a sign of hope and new beginnings" - watch their short video on facebook, link below. Maybe you have some daffodils growing in a pot, or you could paint a daffodil, or ingeniously build one out of household objects!

<https://www.facebook.com/BBCRadioDerby/videos/730039830985094/>



Bishop Libby writes...

Domestic abuse is an affront to God



Balancing work commitments and home schooling, anxiety about jobs and businesses, increased financial pressure and uncertainty - lockdown restrictions are having an impact on us all.

I feel the effects of long-term lack of face-to-face contact and separation from wider family and my friends. Worshipping virtually has brought many blessings, but being unable physically to visit the churches in my care and under my oversight is tough too. I miss you. However, I have my husband and adult children with me and home is a place where I feel safe, supported, valued and loved. Sadly, for many, home can be a place of fear and danger - and the pandemic has exacerbated that. Among those most at risk at the moment are those facing domestic abuse.

Women's Aid England research has found that the additional impacts of the pandemic are considerable: it raises fear, worsens the abuse, affects mental health and the ability to cope, increases isolation, makes contacting the police or support agencies more difficult, and reduces options for escape.

Research also highlights an increased impact on children as they are more exposed to witnessing abuse, at increased risk of being left alone with the perpetrator, and more likely to be abused themselves.

Refuge services have reported significant increases in demand for telephone, online and face-to-face services - an average of 444 contacts and calls per day and a 700% increase in visits to their online Helpline.

No one should suffer domestic abuse. It is not OK, ever.

What's more, domestic abuse is an affront to God. Scripture teaches that each and every person is uniquely created in God's image and is infinitely precious. Jesus sought out with compassion those who are most

vulnerable - his active hunger and thirst for justice transforming their darkness into light.

How we treat one another is an expression of our faith: we read in 1 John 'Those who say, 'I love God', and act hatefully to another are liars; for those who do not act lovingly to someone whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must act lovingly to others also.'

Before Christmas I joined The Mothers' Union for a service launching their participation in 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence. We heard about The Willow Project, from Emily Brailsford of Rural Action Derbyshire, which raises awareness of domestic abuse in rural areas. During January, I participated in the second reading of the Domestic Abuse Bill in the House of Lords and am a co-signatory of an amendment requiring funding for community based services for victims and perpetrators, that includes provision for child victims of such abuse.

I am working for Derby and Derbyshire to be places where all do feel valued, loved, cared for, supported - and safe. Our diocesan vision echoes that desire: The Kingdom of God: Good News for all. That good news needs to translate into transformed lives, not least for those who are suffering - right now, in every context of our diocese - domestic abuse. If you have concerns about your own safety, or that of someone you know, there is help available. All of the Domestic Abuse services in Derbyshire have come together to for ease of access at this time: the helpline number is 08000 198 668; and there is a Facebook page called simply 'Domestic Abuse Support in Derbyshire'.

And please know that I am praying for all those living under the dark shadow of domestic abuse.



C:ovid Island DISCS

The creative ways that people in our parishes have found to help people during the pandemic has been wide-ranging. Here, Our Diocese Together looks at how one parish has taken to YouTube to help build community, grow church and transform lives.

Covid Island Discs was the brainchild of Revd Ian Webb, team vicar in Dronfield with Holmesfield Team Ministry, and he has been producing an episode of this popular feature for 12 weeks.

“Having only been licenced in November, I was thinking about how I could help people get something from worship using video,” said Ian.

“But it was also about building community connections and people getting to know one another.

“There was also an element of testimony in there too – how did I become a Christian and what is my role and purpose?”

As the title reveals, the idea is based on the popular BBC Radio 4 series of a similar name. Ian has approached people of different genders and background to feature in his programmes and give something of themselves and their faith. They include local curate Joel Bird, Archdeacon Carol, Bishop Libby and American country music and Christian music singer-songwriter Jenn Bostic who, last year, performed at Dronfield parish church. Guests have also included some who have recently come to faith.

Ian said: “What I have done is to approach people and then send them some instructions. They choose five pieces of music and send me a biography and we see how the conversation goes from there.

“I have a standard set of five questions I ask – including how they came to faith and how they have coped in these times of Covid – and, of course, they also get to tell me about any particular items they would not want to be without on Covid Island.

“And some of their answers have surprised me. One of the things I ask is ‘When did it feel great to be a Christian?’ I had expected people to tell me about a particular single event, but mostly the guests have talked about being in the rhythm of Christianity and the sustenance that comes from that.

“But the answers are varied, as one guest talked about the time his granddaughter was seriously ill and, being away on holiday, all he could do was to pray. His granddaughter went on to make a remarkable recovery – and that was a significant moment in his Christian journey.”

“Music choices have been interesting”

“Music choices have been interesting too! For example, there was a big difference between Archdeacon Carol’s classical choices and some of Jenn’s choices which might have had you jumping around and going crazy!”

Ian says that the response has been fantastic and that he has had plenty of positive feedback, but that the current series will finish just before Lent: “I wanted to help people to worship – we are weakened as a church because we have not been able to sing together, and this series has hopefully helped and encouraged some to do that and to worship God.

“It is a time-consuming process – mainly because of the editing – but I would do it again if people wanted it. I think it has been of value and I believe it has helped people during lockdown.”

Catch up on all the episodes of Covid Island Discs on YouTube – youtube.com/c/dwhparish

Want to hear more from the diocese?



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Sign up to the fortnightly Enews at www.derby.anglican.org

Share your stories with us

As we come to terms with the changing restrictions it can be hard to know how we can continue to join our church families to celebrate and worship together.

We would love to hear your stories and ideas and share with others around the diocese.

If you’d like to feature in Our Diocese Together or the E-news please email communications@derby.anglican.org including your contact information and if possible, photographs to support your story.

Lent resources

Lent 2021 will be different to previous years but there are still ways to mark this important season of the church year. New resources have been created for you to use at home or perhaps in online groups. Links to all resources can be found on the diocesan website, www.derby.anglican.org

Children's Lent resources

'Living God's Way' is a series of resources, created by Sarah Brown, for children and their households for the season of Lent, aiming to give ideas and spiritual focus during this time of the church year. The resources for each Sunday are not meant as tasks to work through. Rather, they should be taken as ideas which can be selected by children and adults to best meet the age, development, time and resources that are available. Resources include Bible texts, scope for thought and conversation, craft and activities, worship, prayer ideas, and link to songs, videoclips and Powerpoint from other sites.

Intercessions for Sundays in Lent

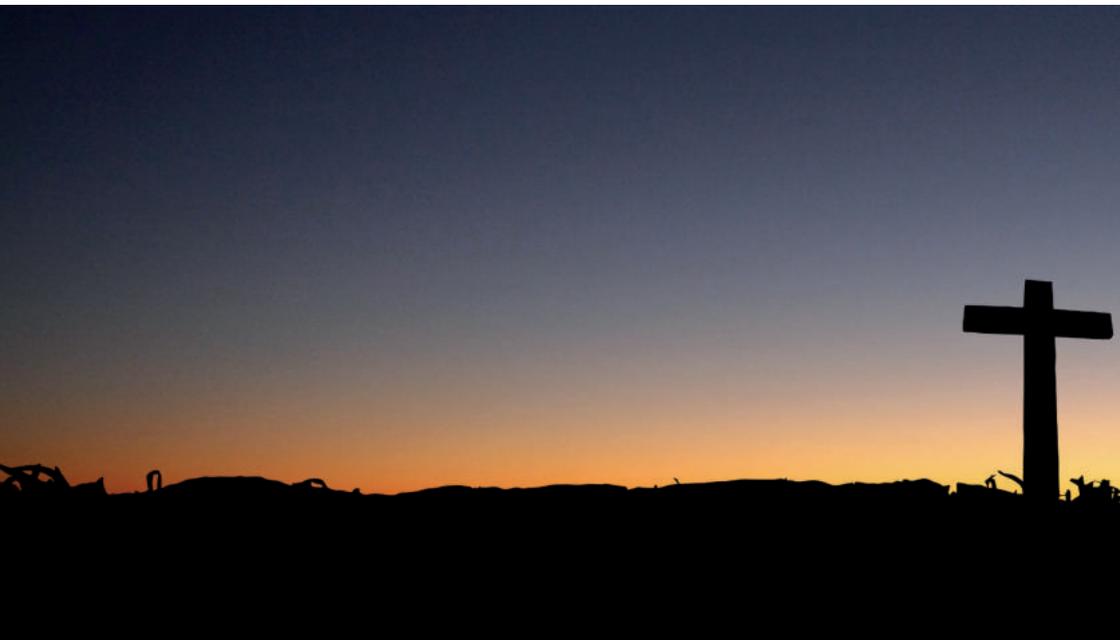
A list of intercessions for the Sundays in Lent 2021 have been created by Rob Rodgers, Tim Sumptner, Nicky Fenton, Stephen Monk and Richard Reade.

Lent Spiritual resources - Creative prayer responses around six themes

These creative resources have been written by Karen Harrick from Harlequin Arts and offers thoughtful and simple prayer ideas for the six weeks of Lent.

The Scars Remain

A selection of poems for Lent and Easter by Tim Sumpter



LiveLent: God's story, Our story

The Church of England's Lent resources theme for 2021, building on the success of recent years, is entitled #LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story.

It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, published on 19 November by SPCK.

Both the book and the accompanying daily reflections encourage all Christians to think about their calling, how to share their faith and reflect on the difference Christ makes in our lives.

We witness to God's story and the impact this has made to our story so that others might also find their story taking on new meaning in the light of God's love. While the current restrictions on daily life necessitated by the pandemic present significant challenges, the suffering and isolation many continue to face make the need for us to share God's love with our communities greater than ever. Rather than just being a Lenten discipline, this year's #LiveLent is a joyful invitation to make witness a normal part of the Christian life, the natural overflow of a life lived in devotion to Christ.

What are the key elements of the Lent 2021 resources?

From Ash Wednesday (17 February) to Easter Sunday (4 April), there will be six reflections for each week, written by Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness. Each reflection will include a short passage from the Bible, a brief exploration of the reading, and a prayer. Additionally, each week will have a unifying theme and an action to be taken during the week.

The daily reflections will be made available through a booklet available to buy from Church House Publishing, as well as a free app, emails, audio and through the Church of England's social media accounts. Webinars will be offered early in 2021 to help churches plan how to make the best use of the range of resources and content for both individuals and groups.

More information is available <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/livelent-2021-church-resources-gods-story-our-story>



Online retreating during the pandemic - a (not too) personal story

Anne Phillips

It's been part of my spiritual life for some years to make an annual individually guided retreat (IGR) to spend time alone with God, 'doing business' with our Maker.

Drawn by the Ignatian tradition, my 'go-to' place is St Beuno's, the spirituality centre set in the glorious countryside of North Wales within sight of the Snowdon range.

Travelling this spring being prohibited, I decided to have a go at one of their new online retreats: everything I've experienced from St Beuno's over the years has been of the highest quality down to the last detail, deeply spiritual and personally caring. They did not let me down this time.

Of the varied lengths on offer, I chose a midweek retreat, Monday evening to Friday morning. Once my booking was confirmed, information was emailed in good time, especially helpful for those new to an IGR, giving an understanding of the process and how to plan an appropriate daily pattern at home.

Living alone, it was easy for me to organise days of isolation and silence, letting all who needed to know the days that I was unavailable. But being thoroughly realistic, the staff are aware that doesn't suit everyone's situation, so the retreat can be done 'in daily life' with dedicated times for guidance and prayer set aside, but fitted in alongside other (family and work) commitments. This makes it available to everyone. The cost is not prohibitive: charges are set as a suggested donation which can be adjusted according to need.

Like many of us, I find Zoom a mixed blessing in these restricted times, but it worked well. The group was small enough for all, plus our spiritual guides, to fit on one screen for the short opening and closing plenaries, and phone numbers are supplied for those not online or in case of technical glitches. After a welcome which included practicalities, there

were brief introductions, followed by a leading into silence with scripture, a brief on-screen liturgy and prayer. St Beuno's works on the principle that only necessary information be shared publicly so it's first names only - certainly no 'post' or denomination: a Jesuit foundation, it's fully ecumenical in reach and operation.

Prayer guides were matched with each of us following confidential information we supplied on our booking form, and each guide was in touch prior to the retreat to arrange a meeting time for each day. These meetings are 40-45 minutes long. All guides are trained by the centre and are under their rigorous supervision, so everyone can be confident in their capability. My guide was an excellent listener, discerning where God was moving in my life - unsurprisingly following a different agenda from my prepared one (as it should be!) - gently and sensitively suggesting scriptures, activities and areas for prayerful meditation and conversation with God, which we built on step by step as we spoke each day. It was a richly rewarding time, this pattern similar to a residential IGR; however, grounded in home space, I found new ways to integrate my spiritual journey with the rest of life - harder to achieve on return from the rarefied atmosphere of a retreat house when the spiritual 'high' so often jars with our lived realities.

St Beuno's retreats follow the Ignatian tradition but the methods and language are neither esoteric nor do they demand prior knowledge or ongoing adherence. Many new to the imaginative reading of scripture which lies at the heart of Ignatian prayer find it life-giving, opening up fresh insights into God, and God's desire to love us each one individually - for such were we made.

More information can be found on the website: <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/>

and wider resources for the pandemic here <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/pandemic-resources>