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Parish of St Peter & St Paul, Abington

* the Church in the Park -

**Welcome to our September Newsletter**

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**Rector’s Pastoral Letter**

Dear friends

Welcome to our very first e-Parish Newsletter! The Pastoral Letter has served its purpose over the last 18 months or so. I give thanks and praise to God for it has now come to an end. There were 53 letters written. When I wrote the first one, I had absolutely no idea that there would be 52 more letters. I have never written that many letters to anyone in my life! If someone told me 18 months ago that I would end up writing 53 letters, then I might have been too scared and stressed even to start. But because I had no idea about what is going to happen in the future, I was able to just do it and get on with it. Sometimes it is better not to know what is going to happen in the future and just focus on what is in front of us right now.

We are still living in the global Pandemic. No one knows how long this will last and where we will be in the coming months. But perhaps there is a blessing in that. All we have to do, all we can do, is to focus on what is in front of us right now and try to listen to what God says to us through the people right next to us.

Jesus was very good at this. He knew what was waiting for him. He knew about the betrayal, the humiliation, the suffering, and the death on the cross. But he didn’t let those things in the future stop him from living the present fully. His focus was on living each day to the full, being true to God in every way. Even though he had all the power and knowledge, he chose to focus on helping the people right next to him. But by doing so, he eventually brought redemption to the whole humanity.

Friends, being kind to one person next to you is worth as much as helping all humanity. Because that one person means the world to God. We don’t know how long this pandemic will last, just like I didn’t know how long I was going to write my pastoral letters. But just as those pastoral letters now have come to an end, there will be an end to this. And it will lead to a new life and new creation. This new e-Parish Newsletter is a small sign of that new hope. That new life may not be as perfect and ideal as we might hope for, just like this parish newsletter is in no way perfect or glowing. But it will still be important and precious to us. And the work that God has begun through us and in us will continue, bringing healing and restoration to our broken and hurting world.

May we continue to walk together with Christ and with one another in hope.

With love in Christ

Jun

**Worship for September**

The service on Sunday 5th September is an outdoor service (weather permitting).

Preachers of September

5th September, Trinity 14: Liz Kelly

12th September, Trinity 15: The Revd. Jun Kim

19th September, Trinity 16: Prester Coleman

26th September, Trinity 17: Alison Barnes

**This month’s prayers and prayer topics**

### **Pray for Afghanistan**

*In this desperate time of violence in Afghanistan, we can feel powerless.  But we believe in the power of prayer.*

O God of mercy and of peace, we hold before you the peoples of Afghanistan.
Be living bread to those who are hungry each day
Be healing and wholeness to those who have no access to health care amidst the ravages of pandemic
Be their true home to all who have been displaced
Be open arms of loving acceptance to those who fear because of their gender, ethnicity, religious or political views
Be peace to those engaged in armed conflict and those who live within its shadow.
Turn our hearts and minds to your ways of just and gentle peace,
Open our eyes to see you in all acts of compassionate care
Strengthen our hearts to step out in solidarity with your suffering people and hold us all in your unfailing love.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who emptied himself of all but love in order to bring life in all its fullness.  Amen.

*This prayer was written by Ramani Leathard, Christian Aid’s Head of Region for South East Asia and Afghanistan.*

**Readings Readers and Intercessors for September**

29th August, Trinity 13: **Reader:** Owen Warr,  **Intercessor:** Donald Loe

5th September, Trinity 14: **Reader:** Jenny Mercer, **Intercessor:** Alison Barnes
12th September, Trinity 15: **Reader:** Damian Pickard, **Intercessor:** Rhiannon George
19th September, Trinity 16: **Reader:** Janet Winn, **Intercessor:** Owen Warr
26th September, Trinity 17: **Reader:** Donald Loe, **Intercessor:** Prester Coleman

**How we are managing COVID risk in Church**

As you know the Ministry Team regularly reviews our Covid procedures and we looked at them again at this week’s meeting looking forward to changes for our service on Sunday 5th September.

Locally, our COVID rate has remained stubbornly high at around 330 cases per 100,000 which is around the national average – concentrated mainly in the two age groups, 10-19, and 20-29. Whilst most of us have had two COVID jabs, we have to be concerned about the current high local rate, for those of us who are immuno-compromised and some recent evidence that the vaccine’s effect may wane over time.

Nonetheless we want to continue to make progress on our relaxation restrictions and we understand some would want to move much faster. However, we want to ensure everyone feels safe in coming to church and so we think it is prudent to continue to ask members of the congregation to continue to follow government guidance that we should continue wearing masks when in church.

However, we are ceasing to require booking of seats and asking that people sit at a respectful distance from their neighbour. With everyone’s cooperation we are confident can now ensure the orderly exit of the congregation from the south door and so enable families with children to resume use of the tower room and look forward to the Junior Church resuming. We are also removing restriction of the number in the choir.

Of course we will keep this under review. If you have concerns that we are moving too fast – or too slowly or need clarification or our procedures- please speak to our Churchwardens, Jim Mercer, Donald Loe, the Rector or myself. Bob Purser

**Junior Church**

We held a half day holiday club with children and families on 16th August featuring 'Marvellous Miracles'. 12 Children attended and heard the story of Jesus walking on the water, before being able to take part in numerous associated activities. A lovely time of faith and fellowship was enjoyed by all the children. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped and in particular to Susie, Gill, Malc, Jill, Alison and Cathy

The next Junior Church will take place at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 29th August based on another of the Marvellous Miracles. This time featuring the wedding at Cana and turning water into wine.

Junior Church will then be held on every Sunday morning commencing 5th September and will continue the theme of Marvellous Miracles.

**Choir and music**

Organ recital by Tim Dolan, Sunday 12th September

**Reader’s reflection**

Earlier this year I wrote a number of “lockdown musings” reflecting on how to sustain our spiritual life during lockdown. In January I wrote that it was my belief that we could come out of lockdown stronger than when we went in – provided we followed the example of the apostle Paul, “pressing on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus”, and taking opportunity to develop our inner life and also using whatever means of communication we have to bless and keep in touch with others.

Now lockdown restrictions have been officially relaxed (though we’re still urged to use masks – talk about mixed messages!) I have been thinking about where we are now. The picture is mixed. Not everyone (as at the end of August) has returned to Sunday worship in the church building. There are a number of reasons why; for example, some parents of younger children are wary of the possibility of youngsters innocently passing on the virus to older people who may develop severe symptoms. As to how well we have kept up our individual spiritual lives, people would need to say for themselves. As to keeping in touch with others, there have been lots of telephone calls and texts, and we are all grateful for the opportunities to gather on Zoom. Paradoxically, lockdown has helped draw us together, even when we couldn’t meet in person.

So what can we look forward to now? I believe the church can come back together stronger than ever. There are some wonderful pictures in the scriptures about God restoring his people’s fortunes. One of my favourites is Psalm 126. This is one of the “songs of ascents”, sung by pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for one of the great festivals. “When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion,” it says, “we were like those who dream.” The Psalmist seems to be thinking of the Israelites returning form their captivity in Babylon. “Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.” Nothing wrong with getting excited when you get your freedom back! “Restore our fortunes, O Lord”, it continues. “May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.” Amen to that – meanwhile, may God give us strength to persevere!

Prester Coleman

**Parish Activities and Events**

****Annual Ride and Stride Event, raising money for the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

This important fundraising event will take place on **Saturday 11th September** from 10 am. Abington Church will be welcoming participants. If you would like to help by recording those people visiting the churchyard, please let Cathy Tinsley know (07516979223). Even if you can only spare an hour, we would be grateful of your support.

Cathy and Alicia plan to walk from Abington church and see how many other churches they can visit in two hours. If you would like to sponsor them, Dorothy has their sponsor form and would be very pleased to receive your donations. Please remember that 50% of all money raised goes to the NHCT and 50% goes to Abington church. Thank you for your generous support.

**Thursday Prayers**

Anxious? Worried? Need strength or guidance? We would love to pray together with you. Every Thursday, at 10 am via Zoom, we gather together to pray. For more details, speak to Liz Kelly

**Pastoral Team**

During the Pandemic the Pastoral Team has been supporting many parishioners through regular telephone calls. Where necessary, this will continue, even though many of the restrictions of the last eighteen months have been lifted. But now, pastoral visits and home communion are also possible too. If you, or anyone you know, would like someone from the pastoral team to get in touch, please contact Liz Kelly, Lay Pastoral Minster and Anna Chaplain. Her contact details are lizmk@outlook.com and telephone 01604 636947 or 07745 604591. We offer a listening ear, someone to pray with, bereavement support, or a friendly visit.

**Mothers’ Union**

After 17 months of not being able to meet in person, 13 members of Abington MU met at the Parish Rooms on a very hot afternoon in July. How wonderful it was to see each other and to enjoy a time of fellowship. Then on 9th August a few members joined with other Deanery MU friends at a service at St Mark’s church in Whitehills. It is 100 years since Mary Sumner, the founder of Mothers’ Union, died and so it was good that we could meet and celebrate her life and the work of this wonderful Christian movement.

The next Mothers’ Union Meeting will be on **Monday 20th September at 2 pm** at the Parish Rooms. We will be celebrating our **annual ‘Wave of Prayer’ service** when we remember our link dioceses around the world. We will then have a ‘**Bring and Buy’ stall** to raise money for Mothers’ Union funds, followed by refreshments. We hope many of our memebers and supporters of MU will be able to join us. **Do remember to bring something along for the sale!** New members always welcome. For more information about MU please do contact either Sue Harrison, Claire Tharby or Cathy Tinsley who are members of the Caretaker Committee.

From Sue Harrison, Claire Tharby and Cathy Tinsley

The Caretaker Committee of Abington Church Mothers’ Union

**Fundraising**

**Standing Committee and PCC**

The next standing committee meetings are on

Wednesday 1st September at 8.00pm

Wednesday 3rd November at 8.00 pm

The next PCC meetings are on

Wednesday 15th September at 8.00 pm

Wednesday 17th November at 8.00 pm

**[Draft Minutes from the last PCC Meeting](https://www.abingtonchurch.org.uk/about-us/parochial-church-council.php)**

**How to get your contribution or event into the next Abington Newsletter**

The Parish Newsletter is emailed on the last Thursday of the month.

Please send content to Matthew George

abingtonbulletin@outlook.com by the 21st of the month for inclusion in the next edition.

If you wish to have a printed version delivered to you, please contact Bob Purser 785836.

There will also be a small number of copies in church for visitors.

**Ministry Team**

The Revd. Jun Kim: Rector, prayandwork@gmail.com

The Revd. Rachel Hetherington: Associate Priest

Alison Barnes: Reader

Prester Coleman: Reader

Liz Kelly: Lay Pastoral Minister & Anna Chaplain

Tim Dolan: Director of Music

Donald Loe and Jim Mercer: Churchwardens

Bob Purser: Lay Chair of the PCC

**When you arrive for a service**

A very warm welcome to St. Peter and St. Paul’s, Abington.

We are a family church and children (however noisy) are particularly welcome at our service. We are delighted that you join us in worship.



 If you use a hearing aid, please use the T setting



Are situated at the back-left hand side of the church and include a baby change

To make an offering, please complete the yellow envelope and we can reclaim Gift Aid. Alternatively you can give on-line through our website or give regularly through the Parish Giving Scheme (talk to Damian Pickard or Bob Purser)

 Our service is livestreamed. The Churchwardens can help you If you cannot see the screen or would prefer to be out of shot

 [St Peter and St Paul Abington Church - Home | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/abingtonchurchinthepark/)

 [St Peter and St Paul Abington Online - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCHk8eQzC5B6f-nH7H4SoVA)

Please speak to our Churchwardens for any assistance during the service or for a Gluten free wafer

[**www.abingtonchurch.org.uk**](http://www.abingtonchurch.org.uk)

If you no longer wish to receive the Newsletter from Abington Church please email bob.purser@abingtonchurch.org.uk

**The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul “The Church in the Park”**

**Park Avenue South, Northampton**

**Charity no. 1131414**