

St Nicholas Church Linton June 2020



Pastoral Letter from the Rector

If you are of a certain age, you will probably remember a song by Boney M called "By the Rivers of Babylon". It got to number 30 in the charts in 1978. For those of you who are under 50, you can find it on Deezer, Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube.

The words of the song are drawn directly from the Old Testament. Psalm 137 says "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. ... How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" The song was originally a Rastafarian protest song, and the Boney M version went back to the original Psalm. Rastafarians used the term "Babylon" for any repressive regime or organisation, and so the essential meaning of the song is the same – Psalm 137 laments the time of exile for the Jewish nation when they were captured by the Babylonians. They were in lockdown for about 70 years, lamenting the lack of access to their familiar surroundings and the temple where they worshipped God.

Times of hardship often create both artistic responses and partisan division. Many of our spiritual songs come from times of slavery. I am not in any way comparing our current situation with the exile or slavery – but we might take heart from a little perspective. However hard we are finding things at the moment, most of us will come through this time of trial and society will recover and rebuild. For those who will have died, we must always lament, learn lessons, and grieve the tragic loss of life.

Billy Graham, the great preacher and evangelist said "Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has." And William Shakespeare, in *As You Like It* states "Sweet are the uses of adversity which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

The current situation has seen something like 45% of UK adults turning to prayer – one in 20 for the first time. Online services have been attracting people to participate in ways not seen in regular worship. Over 25% of adults in the UK have "been to church" during the current pandemic. Our own Zoom™ services have seen up to 80 folk online together. It is highly regrettable that not everybody can access this (by the way you can dial in on an ordinary 'phone – details below) and when we are finally back to "normal" we have to work out how to re-integrate ourselves. Meanwhile, please do keep supporting each other, keep praying, and stay safe and well.

Peter Callway, Rector



Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. A Church of England

initiative in partnership with CONNECTIONS at Holy Trinity Claygate, and Faith in Later Life. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

Church of England Prayer for sufferers of COVID 19
Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

SUNDAY WORSHIP IN THE BENEFICE

10.30 Sunday mornings:

Computer, tablet or smartphone:

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

If you do not have access to the internet you can dial into the service from your landline

Dial 0203 051 2874

Enter 185124308#

Enter #

Cost of a call is standard cost to a geographic number.

The pattern of worship is accessible to all each week, with Holy Communion following each alternate week, ie Sundays of EVEN weeks. Do feel free to have bread and wine in your own homes to share in this time together.

The BBC has various resources

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 at 8.10am

Sunday Worship on BBC1 10.45 – 11.15am (please check the times as they do seem to vary)

Sunday Songs of Praise on BBC1 1.15 – 1.50pm

The Church of England website has on line resources, services and daily prayers.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION SERVICES

Each week there is a new video recording of the BCP Holy Communion service for that week on the Benefice website. <http://BeneficeVideos>

STUDY GROUPS

meet online on Tuesdays at 2.30 pm and Wednesdays at 7.30pm, following a course called Talking Jesus, which is designed to help us share our faith and tell others about Jesus. You are welcome to join the Zoom meeting <http://bit.ly/BeneficeGroups> for either study group.

Benefice Ladies' Prayer Group

Continue to pray every Saturday at 10am online:

<https://zoom.us/j/993530273>



Praying for our communities

Although we are unable to meet we can pray for ourselves and our communities. With this in mind we will pray for our communities each day.

Monday Coxheath
Tuesday East Farleigh
Wednesday Hunton
Thursday Linton
Friday West Farleigh
Saturday The Church at Kasmu in Estonia and their Pastor Revd. Urmas Karileet

Prayer Chain and Pastoral Support

The Benefice has a prayer chain which prays confidentially for anyone who asks for prayer. There is also a Benefice pastoral group. Whilst Eileen is unwell please either contact Marian at david.marian@btinternet.com phone 01622 743977 or the Rector Peter Callway whose details are below.

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4 v 5b -7.

FUNERALS

Please be assured that funerals are still being taken at graveside and the cemetery/crematorium, and the bereaved ministered to, even in different ways at this time.

BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS

Baptisms and weddings cannot take place at the moment and many have postponed weddings until 2021.



Everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"
John 13:35



Go to our facebook page for Messy Church at Home activities

<https://www.facebook.com/LintonMessyChurch/>

Donations for Homeless Care

Until our churches are reopened Becky Parnham is kindly collecting any food donations you wish to make. Donations can be left in a plastic box outside Becky's front door. If you are not sure where she lives, or are unable to get out to drop your donation off please give her a call on 07949 646865 to arrange a pick up. You can also make online monetary donations to Homeless Care Maidstone via their website. Thank you to those who have kindly donated to this cause as it's making a real difference to those in need.



The United Benefice of Coxheath, East Farleigh, Hunton, Linton and West Farleigh

Rector:

Rev Peter Callway Tel: 01622 747570
email: peter@callways.co.uk (not available Fridays)

Associate Rector:

Rev Eileen Doyle Tel:01622 204241
(not available Monday or Tuesday)

Assistant Curate:

Rev Lorna Faulkner 01622 439304

Hon. Associate Rector:

Rev David Jones Tel: 741474

Children & Families' Worker:

Becky Parnham Tel: 07949 646865