

The Bewsborough Parish Post

A newsletter for the Churches in Barfrestone,
Coldred, Eythorne & Elvington with Waldershare,
Shepherdswell and Whitfield



Issue 6

Retreating and Reflecting

by Jenny Groombridge

During our prolonged periods of lockdown St Augustine's College has been running Online Retreats which I have been following.

For the month of January four sessions have been planned on: Soul Songs: Praying the Psalms. For around 15 minutes you listen to a lecturer and then download the suggested activities.

Last week (10th January) Psalm 105 was the chosen Psalm for Remembrance. Other Psalms will be chosen for Lament, Trust and Pilgrimage. I would like to share some of this retreat with you.

Psalm 105: 1-8

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
Make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him:
Tell of all his wonderful works.
Glory in his holy name:
Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Seek the Lord and his strength:
Seek his presence continually.
Remember the wonderful works he has done,
His miracles, and the judgements he has uttered.
O offspring of his servant Abraham,
Children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
He is the Lord our God:
His judgements are in all the earth.
He is mindful of his covenant forever,
Of the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.

31 - 43

He opened the rock and water gushed out;
It flowed through the desert like a river.
For he remembered his holy promise
And Abraham, his servant.
So he brought his people out with joy,
His chosen ones with singing.

'Psalm 105 calls to mind how a wilderness became a place of blessing and solid rock a source of life-giving water. No-one would actively choose where we are now. There are many hardships in this time and sorrows that visit us personally or overwhelm the lives of others. Perhaps the images of wilderness blessing and water from rock can provide a focus for our prayer for those affected in one way or another by Covid. We do not always know what to pray, we cannot always remember all those in need of prayer. Rather than use many words we ask God to release water from this rock and for rivers to begin to flow through this desert.'

I hope that this short extract may interest you. I have given the website above; to join you need to log in and create your own password when accessing the Online Retreats Members area.

Genesis 14:17-20

After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said,
 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
 maker of heaven and earth;
 and blessed be God Most High,
 who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

Psalms 128

1 Blessed are all those who fear the Lord, •
 and walk in his ways.
 2 You shall eat the fruit of the toil of your hands; •
 it shall go well with you,
 and happy shall you be.
 3 Your wife within your house
 shall be like a fruitful vine; •
 your children round your table,
 like fresh olive branches.
 4 Thus shall the one be blest •
 who fears the Lord.
 5 The Lord from out of Zion bless you, •
 that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity
 all the days of your life.
 6 May you see your children's children, •
 and may there be peace upon Israel.

Revelation 19:6-10

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,
 'Hallelujah!
 For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.
 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
 for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
 and his bride has made herself ready;
 to her it has been granted to be clothed
 with fine linen, bright and pure'—
 for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is

that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



Take Note - Signs!

by Revd. Sean Sheffield

In the movie Bruce Almighty, Jim Carey vents his fury against God for not being more visible on a day when he is fired from his job. Pointing at the sky he shouts “Fine, the gloves are off pal!! You’re the one who should be fired. The only one not doing their job properly around here is you!”. Later in a calmer moment, he asks God, “What should I do? Give me a signal” as he is driving down the road full throttle and almost out of control. Just then a neon sign flashes brightly in the darkness – **CAUTION AHEAD** – but he puts his foot down even harder, driving even faster, saying, “I need your guidance Lord, please send me a sign” praying as a truck pulls out in front of him filled with road signs hanging out of the back reading “wrong way”, “dead end” “stop”. Ignoring what is in front of him he crashes the car, and then blames God for not hearing him, not answering his prayers. It takes him until the end of the film, when he has been humbled by many trials, that suddenly he notices Gods signs, realises that these things had been in front of him and he cries out...” You win, I’m done. I don’t want to be God anymore; I want to choose what is right for me. I surrender to your will”.

John’s gospel is pretty clear, that what we heard in our gospel reading this morning, was the first of Jesus’s miracles, but unlike the other gospels he calls them signs. And this term is clearly of importance as it suggests to us that they are much more than mere supernatural feats, they are significant acts. They draw attention to Jesus because they are astounding acts of divine power. They are moments when heaven and earth collide, moments that point away from earth to a heavenly reality. Moments, for those that have eyes to see their real meaning, that stress the significance of Jesus as Saviour, and the nature of the salvation he brings, as John says, they reveal his glory and awaken belief. And yet John is remarkably self-controlled in his gospel in not mentioning any of the amazing miracles in the other gospels, with the exception of two. No lepers healed, no demons cast out, no paralysed man lowered through the roof, no man with a shrivelled hand in the synagogue, not even Jairus’ daughter or the widow of Nain’s son being brought back to life.

Instead, he restricts himself to seven miracles, seven significant events serving as signposts towards who Jesus really is. Recording the feeding of the five thousand, then teaching that Jesus is the bread of life. Recording the healing of a blind man, then explaining that Jesus is the light of the world. Telling of Lazarus being raised from the dead, then teaching that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. There is enough revelation in each of these signs for those who are humble to see. God gives us enough signposts to see him, to trust in him if we are just but humble enough to go looking,

And so it is with this perspective maybe we should look again at the first half of our reading from this morning. First, Mary tells the waiters at the wedding to look at Jesus and “Do whatever he tells you”.

And is that an encouragement, or is it something that brings us up short,
“Do whatever he tells you”

when we realise that this is what our response should be to any of God’s promptings, but is that our response? It certainly leaves me at times asking whether it is always my response. Do I do whatever Jesus tells me. Do I ignore the flashing neon signs in front of me? The warnings, or the direction?

Next Jesus looks for the perfect object which can serve as a signpost for guests at a week-long all Jewish wedding reception, one at which, let's face it we get the general impression a lot of wine had already been drunk. So his eyes land on six stone water jars, now we say jars, but anything that can hold 20 to 30 gallons is not really a jar.... it's a vat, because what we are talking about here is about 120 bottles of wine...in each! Anyway.... I'm pretty sure Jesus could have simply filled the jars with wine, but he doesn't he **involves** the waiters, telling **them** to fill the jars with water, and maybe this is so their simple act of faith can form part of the sign. So, when the unsuspecting master of the feast declares that the bridegroom has served the cheap stuff first, and saved the best to last, it shows what having simple faith in Jesus's words will do. This sign one that would have stirred any humble-hearted guest to faith, the disciples there as wedding guests see this first sign and believe in him.

And so maybe there is an invitation for us today, maybe we should pray through this story with our own failures, setbacks and disappointments of life in mind – thinking of those words again that Mary said. “Do whatever he tells you” – remembering that these are words of transformation. Maybe there are times when we cannot see what is ahead of us; we are in the midst of circumstances beyond our control, that we cannot understand, where the road ahead is not clear, the neon signs don't seem to be working... we should know the Lord is with us, but our humanity pulls us up short and we are afraid to trust him completely. Let's face it, aren't we all in a time like that now, locked in at home, not really knowing when this is going to end. And yet.....despite this, all that really matters, that when we cannot see what is in front of us, and we do not understand what is going on, all that matters.... is that God knows.... God knows.

Perhaps Mary has much to teach us in these times and situations, that we need to learn to trust the Lord completely. Even though we may have had faith in Jesus for many, many years, situations will arise that test that trust to the limit. But, these words remind us.... He will not fail us. He knows about every situation and trial that we face. “Do whatever he tells you” And he has promised to be with us.

And of course, John doesn't want us just to believe that Jesus was able to turn water into wine, this is not about the whispers that no doubt went round the wedding at Cana, that this carpenter, this Jesus from Nazareth was in the wine business now! No, it is an invitation for us to search beyond the miracles, to see them for what they really are, signposts that we would firmly believe and trust in Jesus and put our faith in Him. In his word. That he is involved in our story, so we should look to him, what he can do, the life transformation he offers.

So, going back to where we started, how are we living our lives?

Are we driving full throttle through life like the character in that movie, missing the signs or maybe ignoring them?

If so, then maybe it's time to pull up on the hard shoulder, to look at the signs, to read them. Jesus will not force you to take your eyes off yourself, but he invites you through his signs, his miracles to look at him and see the Living God.

As we consider the transformation of water into wine, we see the effect that Jesus can have, can still have today on our lives, and on the lives of those around us.. Jesus came that we might have life in all its fullness.

Poetry and Prayers

O Beauty, so ancient and so new!
Late have I loved you
though you were always with me.
You call to my heart.
You burst through my deafness.
You scatter my blindness.
I draw breath at your fragrance.
My heart pants for you.
My soul hungers for you.
You touch me and I am consumed
at the thought of your peace.

[St Augustine, 354-430]

A Prayer for Christian Unity

Lord Jesus Christ,
you call us together in faith and love.
Breathe again the new life
of your Holy Spirit among us,
that we may hear your Holy Word,
pray in your name,
seek unity among Christians
and share more fully in your way of life.
All glory and honour be yours
with the Father, and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

For Prayer this Week

For Alpha courses that are being
planned and launched across the
Diocese, including ours recently
advertised.

For our Lent Groups, as we
prayerfully consider resources and
format and our group structure.

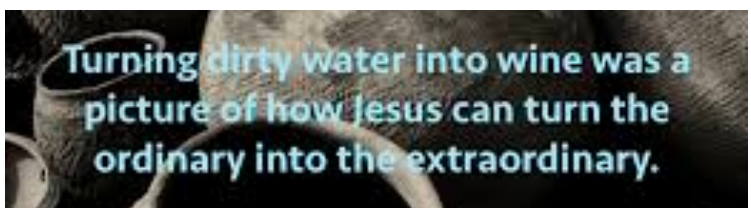
For our longer term vision of small
groups in the Parish beyond our
Lenten journey together.

For Kate & Richard Webster as
they pack up their house and move
on in their new adventure and
journey with God.

For the Sacristan role to be filled at
St. Andrew's Church.

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[The Collect for the third Sunday after Epiphany]



“The Uses of Sorrow” by Mary Oliver

(In my sleep I dreamed this poem)

Someone I loved once gave me
a box full of darkness.

It took me years to understand
that this, too, was a gift.

submitted by Sarah Hindle

Hymns and songs used in this Sunday's online services:

- At the Name of Jesus
- All My Hope on God is Founded
- God is Working His Purpose Out
- **Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)**



written by **John Newton**

(refrain by Chris Tomlin)

(b. London, England, 1725; d. London, 1807)

was born into a Christian home, but his godly mother died when he was seven, and he joined his father at sea when he was eleven. His licentious and tumultuous sailing life included a flogging for attempted desertion from the Royal Navy and captivity by a slave trader in West Africa. After his escape he himself became the captain of a slave ship. Several factors contributed to Newton's conversion: a near-drowning in 1748, the piety of his friend Mary Catlett, (whom he married in 1750), and his reading of Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ. In 1754 he gave up the slave trade and, in association with William Wilberforce, eventually became an ardent abolitionist. After becoming a tide-surveyor in Liverpool, England, Newton came under the influence of George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley and began to study for the ministry. He was ordained in the Church of England and served in Olney (1764-1780) and St. Mary Woolnoth, London (1780-1807). His legacy to the Christian church includes his hymns as well as his collaboration with William Cowper (PHH 434) in publishing Olney Hymns (1779), to which Newton contributed 280 hymns, including "Amazing Grace."

A large number of Newton's hymns have some personal history connected with them, or were associated with circumstances of importance.

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace.

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, Who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

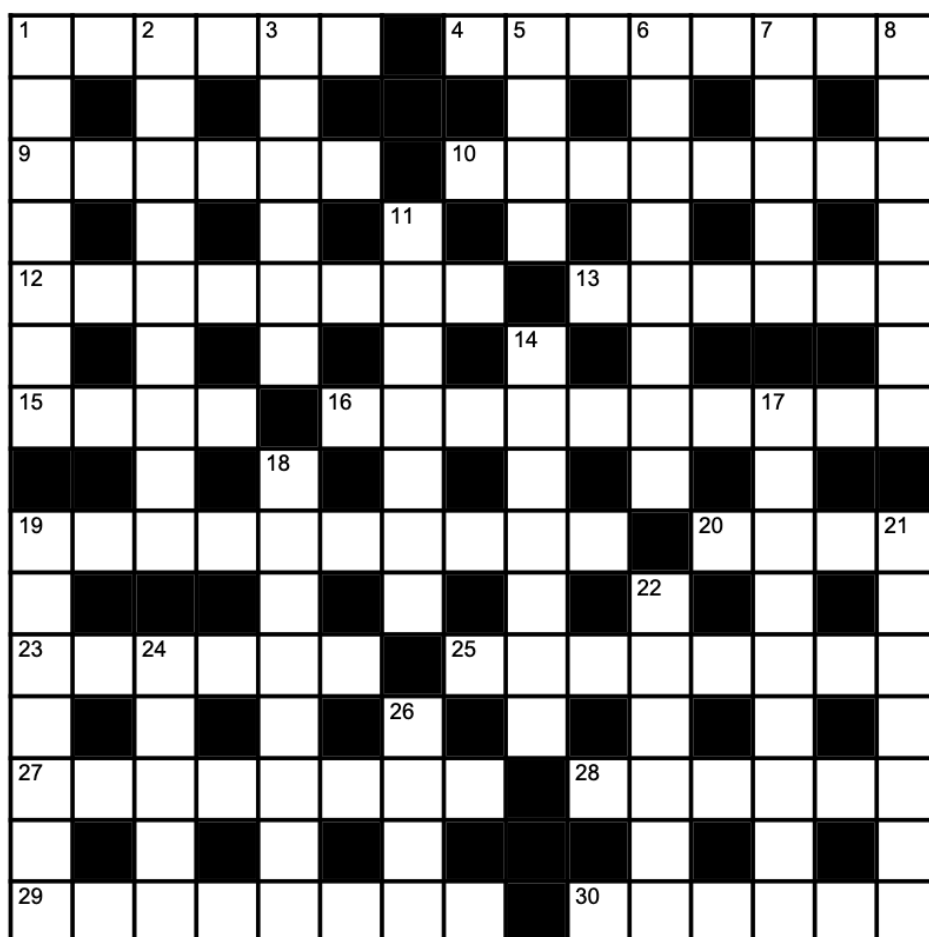
Puzzle Corner

Across

- 1 Express sorrow (6)
 4 Anticipated (8)
 9 God with judge people with this (6)
 10 Sore ants (anag); In the White House? (8)
 12 Kept confined (8)
 13 Times Peter denied Christ (6)
 15 Noah became this by faith (4)
 16 Last book of the Bible (10)
 19 God's angels (10)
 20 Mix up (4)
 23 Thin length of material (6)
 25 It never comes (8)
 27 Soothed (8)
 28 Money lender (6)
 29 Counted (8)
 30 Rigid sheets of metal (6)

Down

- 1 A dimension of God's love (7)
 2 Himalayas, for example (9)



by Philologus

© BiblePuzzles.org.uk

- 3 Gain, reach or arrive at (6)
 5 Sesame worked! (4)
 6 A faithful minister of Christ (8)
 7 Mother in law of Ruth (5)
 8 Sun sets in this sky (7)
 11 Retaliation (7)
 14 Scripture is profitable for this (7)
 17 Magicians couldn't do this for Pharaoh's dreams (9)
 18 Jerusalem - how her house is left (8)
 19 Disease of cattle (7)
 21 When Jesus comes these will be with Him (7)
 22 Fragment of food (6)
 24 Booms (anag) (5)
 26 Not there! (4)

Solution from Issue 5

Across: 8 Ritual, 9 Urn, 10 Urge, 11 Intercedes, 12 Pool, 13 Gehazi, 16 Wanderer, 17 Recount, 18 Incense, 22 Separate, 25 Potter, 26 Body, 27 Overthrown, 30 Kiss, 31 Net, 32 Locust.

Down: 1 Lion, 2 Jude, 3 Election, 4 Sundown, 5 Unison, 6 Supplement, 7 Ignore, 14 Eye, 15 Apocalypse, 19 Naphtali, 20 See, 21 Repents, 23 Elohim, 24 Adorns, 28 Raca, 29 Wash.

Together @ Home

Lectionary Edition
Sunday 24th January
Third Sunday of Epiphany

Here are some activities you could do together as a family, begin with the story and then do as many or as few as you like, in any order.



Bible Passage

Today we will be exploring together, the miracle of turning water into wine.

You can find it in your Bible in:
John 2 v 1–11

Read the story together – choose a Bible translation or children's story version which best suits your group.

The other passages we might be thinking about at church this week are:

Genesis 14 v 17-20
Psalm 128
Revelation 19 v 6-10

A prayer to say together

Dear God,
Thank you for the story of Jesus turning Water into Wine. Thank you that this story shows us how much Jesus cares for his friends. Thank you that Jesus still cares for us and wants to help meet our needs today.

We pray for all those who have had wedding celebrations cancelled or postponed over the last few months that they would be comforted by you.

We pray for all those in the world who are struggling because they do not have the food or supplies that they need. God please would you be their provider.

Amen.

Discussion

A question for adults to ask children

Why do you think Jesus demonstrated this miracle?

John writes that this was the first miracle that Jesus performed. When Mary came to Jesus and asked him to help, Jesus said "My time has not yet come." Jesus hadn't come to the wedding so that he could perform a miracle, he had come with his followers to share in the marriage celebrations. Jesus must have felt pity for the people whose wedding it was that they had run out of wine for their guests, so he helped. This miracle shows us that Jesus cared for those he met and those he was friends with, it also shows how God loves to celebrate good time with us. We can share love and care with our friends and those close to us too.

Some questions for children to ask adults

Can you think of a time when you helped a friend or family member in need?

Bonus Question

Our verse to remember today is from Revelation the last book of the Bible where Jesus the lamb of God is with his bride the church. Why do you think God uses weddings as a picture of his relationship with the church?



Family Activity 1

Water into wine race

You will need: ice cube tray, squash (preferably blackcurrant)



Pre-freeze some squash into ice cubes, you will not want to fill them all the way as it will be too strong. If you don't have ice cube trays you can freeze into the bottom of plastic cups.

When you are ready for your race give everybody a glass of water and then add an ice cube to each.
(If using squash frozen in the bottom of a cup just add the water straight in)

Have a race and see who can turn their water into squash the fastest!

Vegetable and Lentil Cottage Pie

by Jenny Hunt

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped into 1cm cubes
- 200g piece of swede, chopped into 1cm cubes
- 125g dried red lentils
- 400g can plum tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 350ml vegetable stock
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 85g fresh spinach, chopped
- 900g smooth potatoes (such as Desiree or Estima), peeled and cut into large chunks (about 5cm)
- 30g butter
- 5 tbsp full-fat or semi-skimmed milk
- 140g grated strong cheddar cheese

You will need a 1.7-2litre baking dish, measuring about 25x18cm and 7.5cm deep (10x7x3")

Method:

Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large, non-stick sauté pan. Add the onions and garlic and fry over medium-high heat for 8-10 mins or until starting to turn golden, stirring occasionally. Pour the remaining tbsp oil into the pan, add the carrots and swede and fry 3 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the lentils, tomatoes, tomato puree and stock. Season and simmer, covered, for 35-40 minutes over a low heat, until the carrots and swede are tender and the lentils have softened.

Remove from the heat, stir in the spinach and let it wilt. Check the sauce's consistency (moist but not sloppy) and add 2-3 tbsp water if it's too dry. Pour the mixture into the baking dish. Leave to cool before adding the topping as it will support the mash better.

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees C (Fan 180C/400F/Gas 6)

Put the potatoes into a large pan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Put the butter and milk in the pan and warm through over a low heat. Remove from the heat, return the potatoes to the pan and mash with the milk and butter, then whisk with a balloon whisk until smooth. Season then stir in the cheese.

Spread the mash over the filling and bake for 30-40 minutes until golden and bubbling.

TUCK IN!!



What's Happening This Week?

Sunday Morning

Each Sunday morning we have two services that you can join on Zoom, and enjoy the fellowship of those across our worshipping communities as we worship together. We gather together at 9.00am for a service of BCP Morning prayer, and 10.30am for a service of Praise and Worship. Every third week in our 10.30 service we celebrate the Eucharist.

The Zoom meeting room details are the same each week, for both services:

Meeting ID: 858 7103 2095

Passcode: 868162

Daily Morning & Evening Prayer

Tuesday to Saturday 7.45am and 6.00pm

If you are able to join us on zoom, either through video or dialling in on a phone you are most welcome to join us, the Zoom meeting room details are in previous issues of the Parish Post.

If you have any particular prayer needs or need help to join by phone please contact Sean.

Other Resources

Each week Harvey Richardson produces a wonderfully rich resource for our ongoing spiritual journeys. 'Sunday Prayers' contains a reflection, meditation or thoughts, music, poetry and images; alongside prayers for the coming week, linked to the themes of that Sunday.

If you would like to be added to his weekly email distribution list, please drop him an email on harvey.s.richardson@gmail.com

One to Check Out!

You absolutely must check out 'Missing You' a new drama that stars our friend **Sam Barnard** and June Brown MBE (Dot from Eastenders if you are unsure!)

This 30 minute drama is the first in a series that explore relationships, friendships and connections across the generational divide.

Actor Sam Barnard commenting on his part says:

"June is such a legend and a hero of mine since I was little. When I was asked to play this role I said "OOH I SAY" and did a little dance of joy!"

If you copy and paste the link below into your internet browser you can access the recording online:

<https://distinctnostalgia.buzzsprout.com/650596/7004677-new-drama-missing-you-starring-june-brown-mbe-and-sam-barnard?fbclid=IwARlFVZeJbF33xBBYR5aHdLDhUhRvHv46nXIhnNf5Ug-8tOsh1qzlo5HZY4Y>

Lent Groups

Remember to email Sean and sign up for one of our Lent Groups which will be running soon! Details are being finalised for days and times, sign up is important so please get in touch. They are likely to run on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and a day time group will be available.



Candlemas

On Tuesday 2nd February at 8pm there will be a service of Compline on Zoom for anyone who would like to join. This will be a quiet service, with time for reflection and prayer. Further details and information will be following in next week's issue.

One thing to note - make sure you have a candle available on the night!

Ash Wednesday

With our Church buildings currently closed for worship Sean is considering alternative ways in which we can gather together and mark this important time in the Church calendar, and the start of our Lenten journey. A service will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday the 17th February, so please make a note of that date in your calendars.

Whilst we are unable to offer the usual imposition of ashes, there will be a way in which we can all take part and an appropriate symbol of the ashes will be made available prior to the service.

Marian Youngman

It is with great sadness that we need to share the news that on Friday 22nd January, Marian died in the Pilgrims Hospice in Canterbury. As many of you know Marian was a long standing of the Methodist Chapel and very active in that community. She looked after the Methodist Family finances amongst other things. Marian's local Methodist walks and the coffee mornings she hosted at her home are remembered by many.

A wonderful woman and shining light dimmed, but she has gone to the Lord she loved so much.

Please do pray for her family at this incredibly difficult time.

Please send any articles, ideas, thoughts, reflections, prayers, book reviews, poems, recipes, images or anything that you would like to share with others around the Parish.

please email Sean:

rev.sean.sheffield@bewsboroughparish.org

Contributors

Jenny Groombridge

Rev. Harvey Richardson

Jenny Hunt

Malcolm Barnard

Rev. Sean Sheffield
Editor

And finally.....



.....to our wonderful friends Richard and Kate Webster who this week move on to pastures new and the next stage of their life adventure. All in the Parish wish you well, and with love (and sadness) send you on your way.

Below are a selection photos from friends with messages.

