



REFOCUSSED

THE **PARISH MAGAZINE** OF
ST ETHELDREDA'S CHURCH
WITH ST LUKE'S CHURCH

October 2020



Letter to the parish from Lord Charles

A few years ago a book was published called 'God is Back'. As the then Chaplain at Hatfield House remarked, 'I didn't know He'd gone away'.

The point the authors (two very eminent journalists from The Economist) were making was that, however embattled and in decline the Christian churches seemed to be in Western Europe, there was great vigour and growth elsewhere in the world.

This is despite the increase in active and often violent persecution of Christians around the world—and in Europe a tendency for many to regard practicing Christians as worthy of amused tolerance so long as they make the Church and churches available for public ceremonial. The practice of Christianity may be changing but the core beliefs largely remain unchanged.

I have travelled a great deal in my life—both for business and pleasure. Virginia and I often go to a local church wherever we are on a Sunday. If there is no church, there may well be a mosque or a temple (in both cases some more welcoming than others). There is no better way to get out of the traveller's bubble.

While in Western Europe attendance might often be sparse, this is very far from the case elsewhere. In the US. there are packed services for all denominations and strangers are welcome; political activity often has explicit religious references. I remember being caught in a major traffic jam one Sunday afternoon in Manaus, the great Brazilian city half way up the Amazon,

because there were several thousand converging on a Pentecostal church for the Sunday service. In Buenos Aires at the height of the power of the Argentine Military Junta, extra masses had to be arranged in many churches so great were the numbers attending. In Madrid I am however, still not sure whether the respectable size of the congregation was in part due to the clearly eagerly anticipated announcement from the pulpit that there would be sangria in the patio after the service.

Nearer to home, the Church of The Twelve Apostles, the Greek Orthodox Church in Brookmans Park, has so many people for the great Easter Even midnight service that you have to park quarter of a mile away if you are not there by 10pm.

Continued on page 3



Parish of Bishop's Hatfield St Etheldreda with St Luke

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THURSDAY: 7^{pm} Holy Communion,
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Parish of Bishop's Hatfield St Etheldreda with St Luke : Registered Charity No.1152011
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Find us on 

A few words from the Editor ...

Despite these strange times we live in there are many things to be grateful for and I would like to share with you some of mine.

I am grateful to all who contributed articles for this issue of Refocused. In particular Lord Charles who shares his extensive travel experiences—and how his faith always goes with him.

That our two churches are now open again and, thanks to Fr. Darren and his wardens, they are now 'possibly' the safest places in Hatfield, because as much as could be done to make them safe—in a physical as well as spiritual manner—has been done.

That (at the time of writing) the new COVID rule of only six meeting together does not apply to worship in our churches.

Words cannot express how grateful I am for the hope I have of life everlasting—through the risen Christ. I live in faith with this hope, because the really exciting thing is that this hope Jesus offers, offers to us all, is completely free—so what is there to lose?

And I am also very grateful for all the volunteers who deliver our magazine directly to many households in our parish. I hope that you enjoy reading it this month. If you do then perhaps you might like to help us with deliveries? Read more about this on page 8.

Keep staying safe—Mary

Lord Charles letter continued from the front page...

There is a long history of the resilience of Christianity in the face of difficulties. It can be no surprise that the Chinese Christians, though under extreme pressure from the authorities, are strong and growing. Also when we went to a church in Madurai in Southern India (and it is not always easy for non-Hindu religions in India now) where there was a very large congregation—women sitting on the right, men on the left—we were beckoned in enthusiastically.

Sometimes there is matter-of-fact tolerance. We went to a remote church in Syria, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and found a Muslim woman with her children praying there; our driver, a Muslim, said that the Virgin Mary is venerated in Islam and as there was no mosque nearby, it was natural for the woman to come to the church instead.

So I feel that we still can have great hope for the Christian future in the world and what St Etheldreda's and St Luke's show is that the Christian community can grow and flourish here too.

Au Revoir But Not Goodbye



On 13th September 2020, after three years as curate at St Eth's with St Luke's, Rev Penny Thomson was licenced by Bishop Michael as Associate Priest in the Bishop's Hatfield Team—with special responsibility for:

St Mary's Church @ North Mymms

So, Rev Penny stays in the Hatfield Team and we wish her well with her ministry at St Mary's—we also look forward to still seeing her around and about in Hatfield.

IT'S NOT TIME TO HIBERNATE YET!

ENJOY AN AUTUMN ADVENTURE IN HATFIELD PARK



As darker days start to draw in come and enjoy the stunning autumn colours that fill the park.

For the first time Hatfield Park and Woodland Walks will be open to visitors each weekend throughout October. More than ever we are all appreciating the importance of getting outside and being amongst nature to feel happy and healthy.

Autumn is a magical time to embark on one of our Woodland Walks, wrap up and explore as golden leaves fall.

During October half term the Park and Woodland Walks will be open each day. Entertain the children with our pumpkin trail and let them take in the autumn pallet.

The Coach House kitchen will be open each day of the half term holiday as well as on weekends throughout October so a trip to the park can be completed with a well-deserved slice of cake!

For further details on tickets and opening times:

www.hatfield-house.co.uk/your-visit/opening-times-prices/

GOD AND THE PANDEMIC: by Tom Wright

Reviewed by Mary Rathbone, Lay Reader

Seven months later and we are still all doing our best to avoid the COVID-19 virus— and it now looks like it is not going to get easier anytime soon.

So how are we supposed to understand what is happening all around us with the pandemic at a spiritual level—and how should we respond?

There are a lot of different views around: ‘This is a sign of the End of Times’ some say. ‘It is all predicted in the book of Revelation’ others say.

Some have another view: ‘This is a call for all to repent. God is judging the world and through this disease he’s telling us it’s time to change.’

Some take a secular view and ask who is to blame: ‘It’s the fault of the Chinese, the government, the World Health Organization.....’

Bishop Tom Wright examines all these reactions to the virus and is not convinced by any of them.

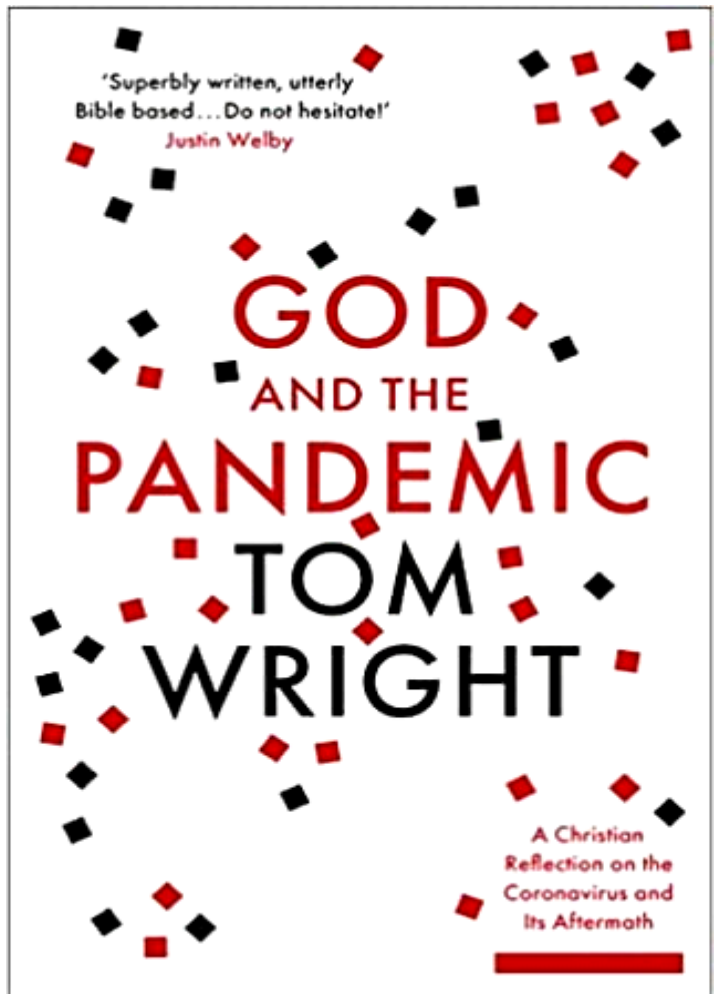
Instead, he invites us to consider a different way of seeing and responding – a way that draws on the teachings and examples of scripture, and above all on the way of living, thinking and praying that Jesus taught during his ministry on earth.

Bishop Tom examines what the Greek philosophers’ view might have been, as well as the Old Testament prophets and New Testament disciples.

In conclusion he proposes that we should not be asking why is God allowing this pandemic? But rather—what can we do to help others during this pandemic?

The book, although short, is full of biblical wisdom and truths about how people have responded in times of difficulty down the centuries and advises that these responses are just as valid today.

I would recommend the book, a light and easy read, for anyone wondering how they might respond to the pandemic in a Christ-like manner, during these strangest of times.



Actually, the best answer I've heard in the last few weeks has not been to the question 'Why?' It's been to the question 'What?' What can we do?

WRIGHT, TOM. *God and the Pandemic* (p. 3). SPCK. Kindle Edition.

Superbly written, utterly Bible based... Do not hesitate! Archbishop Justin Welby

It means that, when the world is going through great convulsions, the followers of Jesus are called to be people of prayer at the place where the world is in pain.

WRIGHT, TOM. *God and the Pandemic* (p. 43). SPCK. Kindle Edition.

For God so loved the world: John 3, v16 Jo Roscoe

And so we reach October – and the glorious golds of high summer have deepened into the deep ambers of autumn. Orchards burgeon with fruit and berries; allotments and market gardens have yielded their produce, fields their crops; and we celebrate God's goodness with harvest suppers and apple pies. But what do we do in this year of Covid?

As we go to print, the rules about gathering together have tightened again. So what kind of harvest is there for us to celebrate this year? Well - think about it. It is certainly true that adversity often brings great blessings in its wake. Not to minimise the difficulties and sometimes deep grief that this pandemic has caused – but how many blessings have we been made aware of during these last six months, which formerly we just took for granted?

Our NHS, doctors, nurses, shop assistants, refuse collectors, delivery men and women, farm and field workers. The services we enjoy but so often take for granted. We have been made aware of how much we need and depend on each other. We have been reminded of our common humanity. And that is a wisdom not bought cheaply.

Ride for Alzheimer's in Barbara Robinson's Memory: October update

Hi all and apologies for the delay in updating you, but as we all know, this year has been a crazy one.

Unfortunately like most things COVID has massively impacted the cycling world and the Lands End to John O'Groats ride has been postponed until 2021.

My training this year has taken some massive ups, but unfortunately some downs too. I've had to take a couple of months out of training. The first back in January when my wife had a bad fall skiing and I became 24/7 daddy day care and taxi driver for a month.

The second in some ways was worse; coming off my bike at speed and ending up with a huge hematoma on my hip. Luckily though it was just my pride that was hurt, the rest of me and my bike coming away unscathed.

Even with 2 months out I have already cycled over 4000 miles this year and would have been completely ready for the 1000 mile ride.

And what makes me even prouder is I now have a new cycling buddy; my 10 year old daughter Eva has now started supporting me in my endeavours doing weekly rides of up to 30 miles, so I got her a club jersey.

But don't worry all is good, and all donations have been transferred over to 2021 and I am just going to be even fitter and stronger by then.

Over the winter months training is going to move indoors. So what is training without a challenge—how about an Everesting Challenge riding 8848 metres in one ride? It's going to be a killer, but hey ho in for a penny as they say.

Again I want to thank you all so much for your support and donations and I look forward to seeing you all in Church when I am next down. All my love Phil Robinson



www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philrobinson-lejog

Tail End.....News from the Bellringers

Thursday 20th August: first ringing at St Eth's since 15th March. No more Thursday evening Zoom meetings – we're back!

With huge thanks to Father Darren, we're now ringing on Thursdays and Sundays. We've introduced a rota system as we can only have nine people in the Ringing Chamber to ensure social distancing.

We had 147 'likes' on the Hatfield Yesteryear Facebook page by Friday evening 21st August – so locals certainly noticed the bells sounding again.

It's certainly a bit odd and slightly uncomfortable ringing in a mask but at least the bells are going again.

Bellringing is not much of a spectator hobby/sport. Don't imagine that if you visit a Ringing Chamber you will see anything remotely energetic, athletic, logical or remotely comprehensible! Bellringers don't smile very often while they are ringing – there is too much concentration involved – but we always have a good laugh after we finish ringing.

We don't ring tunes – it's more like mathematical changes which all have strange and sometimes impressive names like Reverse Canterbury Doubles.

As you progress in bellringing you are expected to learn these 'methods'. A full peal takes at least 2 ½ hours sometimes over 3 hours depending on the number of bells and the weight of the heaviest bell (the tenor).

Left to Right:
Fran, Sue and
Judith ringing
'Rounds' on
the 4th, 5th and
6th bells



A Quarter Peal typically takes 40-50 minutes— but you have to focus and concentrate for the full duration otherwise the bells will get in the wrong order and the peal is 'lost'.

At St Eth's we're not by any means a strong band and so please bear with us if you hear bells rung with varying gaps between them – we try very hard to get good 'striking' but it's not as easy as you might think.

Sorry! We can't accept learners at the moment but hopefully one day soon!

Mary and Rob Goss

t: 01438-718038 e: mary.rob.goss@gmail.com



RIP

PAT @

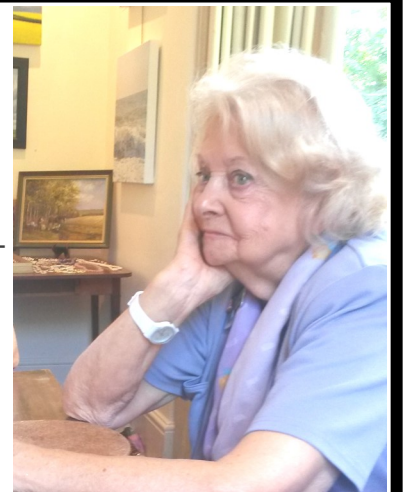
PETA SHAW IN FORE STREET

27TH JAN 1932—11TH AUG 2020

PAT OUTLIVED HER HUSBAND,

PETER, BY TWO DAYS

MAY THEY BOTH REST IN PEACE





Residents warned to be wary of scam HMRC phone calls and texts

Hertfordshire Constabulary is warning residents to stay vigilant following further reports of scam phone calls and text messages which appeared to be from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Nineteen victims were contacted by the fraudsters claiming to be the HMRC over the last two weeks. The victims were told there were outstanding debts or unpaid taxes in their names. The offenders then asked the victims to make bank transfers as payment.

Victims were targeted in the Watford, Hertford, Cheshunt, Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead areas, with eight of the victims losing more than £19,889

The fraudsters cold call victims using a spoofed number, sometimes leaving voicemail messages claiming that they owe unpaid tax to HMRC. The victims are asked to call back on the number provided, through which they are told that there is a warrant out in their name and if they don't pay, the police will arrest them. The victims are also sometimes contacted via text messages asking them to urgently call the number provided.

Detective Inspector Rob Burns, from Hertfordshire Constabulary's Serious Fraud and Cyber Unit, said: "Fraudsters are continuing to call residents in Hertfordshire using this tactic, especially targeting elderly and vulnerable people. They can be quite forceful and intimidating to try and frighten victims into making bank transfers, buying gift cards or vouchers.

"It's important to remember that government official and police officers will NEVER contact you in these ways or ask you to buy gift cards, vouchers, withdraw money, purchase goods or hand over private banking details.

"Please help us to raise awareness by talking about this with your friends and family, especially if they are vulnerable or elderly."

How to protect yourself:

HMRC will never use texts to tell you about a tax rebate or penalty or ever ask for payment in this way.

Telephone numbers and text messages can easily be spoofed. You should never trust the number you see on your telephone display.

If you receive a suspicious cold call, end it immediately.

Hertfordshire Constabulary offers the following advice on recognising fraud:

Be sceptical of callers, even those who claim to be officials.

Don't be afraid to put the phone down with a brief 'No, thank you'.

NEVER give personal information, such as your date of birth or bank details, to unexpected callers.

Remember that the police or your bank would NEVER unexpectedly call you and ask you to withdraw cash or move your money to another account, as a result of fraud or any other reason.

If callers suggest you call your local police or bank to check who they are, use another phone or ensure the line has been fully disconnected by phoning a friend or relative first, or by waiting at least five minutes, otherwise you may think you've phoned a number, but you're simply talking to the fraudsters again. This is a common fraudsters' tactic.

If a caller asks you to type your bank PIN number into your telephone handset - do not do this, as fraudsters can use technology to identify the numbers.

You can opt out of many cold calls by registering for free with the Telephone Preference Service on: 0845 070 0707.

If you believe that you are a victim of this scam please contact Hertfordshire Constabulary's non-emergency number 101, using a different phone to that used to communicate with the fraudsters.

If a fraud is in progress or someone's life is in danger, call 999 immediately.

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If you enjoy your parish magazine then why not help us with deliveries and allow others the pleasure of reading it too?

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At the moment volunteers deliver to 1,000 of those homes. But we need more to be able to cover the whole parish. Is this something you might be able to help us with?

If you could spare an hour once a month, or just a half an hour, then it would help tremendously.

Thank you, Mary,

m: 07910 902 478

e: maryrathbone@icloud.com

ANY SURPLUS APPLES AND/OR PEARS ?



I shall be making mulled cider again for drinking at our Nine Lessons and Carols service at Christmas.....if not for this year, for next year.

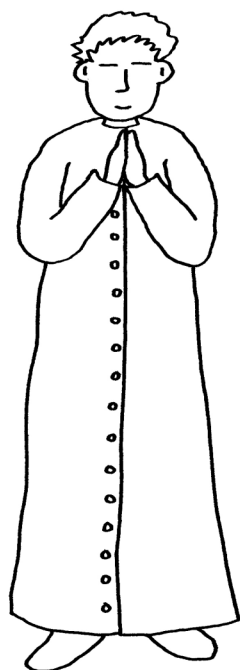
If you have unwanted apples and pears, please let me know. Windfalls are fine.

Thank you, Adrian,

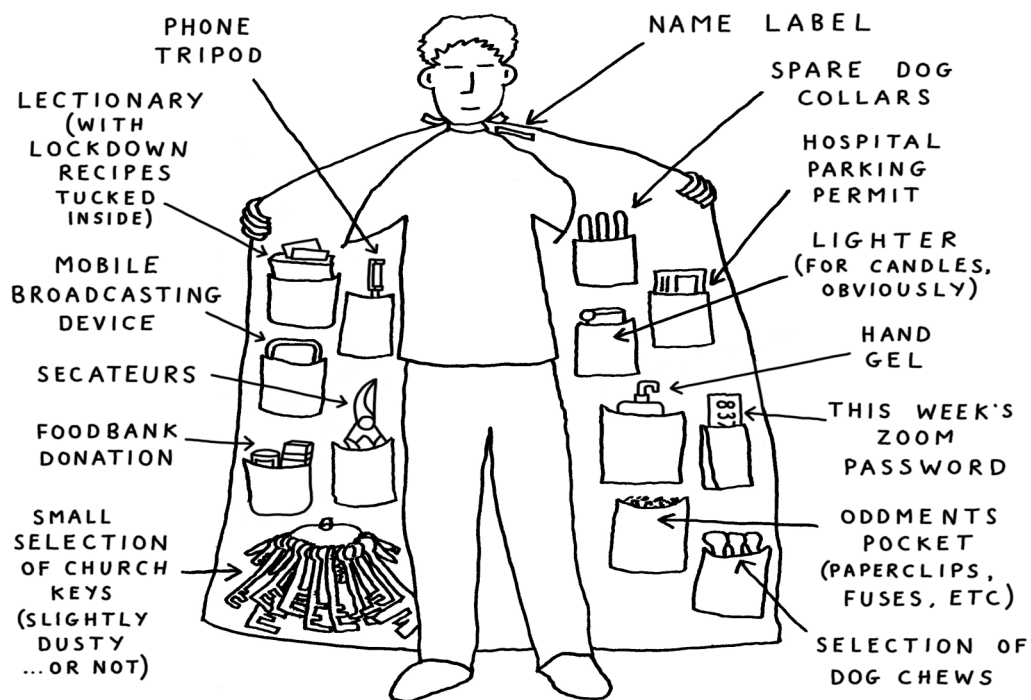
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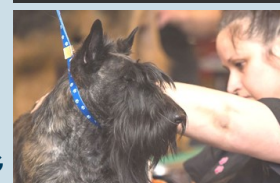
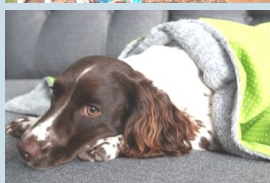
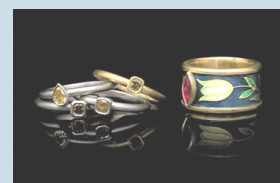


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Please contact—maryrathbone@icloud.com if you have any editorial contributions.



It's Not Time To Hibernate Yet!

AS DARKER DAYS START TO DRAW IN COME AND ENJOY THE STUNNING AUTUMN COLOURS THAT FILL THE PARK.

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