

Letter to the Parish on the gift of love:

Written by Mary Rathbone, Lay Reader

I still clearly remember how I listened in complete amazement as we were taught the theory of evolution during my school days.

Being born into a Christian family I have always had a firm belief in God and the story of creation. But now schoolgirls were saying to each other, well if humans evolved from amoebas washing up out of the sea, then where does the story of creation and the Garden of Eden fit in?

They asked each other, and me, so do you still believe in God? What! I thought, why would anyone not believe in God—is there an option to either believe, or not believe? This way of thinking really alarmed me.

I clearly remember trying to work through in my mind what we were being taught at school about evolution and whether it should affect my faith in a loving and living God.

I could understand the theory of the survival of the fittest and evolution. But, I thought, there is something missing in this internal debate I am having—what is it?

Love is what it is, I concluded.

The burning question within me was, whether or not humankind evolved over millions of years or was created in the Garden of Eden: Why have we been endowed with the capacity to love?

Why would parents love their children, I argued with myself—why would children,

in return, love their parents—if life is simply about the survival of the fittest?

My young mind somehow sensed that whether or not the truth be in evolution or creation, nevertheless God is love.

This initial simple belief developed and became clearer to me over the years—to the point where I now see that a tiny spark of His divine love burns within each one of us.

My favourite apostle is St Paul. He gained this status when I read some verses from a letter he sent to the Corinthians. In them he said that the most important things to have in life are faith, hope and love—and that the greatest of these is love.

I believe it is important to remember this in these strange times in which we live.

Letter continues on page 3...



What's happening at St Etheldreda's and St Luke's?

Services in church have stopped for now, but there's still lots going on!

Online Services (Facebook unless stated)

Every Weekday: 7:30am - Morning Prayer
9pm - Compline (Night Prayer)

Thursdays: 7pm - ZOOM Evening Prayer

Sundays: 9:30am - Holy Communion

Private prayer in Church

Wednesdays: 10am – 11am (St Etheldreda's)

Saturdays & Sundays: 10am - 4pm (St Luke's)

Social

Tuesdays: 10am - 11am ZOOM Coffee & Chat

Pastoral Care

If you'd like a friendly chat with one of the Pastoral Care Team please give us a ring on 01707 256638 and we will return your call as soon as we can.

Other Events

For details of other upcoming events, keep an eye on this Facebook page.

For further details on events, and ZOOM invites, please email: bhteamoffice@gmail.com.

www.facebook.com/StEthHAT

Please contact Fr Darren to book your Wedding or Baptism

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What's on at Hatfield House



DOGS AND DAFFS CHARITY WALK

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The gift of love

continued from front page

Today, I firmly believe that love is central to everything; that small acts of kindness and compassion can fan and expand the spark of divine within us, to become burning embers of faith; and that Christian love and kindness is the key to peace in this world and our hope in life eternal.

A highly educated elderly man once told me that he had a Christian faith, but was not sure about some of the nuts and bolts added on since the time of Jesus' ministry. He told me he believed that Jesus went about the land preaching love and forgiveness and in doing so opened the gates of heaven—bringing God's Kingdom closer to earth.

This is the aim of our work in the two Church of England churches in your parish— St Eth's and St Luke's. With two quite different styles of praise and worship, our joint hope is to bring God's Kingdom closer to you.

In these dark winter days you might have questions about where God is today?

Well you can find out more by drawing closer to these local churches without even leaving home now, because ever since lockdown we offer our services to you on-line.

Our Sunday Eucharist service at 9.30am can now be viewed in real time – or later at your convenience. We also offer online morning and evening prayers each day of the week at:

www.facebook.com/StEthsHat

Why not draw on support from your local churches in these uncertain times? Draw closer to God's love through our online services?

You may like to read the extract from St Paul's letter to the Corinthians that I referred to on page one, about faith, hope and love. Perhaps these words might fill your hearts with joy as they do mine.

Because I believe that hope will always conquer despair and love will always conquer darkness.

1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Have you met Kathryn?

The Rev'd Kathryn Alford—is interviewed by Jo Roscoe

When you read this article, curate Kathryn Alford will have been with us at St Etheldreda's and St Luke's for seven months.

In many ways that time has been one of the strangest and most difficult that any of us has experienced.

Our two churches have been in the same stop-start situation as the rest of the community, and one might have expected that a new curate eager to begin her ministry would have found herself frustrated, disappointed and wrong-footed.

But for Kathryn it would seem the reverse is true. God has put her in this place at this time, and that for her is sufficient. She pays us the tribute of saying that she has felt loved and welcomed from the start, recognising and enjoying the differences between our two churches and at the same time recognising the common love and care that each church offers its people.

She has put her energy into establishing herself as a working member of the clergy team, and has enjoyed getting to know members of the congregation (including through her role as a Refocused 'foot soldier') and allowing us to get to know her.

I can tell you that Kathryn is extremely easy to talk to.

In one of our first conversations, reflecting on her experience as a civil servant in the Ministry of Defence, she impressed me greatly by knowing about Barrow-in-Furness in south Cumbria—my birthplace and once a prosperous shipbuilding town and now the Admiralty's naval base for building nuclear submarines.

I longed to be able to say that Kathryn had not only visited Barrow but had walked a nuclear submarine deck. Alas, she said she had not; as consolation in response to my crestfallen face, she told me she had flown in the Queen's Flight but added that they had flown through a terrific thunderstorm and she had been terribly sick.



I think this may be a trait of Kathryn's; to say something exciting about herself and then to make it commonplace. I am not going to try to tell you her life story. That is for her to do in her own time and her own way to whom she thinks appropriate.

But I will tell you that she is a person of interest, while first and foremost a person who is interested in you.

Whatever the next year may bring, do take any opportunity that arises to get to know her. She would love to get to know you: after a church service when we are next able to congregate, or join her on Zoom (you don't have to be a member of the church and the Team Office has the details).

Let us look forward to a time when we can share with her a cup of coffee or tea in our gardens or the local café or in a pew at the back of the church.

Riding the ups and downs of the Corona-coaster!

Written by the Rev'd Kathryn Alford

As this is the first Refocused of 2021, I think it's still OK for me to wish you all a 'Happy New Year', even if it is now February!

I'd rather hoped that we'd be starting 2021 with life returning closer to normal. But at the time of writing, St Etheldreda's and St Luke's are still only open for private prayer and the broadcasting of online worship.

The speed at which we were able to adapt to the latest lockdown in January has led me to reflect on how far our churches have come over the last year.

Back in March 2020, our first online worship was recorded with a tripod and phone. Now, thanks to the generosity of congregation members, we've had new cameras installed and are streaming live worship into people's homes on Facebook and YouTube. Songs of Praise isn't a patch on our Sunday morning (9:30am) online service!

Encouragingly, we've seen a real growth in our 'virtual' congregation, with people now joining us from across the world. It was brilliant to have so many people watching our DIY Christingle talk; worshipping with us online during our Advent and Christmas services; and following 'Kathryn's Advent Adventure'. We also started streaming assemblies into Countess Anne school – it's been great to be able to engage with the children again.

Churchgoers are generally renowned for liking a good chat, and Covid-19 didn't put a stop to that in 2020! When we've been allowed, we've invented safe ways to meet up over a spot of gardening or march around the grounds of Hatfield House. Like many other organisations, we've also become very familiar with Zoom, and have kept in touch with old and new friends through online coffee mornings (10am Tues); 'Zoom' evening prayer (7pm Thurs); study groups and more.

If you'd be interested in meeting new people in these ways during 2021 drop us an email at bhteamoffice@gmail.com. You'd be very welcome.

Of course, we weren't always exclusively online during 2020. For several months we were able to return to the building, and it was wonderful to be able to meet people face to face at our services, and All Souls and Christmas drop-in events.

The return to in-building services came with the addition of face masks and social distancing. I look forward to the day when I don't have to issue safety instructions at the beginning of services like an air-steward, but keeping each other safe has become a really important demonstration of our love and care for each other.

This brings me neatly on to some of the amazing demonstrations of love I saw in the local community during 2020. People really pulled out the stops to look out for each other through phone calls, offers of help with shopping, or invitations to go for a walk and chat. One of the positives of current times, is that many neighbours have got to know each other a bit more. Let's hope that continues into 2021 and beyond.

In the meantime, we're busy planning new online activities, such as a Zoom Lent course. If you'd be interested in joining this from 18th February please email: bhteamoffice@gmail.com *Continued on page 8*



Ash Wednesday 17th February

Jill and Mark Knight

a tribute to their Ministry at St Etheldreda's and St Luke's churches written by
Church Warden, Richard Morton

Last Sunday (3rd January 2021) we said farewell to Jill Knight, our Director of Music for the last seven years, and to Mark, her husband, who was our Treasurer for most of that time using all his financial skills to keep us on the financial straight and narrow.

We have also often enjoyed the beautiful singing of their two daughters, Rebekah and Rachel, joining the choir on many special occasions. What a team and what a contribution!

When Jill joined us we had a strong musical tradition and a good adult choir, nurtured by her predecessors and by a very musical rector, Richard Pyke.

It had been some years though since we last had any number of children joining us and we had, I think, rather given up hope of enjoying again the extra beauty and joy that children's singing can bring.

Jill made it her mission from the start to change all of that and she brought her unique energy and enthusiasm to the task, establishing a core group of young choristers which has grown into what we now know as Y.E.S., the Young Eth's Singers.

It has been a special pleasure to watch this group grow in numbers and musicianship under Jill's tutelage and it now includes a number of really fine singers.

Y.E.S have contributed greatly to worship in St Eth's, St Luke's and other local churches but they have also, very importantly, enjoyed themselves as a group, with visits, including a memorable trip to Cambridge, and activities such as rafting at Stanborough, all of course made possible by the commitment and sense of fun which Jill has brought to her work.

There have also been numerous memorable and really beautiful musical moments with the adult



choir which has continued to thrive under Jill's leadership: carol services, Burghley sermon even-songs, the Remembrance Day commemoration two years ago, and so many more. The music never stopped flowing even during the first lockdown when Jill spent hours assembling tracks individually recorded at home by choir members to provide an anthem each Sunday.

It was a great blow when Jill told us, back in the summer, of her intention to retire and we confidently expected at the time that we would all be back to normal in Church for an Epiphany Sunday send-off. It was specially poignant instead that the choir had to sing to an empty church and an on-line congregation, but a very special moment for all that.

We wish Jill and Mark every blessing in their retirement and we hope very much to see them from time to time. Jill will be a very hard act to follow but we are delighted that Ben Holder, who has been a member of St Eth's congregation, with his wife and young family for the last couple of years, and who, in normal times, works full time on West End musicals, has agreed to take on the challenge.

A fond farewell to David and Celia Kennett

by Mary Rathbone, Editor of Refocused

Looking back on it now, when we first relaunched our parish magazine in 2013 as Refocused—I feel God’s hand was at work. Because very quickly a small nucleus of people naturally formed who were completely dedicated to the success of the relaunch.

Because of my background in marketing, I was appointed Editor. After a very tentative start I asked STEPS if they would print 300 copies of the first issue, for local distribution. Mike Berwick delivered them into the boot of my car, and as I stood in the street looking at 300 copies of the magazine packed into my Mazda, Jo Roscoe walked by. Seeing what I had she said, ‘I will help you deliver those’ – and very kindly took half of them off me.

We said to each other later, we really need someone to take charge of the distribution of this magazine, and so put a notice in LOOK! whose Editor was, and still is, Celia Kennett. Somehow David got to see the notice before LOOK! went out and said, I think to Celia’s bemusement, ‘I will do that job’.

And he did do the job—for the last 7 years he has managed a team of 25 Foot Soldiers, who hand deliver the magazine in the parish, to the highest professional standard, from an initial 300 to now 1000+ homes per month. He also helped with the planning process of a second round of a similar amount so that we can cover the whole parish. He no doubt uses skills acquired during a lifetime of delivering such a high standard of work. I noticed too how David is always on the look out for the welfare of those on the team, in particular his Foot Soldiers.

Likewise, Celia, who I believe took on the job of editing LOOK! just before we started producing Refocused, has also in this role provided a very high standard of service to the church—with never a complaint or grumble. I would be very hard pressed

A tribute to David and Celia, from Jo Roscoe

When Mary set out on her Refocused journey, I joined her at first as a sympathetic neighbour and quickly became her editorial team.

Under Mary’s leadership and Richard Pyke’s encouragement, it quickly became a great success, as the parish was hungry for it.

When David joined us to take over the distribution, we became a close threesome, mutually supportive and dependable.

David has a quality of being unflappable and we needed that in spades at first. And he has gone on being unflappable and making light of problems.

His importance in those early days, and still is, to the ongoing success of Refocused cannot be overstated. We will miss him as a member of the team and for himself and the qualities he has brought in service to the church in his quiet way for so long.

When you get David, you also get the added bonus of Celia—who like David, is also completely dependable and unflappable! We shall miss them both not just for what they do—but for who they are.

to find an error she has ever made, and she even proofreads Refocused for us. And my goodness me just like her mother, our dearest departed and much loved Gladys, nothing escapes her eagle eyes.

Sadly for us, David and Celia have now decided to move on to be closer to family in Somerset. I must confess to feeling quite bereft when they first told me of their plans. But have come to terms with their decision and would like to thank them for all the support they have quietly offered the church, and me personally, over the years.

Our loss will be their new parish’s gain.

To Jill & Mark and David & Celia

Your many friends at St Eth’s and St Luke’s would like you to always remember these words from Psalm 32:8:

‘The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.
I will advise you and watch over you.’

Riding the ups and downs of the Corona-coaster!

Written by the Rev'd Kathryn Alford—continued from page 5

This love has also been revealed in some of the imaginative projects that have popped up in the church and local community in recent months. Mary's house is currently filled to the brim with knitted squares (or squares of kindness as she calls them), which people have created to make blankets for Herts Young Homeless.

Although 2021 hasn't got off to the start we hoped for, we're determined to keep building on the positives of 2020 and to reach as many people as possible. As soon as we're allowed (and when it's a bit warmer!) we're hoping to hold social events, and outdoor services. Keep an eye out for them in Refocused and on our Facebook page.

2020 felt a bit like being on a rollercoaster – or a 'corona-coaster' – at times. There were some really tough downs for many people, but there were also some ups. This ride is going to continue for a while yet, so let's continue to help each other through the down times, and look forward to the day when things are a bit smoother once again.

Take care. Kathryn

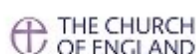


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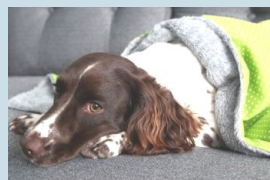
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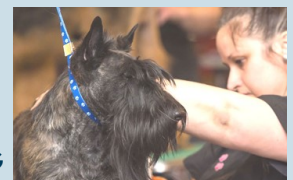
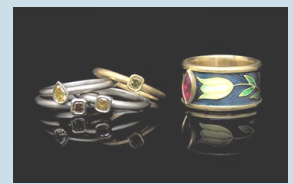
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The Hair of the Dog

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Views expressed in this magazine are those of contributors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Ministers, Churchwardens, Parochial Church Council or Editorial Team of the Parish of St Etheldreda with St Luke.

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

LifeLine

Community Alarm Service



“ Helping people live independently so they can stay in their own home for longer; happy, safe and in control

The Lifeline service is open to everyone - of all ages - that would like to feel safe, protected & independent in their own home

- 24/7 365 day emergency response service
- Average 12 minute response time
- Regular monitoring visits
- Locally based control centre
- Free installation & competitive weekly charge
- Immediate action
- Holiday packages available

Get in touch

Contact the control centre on **01707 357 696** and request a **LifeLine application form**.

For more information, visit our website: www.welhat.gov.uk/housing/lifeline

LifeLine is a service provided by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.



Herts Young Homeless

Knitting is the new yoga (apparently)



St Mary's Church in North Mymms has been knitting blankets for the homeless for 5 years.

The blankets are for young people who are coming out of council care and setting up their first homes.

We are going to join St Mary's efforts and start knitting the squares that make up the blankets.

Is this something you would like to help with?

The soothing effect of knitting can be quite relaxing too—so it's a great win-win winter activity

Contact: maryrathbone@icloud.com



The Herts Young Homeless charity at Gracemead House, in Hatfield Town Centre, helps young people in Herts aged 18-24 who are coming out of care, to establish their first homes.

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