

intouch

NEWSLETTER

Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon,
Wallington, and Weston



What's next?

The first of June is the official start of summer so the answer to what's next is – RAIN. Everything else might be different but an English summer is generally reliable in being totally unpredictable so stand by. How do you think you will look back on 2020? Of course your memories will have to include the word of the year, 'unprecedented'. We could apply it to so many situations and things that have happened around us in the past 3 months that there's an unreality to our lives sometimes, I'm sure I'm not alone in wondering if I'm dreaming it all, but it's all true however peculiar it may seem.

For many of us contending with change and lack of 'normal' is an unsettling thing, we don't like the unexpected even we expect it so 'what's next?' is quite likely more in your mind than usual.

We really can't know how the situation will play out but there remains much to be positive about, if you don't believe me try making a list of all the positive versus negative things you note at the moment, I reckon you will have a feel good moment when you assess life.

For us as Christians' thankfulness' should be right at the front of our thinking, to say we are blessed by God is an understatement. We aren't set aside from the things other people have to contend with but a little reflection on how the Lord of Heaven has acted in each of our lives can be a light bulb moment to reinforce how we are loved.

Has God exercised any of these traits of His nature on you?

PATIENCE, FAITHFULNESS, GENEROSITY, HEALING, GUIDANCE, FORBEARANCE, KINDNESS, FORGIVENESSES AND LOTS MORE.

It's good to hold on to some constants in times of change, how about this one. We are loved with an EVER LASTING love by an unchanging God.

Peace and blessings to all. Nick

The Holy Trinity

(John 16:12-15)

*The Spirit comes silently into our hearts
bringing love
bringing life
and pointing to the one who brought us life
Jesus the Christ
The Living God
In our desires to be the centre
and our desires to turn inward
wrapping ourselves up in ever smaller packages
fearing that if we are not the centre
there will be no centre
in our emptiness
longing to find that to which we can cling
The Spirit comes
and points to the Christ
the one who walked with us
the one who lived with us
the one who was us
and died like us
only to live and bring life
This is the one to whom the Spirit points
simply
quietly
that we may know God's love for us
and burst forth in new life
new creation*

written by Pastor Dan

PP Holy Days 7 June

Trinity Sunday, celebrating our God who is Three Persons

Trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity has kept many a theologian busy down the centuries. One helpful picture is to imagine the sun shining in the sky. The sun itself – way out there in space, and unapproachable in its fiery majesty – is the Father. The light that flows from it, which gives us life and illuminates all our lives, is the Son. The heat that flows from it, and which gives us all the energy to move and grow, is the Holy Spirit.

You cannot have the sun without its light and its heat. The light and the heat are from the sun, are of the sun, and yet are also distinct in themselves, with their own roles to play.

The Bible makes clear that God is One God, who is disclosed in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. For example:

Deuteronomy 6:4: 'Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'

Isaiah 45:22: 'Turn to me and be saved... for I am God, and there is no other.'

Genesis 1:1-2: 'In the beginning God created.... and the Spirit of God was hovering...'

Judges 14:6: 'The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power...'

John 1:1-3: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.'

Luke 24:49 actually manages to squeeze the whole Trinity into one sentence. Jesus tells His disciples: 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power (the Holy Spirit) from on high.'

In other words, the sun eternally gives off light and heat, and whenever we turn to its brilliant light, we find that the warmth and life there as well.



Masaccio: The Holy Trinity (1427)

Artists, and the faiths that employ or inspire them, tend to be wary about making pictures of God. How can images be made of what is beyond human imagining? However we might depict God, God is not like that. So in some faiths, notably Islam, it is simply idolatrous and forbidden to attempt it. Yet in others, especially Hinduism, the response is to depict God in a riotous profusion of ways, thousands of ways of seeing God, yet no one image definitive. Christianity has been in conflict over this for centuries, and in England the most obvious evidence is the way in which almost all decoration in our churches was obliterated at the Reformation or in the Cromwellian period.

Masaccio, 'Messa Tom' as this nickname personifies him, died in 1428 at the age of 26, a loss keenly felt by those who knew his remarkable ability. His great fresco of the Holy Trinity in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (measuring some 22 feet by 10) predates the Reformation by a century but the Roman Catholic Church to which he belonged remained committed to images sculpted and painted as a means of teaching the faithful and inspiring them to devotion. And if Jesus taught us to call God 'Father' then why not depict him thus?

Masaccio's Holy Trinity is famous for its

very early use of linear perspective, at first sight convincing us that an entire barrel-vaulted chapel opens up beyond God the Father. But what transforms a seemingly sombre image (one much damaged by time) is the tender and merciful way in which the Father's extended arms support and mirror the arms of his Son on the cross. That the Father stands to do this rather than be conventionally seated on the Throne of Grace offers dignified respect to the Son's suffering triumph as well as touching humanity, for even the toes of God appear beneath the hem of his cloak. Between Father and Son the Holy Spirit, a white dove, flies purposefully.

It is all too easy for the idea of the Trinity to become an arid technical exercise for the compilers of creeds and catechisms to unravel, or more frequently to leave in a baffling tangled knot. But kindness, grace, compassion, mercy all flow from the Trinity, as does Christ's blood towards the painted altar at the foot of Masaccio's work. The Holy Trinity is every bit the loving caring family we so ardently desire for our lives. We do not merely admire it; we are included in it.

Focus on St Mary the Virgin – Clothall

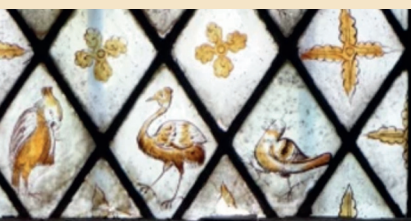


Photo courtesy of Mrs H Taylor



This week I am beginning a series looking at the churches in our benefice and starting, alphabetically speaking, with St Mary the Virgin, Clothall. Nestled in a fold of low hills just slightly to the South – East of the ancient market town of Baldock lies the small village of Clothall. On one of the hills, and discernible from the A507, you can see this small church surrounded by trees. In times gone by it would have been a clear landmark for those travelling between Baldock and Buntingford guiding the weary traveller on their way. The path to the church is steep and on gaining the porch it is worth turning to look at the surrounding views. Just pushing open the great old wooden door and stepping down into the church creates a feeling of timelessness as the oldest parts of the church date from the 13th century with the font being earlier and most of the church 14th & 15th century and you feel as if time has stood still in this quietly atmospheric place. The beautiful windows, which have rare depictions of birds, can be seen around the church and the old box pews invite the visitor to sit in quiet comfortable security and to be at peace. It has a growing and lively congregation which spans toddlers to nonagenarians – so all are welcome.

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

Thank you.

PCC OF RUSHDEN

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

SANDON PCC

BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

PCC OF ST MARY'S CHURCH WALLINGTON

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PCC OF CLOTHALL

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A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

*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.*