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NEWSLETTER

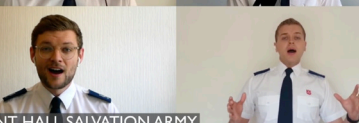
Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon,
Wallington, and Weston



Saint Alban; St Mary, Sledmere,
East Riding of Yorkshire.



JOHN LONDON CHURCH



NT HALL SALVATION ARMY



CHURCH NORWICH



Welcome

WHAT NOW?

We are all used to constant news, it's an integral part of life but the difference is that typically it's all sorts of news from all sorts of places, until 3 months ago. Since then its seemingly a single subject Covid 19, do you long for something else? Don't worry Brexit is rising up the agenda again because it still lurks out there, meanwhile we have the rise of Black Lives Matter giving many of us fresh insights into another recurring issue.

We have news of progress with medicine to help treat C19 plus ever changing instructions on how to behave in public, face masks will of course be a major fashion craze any day soon.

Are you desperate to get out in the world again or fearful or both? Day by day we are facing new challenges and changes at an accelerating rate but life goes on. Will you let it just happen to you or can you embrace change? Most of us like a bit of excitement, maybe even surprises but anxiety can consume us.

Maybe I can reframe a few new changes in a positive way, no crowds in the shops, no traffic jams, no expensive visits to hairdressers, no need to buy new clothes. How about the warmest Spring on record and domestic fuel oil at an all-time cheap price and how about all the lovely generosity and kindness everywhere we look.

Life does indeed go on, it will never stop, the world keeps turning and we can't get off—HOORAY because actually its rather wonderful.

If you were present on line for last Sundays zurch(zoom church) I hope you found it as excellent as I did, Isobel and the Dougs, the UK Blessing. Great hymns, insightful prayers and Fiona opening up the start of the Beatitudes for us so brilliantly. For me, and I know for others, it was a morning full of the Holy Spirit and we were corporately blessed. It's new and its different and it's a change we were not expecting, but it's absolutely wonderful, if you haven't joined so far please come along, you won't regret it. **Peace and blessings to all. Nick**



20th June

Summer Solstice

— longest day of the year

June, of course is the month of the summer solstice, the month of the Sun. Sol + stice come from two Latin words meaning 'sun' and 'to stand still'. As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December. Whilst the ancients lit fires to celebrate the midsummer festival (Beltane) and the druid worship at Stonehenge and elsewhere, we as Christians celebrate the Creator and his continuing presence in the heart of his creation. Here are two pieces written by famous sons of the church.

22nd June

St Alban, Britain's first Christian martyr

Alban was the very first Christian martyr in Britain - or at least the first we know of. A 'martyr' is someone who has died for the faith - the word literally means 'witness'. He was probably killed during the persecution under the emperor Diocletian in the early years of the fourth century, in the late stages of the Roman occupation of Britain. His martyrdom took place in the amphitheatre outside the Roman city of Verulamium, which is now St Albans, in Hertfordshire. The church historian Bede, writing six hundred years after Alban's death, records that Alban was a Roman citizen who gave shelter to a priest who was being hunted by the Romans. During the priest's stay in his home, Alban was converted to the Christian faith. When the soldiers eventually tracked the

priest down, they arrived at Alban's house and insisted on searching it. What they found was Alban dressed in the priest's clothes, while their real prey escaped. They arrested Alban and demanded that he make a sacrifice to the Emperor - a common test of loyalty. He refused. He was then condemned to death and taken into the amphitheatre, which still stands in the fields below St Alban's Abbey, to be put to death. One of his executioners was converted, Bede claims, but the other one took a sword and beheaded him. He was buried nearby, on a site where a shrine was later erected. In the early fifth century two Continental bishops, Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes, were sent to Britain and record that they visited the shrine of Alban at Verulamium. The date of

their visit was given as 429. The martyrdom of Alban is a reminder that Christianity was planted first in these islands during the Roman occupation, though it was all but extinguished in England in the dark centuries that followed, until people like David, Cuthbert and the other Celtic missionaries restored the faith in many parts of the land - especially in the north. The fact that his shrine existed and was venerated right through to the time of Bede also demonstrates that the faith did not die out completely, even in the south of England. Not a great deal is known about Alban apart from the story of his martyrdom, but what we do know is probably enough to give him a substantial claim to be the patron saint of England ahead of the foreigner St George.

A Canticle for Brother Sun

Praised be You, My Lord,
in all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and
enlightens us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his
Most High Lord.
St Francis of Assisi

God in All

He inspires all,
He gives life to all,
He dominates all,
He supports all.
He lights the light of the sun.
He furnishes the light of the night.
He has made springs in dry land.
He is the God of heaven and earth,
of sea and rivers,
of sun, moon and stars,
of the lofty mountain and the
lowly valley,
the God above heaven,
and in heaven,
and under heaven.
A prayer of St Patrick



Annibale Carracci: Domine, Quo Vadis? (c.1602)



The most talented of a family of painters from Bologna, Annibale Carracci went to Rome in 1595. He made his name decorating the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery, and in doing so produced work long thought to rank in quality with the Sistine Chapel. He had the misfortune to be working in Rome at the same time as the volatile Caravaggio, who made Carracci his bitter enemy, losing no opportunity to deride what he saw as the old-fashioned painting of his rival compared to his own arresting creations of deep darkness and brilliant light. But at his best Annibale Carracci imparts a fresh liveliness to his work, less easily discovered in painters of earlier decades.

What is it to be struck by a vision? It is to have some important truth impact upon the mind with such overwhelming clarity that it produces to the senses the physical effects associated with it. It is to one who experiences it utterly real. This tale is not to be found in the Bible but in an early text called The Acts of Peter. The keys to the kingdom of heaven hanging from his belt, Peter has been persuaded to

escape the Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians and is hurrying out of Rome along the Appian Way. If he travels its full length he will reach the Adriatic and a ship home to safety. But to his astonishment when barely out of the city (and Carracci amended his first attempt at the figure of Peter to make him more obviously recoil in shock) he is confronted by Christ carrying his cross.

Looking as if he will walk straight out the painting he hardly breaks stride, such is the urgency of his mission. 'Domine, Quo Vadis?', 'Lord, where are you going?' gasps Peter. 'I am going to Rome to be crucified again' Christ replies, his strong fast-moving figure shouldering the cross with ease, his dramatic gesture pointing the way to Peter. So Peter, about to repeat his terrible denial of Jesus before the crucifixion, returns to Rome, the true disciple of Christ facing his martyrdom.

It is a legendary tale perhaps, but a plausible one given the turbulent atmosphere which surrounded the early Christians. For us it is a reminder that what seems to be the wise and sensible choice is not always the right one if it causes us to forsake our lives' deepest commitments. Annibale Carracci's Christ shows Peter the way, and points over our shoulder to insist that we too turn again.

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.

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
LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845245

Focus on All Saints Sandon



Photos courtesy of Mr James Hawkes

All Saints is easily spotted due to its distinctive tower buttresses (17th C) which are now purely decorative as they are no longer required to support the tower - but where would we be without them? The church stands in an elevated position above village green, hall and the pond and was originally started in the mid-14thC (1348) prior to the Black Death. Work stopped during the pestilence and was restarted nearer to the

end of that century and gradually added to in the subsequent centuries with major restoration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Of note are the ten 15thC pews at the back of church with their distinctive poppy head finials (lovely to look at - murder to sit on!) the 17th C pulpit and the glorious 15thC chancel screen. Everything seems to work into an harmonious all-embracing whole with further delights wherever you look. A recent addition to the churchyard is a memorial to all who served in the Great War. An active church with regular services and a welcoming congregation it continues to serve the village in all seasons.



To make you smile (or wince)

What time of day was Adam created?
Just a little before Eve.

Why are atoms Catholic?
Because they all have mass.

The good Lord didn't create anything
without a purpose.
Mosquitoes come close, though.

On a house's fence:
"Salespeople welcome! Dog food is expensive."

Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?
Because Noah was always standing on the deck

"Something's wrong with me," sighed a young lady after a wedding. "I've been a bridesmaid twice, I even caught the bouquet, too; but I'm still single."
"Next time," advised her grandmother, "don't reach for the flowers; reach for the best man."