

intouch

NEWSLETTER

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



The Archbishop of Canterbury will lead a national broadcast on Sunday 22nd March across BBC radio at 8am.

Welcome

Welcome to our first newsletter helping you to keep in touch around the benefice in these challenging times. As we all try to come to terms with what is happening around us it is good to know that we are still community and keeping in touch is important. We will be able to use this newsletter to help us keep in touch with you and you in touch with others—we are still community even when we cannot meet face to face. We are hoping to include bible texts and reflections, prayers, news, things or make you smile and much more once we get up and running.

There are clouds of uncertainty and isolation surrounding us all at the moment—it is time to reach out inside the cloud in whatever way we can—we may not be able to touch with our hands but we can with our hearts and our prayers our smiles and our waves. Fiona

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.*

Behind the clouds

'The Lord is a sun and a shield: The Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from those who walk with him'

My home is on a mountain nearly two thousand feet high. Some morning we wake up to find that we are in lovely sunshine but the valley below is covered in clouds and there are times when storms come up and we can see the flashes of lightening and hear the thunder but we remain in the clear air above. Many times, I have sat on the porch watching the clouds and thinking about them. Clouds of discouragement and suffering that temporarily veil the sunlight of God's love from us. Many people are living with clouds over their lives at the moment. Some will be in hospital, many feeling worried about relatives, their jobs or how they are even going to feed their families, pay their mortgages or keep their business going in these challenging times.

The bible has a great deal to say about clouds, for they sometimes symbolise the spiritual forces that obscure the face of God. The Bible indicates that clouds are given to us for a purpose and that there is glory in the clouds and that every cloud has a silver lining.

Adapted from Billy Graham

The Rectory -St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your decision to place a notice board outside your church seems a good one – and its design in blue plastic with luminous red detachable letters seems entirely in keeping with the aesthetics of your building. Make sure that it is lockable, however, as an innocent notice saying 'all are welcome' may be modified by a devotee of anagrams to say something far less polite by the following day.

We recently replaced ours, which had disappeared shortly before last bonfire night. That the Scouts' bonfire had a board which closely resembled our old one in its centre was, I am sure, a complete coincidence. The Venture Scouts' collective smirk during the following week's Parade Service did give one pause for thought, and the Cubs' collapse into helpless laughter at the chorus 'So light up the fire and let the flames burn' only increased suspicion.

On reflection, you may not have been wise to use your notice board to tell everyone your holiday dates. Certainly, various local burglars were tripping over each other inside the vicarage while you were away. However, the note the last one left you, saying that next time he broke in, he would bring you something, since you had so little left, was quite touching. Inevitably, now that your church has a notice board, there will be open warfare over who is allowed to display notices on it. Will the Slimmer's Club be seen as biblical? Why is the Ladies Guild notice twice as large as all the others? And do remember that while everyone will want space to display their notices, no one will ever remove them once the event is over. Plaintive announcements of Christmas parties in April or of Summer Fetes in November only serve to take people down memory lane.

Here's the best way to manage a notice board: create that panacea for all problems: a sub-committee. These poor people only ever exist in order to get the clergy out of tight corners and to make sure that matters are discussed at such inordinate length that every issue eventually dies a natural death. And if even that fails, you could have a quiet word with our Scouts before next year's bonfire night.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

Churches still open for prayer

All our churches will be open as much as possible during the day—please feel free to come in and sit in quiet stillness for a while. There will be a Prayer Tree in every church for you to leave or request a prayer.

