

# NEWSLETTER into touch



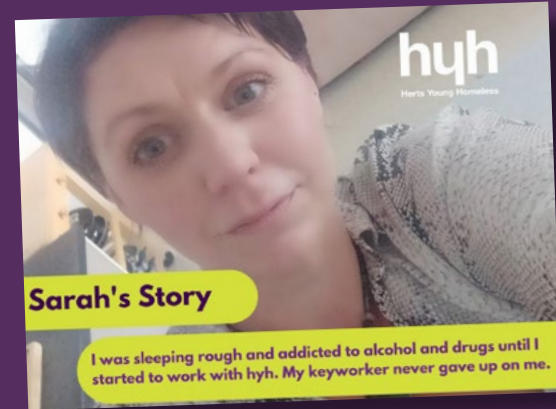
KINGS  
WOOD  
BENEFICE

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

## Welcome to this edition of In Touch.

We have had some lovely sunshine over the past few days which seems to have lifted everyone's spirits and pointed out to me that it is time I did some window cleaning! We are devoting some of our space this week to the **Herts Young Homeless Charity** – with some ideas of things we could do to help this good local cause. We continue with our journey through global lent customs and the latest letter from St James the lesser brings smile as we contemplate the joys of being rural churches with a slower pace of pressure from our town cousins. **Mike Leverton** continues to open our eyes to the messages in famous paintings with **The Tribute** – a scene where the authorities try to trick Jesus into saying something they can leap on and judge. I hope you are all keeping well and safe and, like me, looking forward to better weather and being able to meet up outside again.

With blessings Fiona



St James the Least of All

The Rectory

## On how to deflect those staff appraisals



### My dear Nephew Darren

So, your vicar has introduced staff appraisal for all the officers who work for your church, including yourself. It seems a very dangerous innovation; as far as I am concerned, ministry is only successful when parishioners have no idea what the clergy get up to.

I imagine that he will look at the number of services you take in a year. Funerals can only be increased if you resort to murder, which is likely to be frowned on – although I have been sorely tempted during endless church council meetings. Perhaps if you take a flask of water wherever you go and if you find a baby unattended, you could resort to a spontaneous baptism. That would get your numbers up, even if returning mothers may marvel at the highly localised and brief shower that seemed to have taken place over the pram.

Visiting targets are easily increased. Compile a list of when parishioners will be out and call on those days; a card through their letterbox will prove to your vicar that you were there. Should they happen to be in, mention that you are collecting for the organ fund and they will immediately excuse themselves for an important appointment. You are then free to move on to clock another visit.

Your vicar is also bound to want to see the congregation increasing. This is not sustainable, and you should put a stop to such ambitions at once. It is easily done. All you have to do is to approach your friends at the local football club and bribe them with your homemade beer to come along to church several Sunday mornings in a row. If you give them enough beer BEFORE the service, they will be likely to make just enough muted disruption as to leave your vicar a bit rattled, and thinking that perhaps after all, 'less' is 'more' when it comes to the congregation.

But whatever you do, make sure that you never preach a better sermon than he does. You don't want anyone thanking you at the door for your 'so interesting sermon' in front of him, when they have been sleeping through his sermons for years. If you offend the vicar this way, he will take swift revenge, and ask you to organise the parish summer fete.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

## HERTS YOUNG HOMELESS CHARITY

We know the last few months have been tough for everyone, but as the evenings start to get lighter and the weather warms up, we've started to feel a lot more positive!

This month, we thought we'd share a case study that shows just how life changing our staff's support can be, as well as some service news and finishing with some fun ways to get involved with us.

Over the last month, we have experienced some extreme weather across the county, including heavy winds, rain and even snow. These harsh conditions have reminded us of the importance of our work in supporting people across Hertfordshire who are facing homelessness and helping them to avoid resorting to rough sleeping.

We'd like to tell you the story of Sarah who, after battling with addiction for many years, became street homeless in the Watford area.

Sarah started to use the services at The Haven to get some food and have a wash. It was there that she met hyh's Dual Diagnosis Link worker, Lydia.

### Read More

The hyh Friends raise money for things such as where benefits will not cover necessary basics when we do get to the point of young people moving into their homes. If you would like to help please donate here:

Sort code: 60-18-11 and Account no: 45366578 and reference 'hyhfriends'

Thank you

## Titian: The Tribute Money (1516)



Before speech, before words, comes expression and gesture. As the world comes into focus in our new-born days, as we get used to the idea that the being we inhabit gives us the means to see, so we begin to use that gift to interpret everything that moves and shapes itself around us. People surround us, and even if we have yet to work out that what they are we are too, we are quickly drawn into perceiving what they make of us. We don't know what words mean, so adults resort to meaning-free song-like cooing to express their affection for us. But swiftly we learn to recognize how love looks, the grace of a smile, the open adoration of eyes. And we respond with those first attempts at laughter which cause the hearts of those who love us to skip a beat with joy. The response of a face to a face is our primary speech and it remains the wordless root of all the communication we will engage in throughout our lives, in acceptance and in opposition.

We enter every painting as deaf mutes for paintings cannot speak and we cannot speak to them. But do we need to hear the words the two actors speak in Titian's painting in order to know what's going on? No, for the skills we learned as babies tell us immediately that dead-eyed cunning is being met with a vigilant wariness which

is in no way aggressive. That the facial expression of Jesus is so cleverly balanced by Titian make this one of the great illuminations of character in art.

On the right the inquisitor is built to thrust forward. His rough strength of forearm and insistent head move in confidently from behind and push across the shoulder of Christ. He believes himself unanswerable. Now the hand of Jesus, strikingly contrasted in its delicate sensitivity with the callous rawness of the other touches but does not take the proffered coin backed up by others concealed in the questioner's grip. Then he will say the words which, thanks to the genius of Titian, we barely need to hear; 'Give the emperor his own things, give God what belongs to God'. Thus he disarms a question which must, so the asker thought, trap Jesus between treason and faithlessness – either will do to condemn him. But Jesus takes the matter beyond the political and religious tensions of his time, offering an answer which is universal in scope. And no doubt the Duke of Ferrara, who commissioned this painting to adorn the door of the cupboard in which he kept his coin and medal collection, quite saw the point.

### HOLY DAYS

## LENT CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD – PART 3

### Slovakia

On Palm Sunday, called *Kvetna*, or *Flower Sunday*, after the morning Mass, children in villages gathered behind a maypole and went through the town singing a song about Christ journeying to Jerusalem.

### Bulgaria

The *Lazarouvine* festival is celebrated on the Saturday before Easter and honors spring and young girls. A beloved event every year, the *Lazarouvine* represents a kind of debut for girls. They gather on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, decorate the gates of the village with willow twigs, and then walk through the village singing. The next day, they make Palm Sunday wreaths. According to superstition, young girls who refuse to take part will never find a husband.

Needless to say, the day is also used for marriage proposals.

### Philippines

On Good Friday some of the faithful in the town of San Pedro in the Philippines actually endure crucifixion as well as flagellation with sharp-tipped whips. The crucifixions do not last long enough to cause serious injury or death. Passion plays or *sinakulo* are also often performed during Lent. These plays are performed over several nights during Holy Week. On Holy Thursday, the most common activity among Catholics has been to visit three, seven, nine or even 14 churches. The custom of the churches is based on keeping vigil in the spirit of Christ's journey to Gethsemane after the Last Supper. The practice likely began with the pilgrims who made their way to Rome to visit the seven great pilgrim churches.

### HERTS YOUNG HOMELESS CHARITY



### What are you giving up for Lent?

Are you giving something up for Lent this year? Did you know that the things we cut back on throughout Lent can really add up! We've compiled costs for some of the typical luxuries we enjoy daily, weekly and monthly to put some of these expenses into perspective.

Could you spare some of what you save this year to help Herts Young Homeless?

### Share the Love

Our supporters are always finding creative ways to support us and this fundraiser is no different! Massive thanks to Tina Gaskin-Edwards who has been creating and selling lovely greetings cards with 100% of the proceeds coming to hyh. So far she has raised a fantastic £500!

Let your loved ones know you're thinking of them with one of Tina's creative cards. Check out her portfolio here and email us - [marketing@hyh.org.uk](mailto:marketing@hyh.org.uk) to buy.



### hyh Happy Hits

It's safe to say we all need some happiness in our lives right now and, for many of us, listening to a great playlist or having a kitchen boogie is the key to a better mood.

We are so thrilled to announce our new, unique fundraiser: the hyh Happy Hits Playlist! Using the GivePenny platform, we want you to help us build a playlist of amazing, positive tunes that will help us all through lockdown.

For a recommended donation of £1, you can add a song to our community playlist.