

Dear all

My apologies for the non-appearance of letter before the services last weekend. As you may have picked up from the service, just before the time I was due to work on the letter, we heard that Helen's mother had been taken to hospital, where she subsequently died. This time I will give plenty of warning for the service!

So, I will start with the **Service details** for this coming Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Easter. I'm going to be a bit of a rebel! 25th April is the feast of St Mark the Evangelist. According to the lectionary, this is transferred to 26th, but since this is lectionary Year B, the year when Mark's Gospel is the main gospel, I'm going to focus on that feast.

Readings – Acts 15:35-41; Ephesians 4:7-16; and Mark 13:3-13. The Psalm is Psalm 119: 9-16.

Hymns – 'We have a Gospel to proclaim', and a new hymn 'Praise be to God for servants of the word'.

As we have been involved over the last few days going through all sorts of paperwork, we have come across quite detailed plans of what my mother-in-law wanted for her memorial service (she had chosen to leave her body for medical research, so there will not be a funeral as such). Apparently, she discussed and made these plans after the funeral of my mother, who left no plans, so my brother and I had to make our own choices. I have often found that, when arranging funerals, the next of kin can find it a very stressful part trying to guess what the deceased may have wanted at their funeral. While I make it clear that the funeral service is for them – to remember and give thanks in a way that is meaningful to them – nevertheless knowing that they are carrying out the wishes of the deceased (their favourite hymns, music, readings etc.) can be a comfort, as well as relieving the stress of yet more decisions to make.

I therefore periodically take an opportunity to suggest to people that this can be a real gift they can leave their next-of-kin. It is really helpful to write down your wishes, even better to discuss it with them. It sounds a bit morbid, but it can turn into a valuable time of sharing stories and what is important. It can also be very helpful to write down/tell your life story. So many times, the next-of-kin are left struggling to remember dates, or special events, especially early in life. Again, this can be a valuable time of sharing and getting to know someone even better. I couldn't count how many times I've heard, at a funeral service, "I never knew that about them – I wish I had known, I'd loved to have talked about it". I will still never forget, at my dad's funeral, learning that, as a teenager, he would ride a noisy motorbike up and down the road, being 'cool'. What!!! My dad!!!

I must confess, though, that while I know where Helen has written her wishes down, I haven't yet done it myself (I have spoken about it, but not yet written). On my 'to do' list!

The Bible study group resumes on Thursday 22nd April, continuing where we left off in Mark's Gospel, chapter 5. New members are welcome. The link is <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1MnI0bjJ2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

The Church of England has produced a series of reflections about prayer, which are being delivered by email. If you would like these to be delivered to you, you can sign up at ['Prayer - where to start and how to keep going' email reflections | The Church of England](#)

My apologies that I didn't post this earlier, but you might still be interested in Nick Fawcett's prayer for Prince Philip.

Today, 17 April 2021, sees the funeral service of Prince Philip. By his own request, and all the more so because of ongoing Covid restrictions, it will be a simple and relatively low-key affair, but I know many will want, in some small way, to pay their own personal respects to a respected man who for so long has played a major part in this nation's affairs, so here is a prayer of thanksgiving for the Duke's long life.

Loving God,
as we recall today the end of a chapter,
the end of an epoch,
the end of a life,
we thank you.

As we recall devoted service to the Crown,
to the nation,
to the Commonwealth,
to the world,
we thank you.

As we recall a title carried with honour,
a position fulfilled with dignity,
a duty discharged with steadfastness,
a life lived with dynamism,
we thank you.

As we recall a dedicated husband,
a loving father,

a caring grandfather,
a proud great-grandfather,
we thank you.

As we recall a committed campaigner,
an informed writer,
a loyal patron,
a visionary trailblazer,
we thank you.

As we recall a man of integrity,
a man of wisdom,
a man of wit,
a man of courage,
we thank you.

For everything that Prince Philip has meant to this country,
to us,
to his friends and colleagues,
and above all to his family,
we thank you.
Amen.

I have recently finished reading a quite fascinating book called *Restless Souls Pilgrim Roots* by Adrian Gray. It's about the history of Christianity in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire up until the Restoration of Charles II. The section concerning the birth of the Quakers was absolutely jaw-dropping. The persecution they experienced was appalling, but occasionally strangely... I'm not sure you can say 'amusing', but... well, here is an extract about the reaction of our neighbouring parish of Crowland to George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement:

Then [Fox] went in 1656 with Robert Craven and others to Crowland, where he found much heavy drinking which he suggested was the result of the poor practice of the town's priest and clerk; the two of them attacked Fox with the tongs and fire shovel. The reception in Boston was rather better.

Today's musical offerings (apologies for adverts – it's how they are able to make content free!):

Firstly, Anglican chant.

[Psalm 119 "Blessed Are Those That Are undefiled in the Way" \(Arr. for Choir & Organ\) : Verses 1-32 - YouTube](#)

And, for total contrast...

[Psalm 119b - Beth - How Can A Young Man Keep His Way Pure? - YouTube](#)

There are no anthems appropriate for this Sunday particularly, however (though I think I may have posted this earlier) here is Ton Koopman's reconstruction of St Mark's Passion by JS Bach.

[Bach Markus Passion BWV 247 reconstructed by Ton Koopman - YouTube](#)

Something totally random! Sheila E – The Belle of St Mark (If you like 80s pop).

[Sheila E - The Belle Of St. Mark • TopPop - YouTube](#)



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark