

priory news

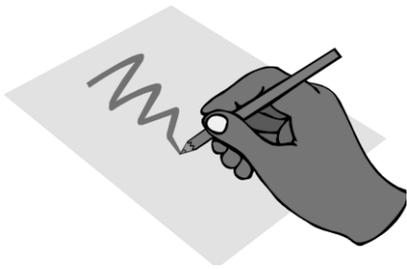
Deeping St James Parish Church Magazine

50p

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March 2021





From the Vicar

I wonder if, perhaps, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. As we enter March, we have had a significant out-rolling of the vaccinations, and the announcement of a phased relaxing of the lockdown from our Prime Minister – dependent, it has been clearly stated, on data, not dates.



From phone conversations I have had, this third lockdown has been quite a struggle for many. The first lockdown was a walk into the unknown. It was new, and there was, perhaps, some degree of optimism of its working – hence the exuberant reaction to coming out, and the subsequent rapid rise in cases. The second lockdown was for a limited period, and we knew what to expect. This third lockdown seemed to take us all by surprise, as the second was supposed to have worked. By now we were confused by new variants, and by rapidly changing levels of infection, sometimes defying all logic. Mind-blowing mortality statistics didn't help. And all of this occurring during the two months notorious for being the darkest and most challenging under normal circumstances, both literally and metaphorically.

As I write this, we are well into the season of Lent, and perhaps this is a season that can speak to us in our current situation. Lent is a period when we take time to share, in some small way, with Jesus' experience in the wilderness. We share perhaps a sense of isolation, of a total change in our normal patterns of life. And we might also share in those devious, de-stabilising, and demonic whispers that Jesus heard at that time. Twice the temptation starts "If you are the son of God..." Are you really? Are you sure? Do you feel like it?... The other temptation is different – change your focus... look away from God, What do you worship... give worth to?

I wonder if Jesus knew how long he would be in the wilderness... 25 done, only 15 to go now... counting down the days... I wonder if he too felt one day blurring into another. Did he see the light at the end of the tunnel?

We know how Lent will end. We know that there will be a real roller-coaster ride – triumph, friendship, betrayal, suffering, and death... and then triumph again. We experience darkness before the light at the end. But we hold on to that hope, that darkness has not overcome the light.

I wonder what Jesus was holding on to. I suspect that he had the words of scripture – accounts of God’s faithfulness in the past, and promise for the present and future. Man lives... by every word that comes from God. I wouldn’t mind betting that a lot of prayer was going on too! Sometimes, I imagine, it would be pretty raw and painful. And we also hear that, when exhausted, he was ministered to by God’s messengers (angelos – angels in Greek).

So, as the days noticeably lengthen (from which we get the word ‘Lent’), and we experience more daylight day by day, let us look to the light at the end of the tunnel – not just the COVID tunnel. Let’s allow that light of hope to fill us now, and, who knows, perhaps we can be angels too for one another.

Rev Mark

- *Services and Church Opening (update)*

Currently services will be online only until further notice. We will be livestreaming a service at 10.00am on Sundays, and at 6.00pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

The permission to suspend public worship lasts until Passion Sunday, 21st March. Dependent upon the agreement of the PCC, it is likely that we will be able to recommence public worship in the church, subject to COVID-safe practice, as before. Please look out for confirmation via email, on our Facebook page, and the church noticeboard by the car park.

- *Lent Course*

We will meet on Zoom, Thursdays 2.30-3.30ish pm. The Zoom details are:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1MnI0bjJ2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

- *Registers for February*

Funerals: We commend to God’s keeping:

1st	February	Sheila Miller
17th	February	Doreen Wilson
22nd	February	Marlene Parker
26th	February	Gwen Parsonage

Parish Directory

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Curate	The Revd Sonia Marshall	curate@dsj.org.uk
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Assistant Churchwarden	John Worthington	priorynews@dsj.org.uk
Parochial Church Council		
Chairman	The Revd Mark Williams	vicar@dsj.org.uk
Vice-Chairman	Canon Niccy Fisher	
Hon. Secretary	Johanna Jones	
Hon. Treasurer	Simon Marshall	treasurer@dsj.org.uk
Covenant Secretary	Vivien Hamilton	
Electoral Roll Officer	Barry Fisher	
Safeguarding Officer	Ted Fisk	safeguarding@dsj.org.uk
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Organist & Director of Music	Chris Brown	music@dsj.org.uk
Organisations		
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Church Hall Bookings	Nick Drewett & Jan Fisk	churchhall@dsj.org.uk
Church Ladies' Fellowship	Juliet Mills	
Church Flowers	Pauline Brooksbank Christine Masters	
House Group	Doris Warner	
Rose & Sweet Pea Show	Nick & Kate Drewett	priorynews@dsj.org.uk
Junior Church	Vicki Billyard	
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In this Month's Priory News ...

Dear Readers,

In this month's letter Rev Mark talks about "the light at the end of the tunnel" and certainly the news over the last few days does seem to suggest that the vaccination programme is going well and together with the present lockdown, whilst the coronavirus is still definitely with us, the signs are that come the autumn or even the late summer we may be regaining something of the 'old normal'.

Those of us 'meeting' via Zoom for the Lent Course are finding it a stimulating experience reminding us very powerfully of what Lent and Easter are all about. I, for one, highly recommend the book entitled "Living His Story" by Hannah Steele which forms the basis of the Course. Why not join us on Thursdays at 2.30 pm for an hour or so? Details are to be found at the end of the Vicar's Letter at the beginning of this issue. Oh, and you don't need to be computer-savvy - you can download the app to your iPhone and join the meetings from there.

Cooking with Margaret	5
From the Vicar	1
In This Month's Priory News	4
Lent Course	2
Mission Matters	5
Monuments in the Priory Church	8
Parish Directory	3
Poetry Corner: Faith	9
Registers for January	2
Rotas for March	10
Services & Church opening	2
The Gospels	6

John

This month's recipe also first appeared in Priory News in 2014. Thank you Margaret.

Our thanks to Chris Halley for the lovely picture on the virtual 'cover' of this month's magazine.

Thanks to those who have sent in articles for Priory News. Please keep them coming. ***Please note: pictures containing recognisable children must be accompanied by authorisation to publish from their parents or guardians. We will not publish the names of children pictured unless specifically requested to do so by their parents or guardians.***

John Worthington, Cranmore Farmhouse, DSJ - Tel: 343860 priorynews@dsj.org.uk
 Please let us have your contributions for the April issue of Priory News **BEFORE the deadline of Friday 19th March.** Thank you.

Cooking with Margaret

Apricot and Coconut Slices



Ingredients

225g finely crushed digestive biscuits

175g ready to eat dried apricots, finely chopped

125g desiccated coconut

125g unsalted butter

397g can of condensed milk

175g white chocolate

Method

You will need a lightly greased and base lined 20cm by 30cm shallow tin.

Mix together the biscuits, apricots and coconut in a large bowl.

Melt together the butter and condensed milk until smooth, then mix into crumb mixture.

Spread into prepared tin, pressing down evenly.

Melt the chocolate and spread evenly over the top of the biscuit base.

Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares and enjoy.

• *Mission Matters*

Sadly we have not been able to run our Soup and Sandwich Lunches again this year. The appeals for help from the various charities still keep arriving and there is a way in which you can help. Water Aid always run a 'jars of change' appeal which we have supported in the past. What I am suggesting is that you find a tin or jar at home and put in it any loose change you might have and can spare. When we are able to meet at church again there will be a large jar at the back of church to receive your donations. This will be one small way in which we can continue to support Water Aid.

Victoria

• *The Gospels – another theological foray!*

In one of the Bible Studies, prior to the group morphing into the Lent Course, the question of the nature of the Gospels came up. It is a very important question, as, of all scriptures, they are the fundamental texts for our faith. They tell us of Jesus, who he was, and is, and what he did – his teaching, as opposed to that of his followers. At least, that is what we naturally assume.

The word 'Gospel' means 'Good News'. So far, so good! But good news about what? Often the term was used in Roman times to refer to news about the only important figure that really mattered – the god-man known as the emperor. So, to call the account of the life of Jesus Christ 'Good News' was a pretty radical thing. It threw down the gauntlet somewhat! What was this Good News?

John sums it up best in a verse towards the end of his gospel - *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name* (John 20: 30-31).

What sort of writings are they? Paul writes to Timothy that *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work* (2 Timothy 3: 16-17). Leaving aside the fact that, when Paul wrote this, the Gospels almost certainly did not exist, and that the 'scriptures' would be what we call the Old Testament, nevertheless, we still assume that the Gospels (perhaps the whole New Testament) are 'inspired'. But what does this mean?

Sometimes it is assumed that it means dictated word for word in some spiritual way. That would be nice, but not what this means. 'Inspired' means 'breathed in', by God. The extent to which every word is inspired has been discussed and argued over ever since it was written. But bear in mind that we are reading words written many years after the events, in a foreign language, that is then translated from the best sources that survive, occasionally contradictory... In my mind, inspiration happens at least as much to us when we read the words as it did to the one who originally wrote them.

There are four Gospels. Three (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are very similar, and are called *synoptic* (literally 'same eye', the same viewpoint). John is very different. There is a general assumption that Mark was written first, and served as one of the sources for Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke share some stories that don't appear in Mark – and so it is assumed that they shared the same long-lost source, which we call Q (from the German *Quelle* – source). And then Matthew and Luke have their own unique sources. John is almost totally on his own.

Occasionally stories appear in all four e.g. the feeding of the 5000, and, obviously, the crucifixion and resurrection (though details differ). There are some surprising omissions – e.g. Mark and John have no birth stories, John has no Last Supper account. It seems pretty obvious that the stories have been chosen, and edited for a particular reason.

Sometimes Gospels contradict each other – for example John has the cleansing of the temple near the beginning of the gospel, the others towards the end. Did Jesus really do it twice? How did he get away with it the second time? Or was it placed differently to make a particular point?

One recent way of approaching the Gospels is to see them in the genre of Biography of the time. This is a different animal to what we expect today. Stories are chosen to let us know what we need to know about a person – perhaps sometimes putting words into their mouths that they may or may not have actually said, but it is the sort of thing they would have said!

So, why four versions? The early church had many accounts of the life of Jesus – initially all oral, passed on by word of mouth. Soon, it was necessary to write them down, to preserve the genuine accounts. Each Gospel traditionally has an authority. Mark is traditionally the young man who fled naked at the arrest of Jesus, the erstwhile companion of Paul. Peter is traditionally believed to be his main source. Matthew is traditionally one of the actual disciples. John (the son of Zebedee, brother of James) is also assumed to be one of the actual disciples – by the slightly strange argument that he is never mentioned in the Gospel. Instead, there is reference to ‘the disciple Jesus loved’.

Luke is different. He starts his Gospel *Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.* (Luke 1: 1-4). (*Theophilus*, incidentally, means ‘lover of God’ – perhaps an actual person, but possibly generic reader who is one who loves God). This seems to indicate that it is a history, not a biography, and possibly more like what we would understand as history. He seems to suggest he has included a wide range of eyewitness accounts, and has ordered them for publication.

There are differences too in language (good Greek or more basic Greek), and in focus. For example, Luke (a Gentile doctor who accompanied Paul) focusses more on women, healing and foreigners/outcasts. Matthew has quite a Jewish structure and approach, sometimes appearing, in our modern eyes, strangely anti-Semitic. It is quite likely he was writing to Jewish converts, who were experiencing persecution as heretics. He would then be taking

pains to explain why they were the true heirs of the Old Testament promises, in the face of official persecution.

But above all, the Gospels are life-changing, living and breathing. Over 2000 years, people's lives have been changed, because, in the reading of the Gospels, they have come face to face with the living God, incarnate in the person of Jesus. They have come to know Him and His power in their lives.

...in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it... The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world... to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...

(John 1: 4-5, 9, 12)



Rev Mark

(Once again we are indebted to Rev Sonia for the latest in her excellent series, "Monuments in the Priory Church".)

• *Monuments in the Priory Church*

Revd John Mossop (1753-1834)

A stone in the south aisle of the Priory Church commemorates the Rev'd John Mossop, curate of the Priory church from 1778 until his death. A wall plaque on the south wall is at present inaccessible being obscured by the organ.

John Mossop was born in 1753 to a farming family .Baptised at St Mary's Gosforth, he attended school at St Bees and in 1778 was admitted as a sizer at St John's college, Cambridge, his home then being Seascale, Cumberland. The newly appointed vicar of Deeping St James, Rev'd Weldon Champneys, was a canon and later subdean of St Paul's, London, canon of Westminster Abbey and St George's, Windsor, senior lecturer of St Bride's and chaplain to the Goldsmiths' Company. John Mossop was ordained deacon and appointed curate in 1778 to provide for the spiritual needs of the parish, the vicar being non resident. Revd John also became vicar of Baston in 1781 and of Langtoft in 1801, livings which he held until his death.

In 1787 he married Ann Berridge of Market Overton and they went on to have 15 children, one of whom became vicar of Helpston. Ann died in 1806 aged 39 years.

Rev'd John was a conscientious priest, increasing services to twice on Sundays. He founded a Sunday School, the first in the diocese, in 1815 establishing a National School. He lent the

parish funds to re-roof the main aisle and subscribed to Stamford library and various missionary activities. An excellent preacher with a clear voice, Marrat's history calls him a notable exception in a church that was nicknamed 'kill parson' because of its huge size. Though initially intrigued by the 'prophetess' Joanna Southcott he soon realised her claims were fantastical and lost interest.

Owning several acres of land and properties in the area, after providing for his surviving children he left bequests in trust for the widows of the parishes where he ministered, passing away in July, 1834.



Rev Sonia

• *Poetry Corner*

(We are grateful to Bet Washbrooke for the following poem by her mother, the late Betty Mates.)

FAITH

I'd forgotten that the sun could fill my heart with such delight,
Forgotten that its rays could make my dingy room so bright.
Buried in the depths of winter, 'mid the snow and rain
I'd forgotten that the skies could smile and springtime come again.

Like fearful faithless fancies that hover in the gloom
My brain was filled with doubting thoughts; how could spring flowers bloom
When all the earth was dead and bare,
And frozen arrows pierced the air?

I bow my head in silent shame to see each flower unfold
For now I know the secret that their fragrant petals hold.
He did not forget — indeed He knows each pain and care.
And spring, His crowning gift of love, returns for all to share.

(1938)

Flower Rota - March

7th	LENT
14th	LENT
21st	LENT
28th	LENT
April 4th	EASTER FLOWERS

Intercessions Rota - March

7th	Jo Astle
14th	Tony Masters
21st	Bet Washbrooke
28th	Niccy Fisher

- *And finally . . .*

To make you smile . . . Jo Astle has sent in the following:



(Thanks, Jo.)