

St Mary's Ticehurst and St Augustine's Flimwell

To: Congregation members and those on our circulation list

Dear Friends

VICAR'S LETTER/UPDATE as at Thursday 19th November 2020

National Lockdown #2 has just under two weeks to go, I hope and pray ... that it will be lifted by 2 Dec. As I mentioned in my last letter, it meant that my Church page in the current edition of the News & Views had proved somewhat inaccurate. Undaunted, I take the similar risk of including here what is planned for December. There are differences to last year, of course. Do bear with us. This letter is also to give you information from Sheila Synge about the Family Support Work appeal for Christmas. And as we have done before, I attach a sermon particularly for those of you getting this by Royal Mail.

Finally, if like me you are fed up with the pandemic, or struggling in any ways, do feel free to call me. As we see in quite a few of the Psalms, letting off steam and then remembering all our benefits, God's loving majesty and the rule of God the Son - Christ the King - in our lives ... it's been holy therapy for a very long time.

Family Support Work. *From Sheila Synge ...* FSW is looking for help in organising Christmas and preparing presents and hampers for families. Things cannot be done in our usual way obviously, but we should contribute as much as we can, as the need this year is greater than ever. A supportive supplier is again donating turkeys. Below is a list of items FSW need, and I'll take our contributions to a collection point on Mon 7th Dec. So I would be very happy to collect any items, if people want to ring me (01580 860164).

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| Sharing tubs of sweets | Selection boxes/family-size boxes of biscuits | Jelly! |
| Christmas Puddings | Tinned custard | Tinned fruit |
| Bread sauce, stuffing mix, gravy granules | Mince pies | Cranberry sauce |
| | | Sharing packs of savoury snacks. |

With presents, we can accept any new toys but please do NOT to wrap them. We especially need toys for the over 5s, including games, jigsaws, colouring books and pens and of course books. For teenagers, gift vouchers are good. We can't use soft toys of any kind this year. Small presents for parents would also be wonderful.

WORSHIP – Provisional from 6th December (for obvious reasons). Details to follow.

22nd Nov: **Christ the King Sunday** – ONLINE ONLY* 11am Livestreamed Morning Praise *with guest speaker.*

29th Nov: **Advent Sunday** - ONLINE ONLY*. 11am Livestreamed Advent Communion

6th Dec: **Advent 2** - 9.30am St Mary's Communion. 11am Morning Worship (online only*)

13th Dec: **Advent 3** - 9.30am Flimwell Christmas Service (informal). 11am St Mary's Communion.

20th Dec: **Advent 4** - 8am St Mary's Communion (BCP). 11am St Mary's Carol Service (online only*)

24th Dec: **Christmas Eve** - 4pm Christingle Service on Zoom! Advance booking only, limited to 100 devices!

25th Dec! 8am St Mary's Communion. 9.30am Flimwell Communion. 11am St Mary's Churchyard Communion

27th Dec: **1st Sunday of Christmas** - 9.30am St Mary's Communion (Feast of St Stephen transf. from 26th)

Service sheets & Pew/Readings sheet can be found on the homepage of www.ticehurstandflimwell.church several days in advance and will be emailed to our e-circular list. After the day of the livestream do go to www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5182 (Services & Events) and the sheets are available in the service box.

Diocesan services online - can be watched on www.chichester.anglican.org/liveservices and those at the Cathedral at www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/worship/live-service

Especially for those of you not on the internet – DAILY HOPE provides C of E worship on 0800 804 8044.

Church Finances/Charity Giving. Your continued giving, contactless or otherwise, is hugely appreciated: Nat West Bank 60-22-15: Ticehurst PCC 71164383 or Parochial Church Council of Flimwell 35098651.

Ashley Evans

Revd Ashley Evans, Vicar of Ticehurst and Flimwell

The Vicarage, Church St, Ticehurst TN5 7AB. T: 01580 200316. M: 07763 070177. E: revd@penandashley.co.uk

Di Freeman works a.m. at home, Mon/Tue/Thu. T: 07751 841355. E: admin@ticehurstandflimwell.church

Website www.ticehurstandflimwell.church

*For online worship go to - www.facebook.com/stMarysTicehurst

Remembrance Sermon 2020 (Service pre-recorded in St Mary's for Remembrance Sunday)
Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died." We can see in those words of St Paul to the Christians in Thessaloniki, its earliest 'Church', that that was a live question then as now, about those who have died.

We reflect today upon those killed in World Wars and other conflicts defending our nation and allies less able to defend themselves. So many killed. 20m in WW1 alone, 330k allied troops at Passchendaele alone. *Lest we forget* - in a time of world crisis, pandemic - we're called to remember them, to honour our war dead, and to ponder how so many came to die.

Remembrance of those lost in conflict, forebears/loved ones, those named on our memorials, is still emotive and distressing, rightly so. The scale of the loss and its causes are important, so as to strengthen our preparedness and resolve to prevent a recurrence, to identify and address (preferably peaceably) the warning signs. In some way we might wonder whether similar vigilance could have prevented this year's pandemic. Remembrance, *lest we forget ... be prepared*: otherwise all we are doing is effectively mourning: we risk their sacrifice being in vain; we risk losing hope. We must learn from the past and signs of the present.

No one of right mind would not want World Wars to be a thing of the past. As for Christianity, it is a thing of our past, but our present also, our inheritance. Jesus Christ is the future that humanity will be unable to avoid. Perhaps it's not as valued as it was, rivalled by modern faiths including social media-ism, indifference and escapism. One of my escapisms is admittedly football. A football manager once said, when asked whether he preferred the stick or the carrot approach with his players, that he liked to use a sharpened carrot. *Christ will come again* is an article of our faith - a sharpened carrot. So *Be Prepared!* Jesus said, words we the Church are to echo.

Going into battle, you have to be prepared, ready, in body, mind and soul. Are we, for what lies ahead? While evil remains in the world we still need defensive capability to protect ourselves, the defenceless and the innocent, to deter/avert the threat from enemies of freedom, fairness, tolerance, peace, democracy. But are we prepared *spiritually*?

"Put on the whole armour of God", St Paul says in Ephesians 6 - truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, the Spirit and the shield of faith. Why? Jesus wanted his followers to go into action, living out the faith in love for God and all our neighbours, for all that God has made, wanting the best for each other, being generous to all others, merciful even to our enemies, and to be self-sacrificial. Those we remember today have given that sacrifice. We are to be thankful for our inheritance from them, our freedoms, and for the spiritual inheritance handed down by the apostles and all the saints, all believers, through the scriptures. In Christ there is peace to be had, God's love to be shared, and we can resist all evil with confidence that through Jesus' dying and resurrection, sin and death have lost their sting, are defeated. With that victory, following Jesus the Christ's way, being on the Lord's side, we have the surest hope and can be ready for God's trumpet call to join the heavenly host awaiting us.

A.E.