

intouch

NEWSLETTER

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



Lighting the night with hope!

We are still encouraging everyone to put a candle in their window at 7pm each Sunday night as a sign of hope, community and support for all those who are working for our health and safety.



Welcome

Well here we all are still in lockdown and doing our best for Queen and Country, clapping for those on the front line who are working relentlessly to try and save as many lives as possible, or keeping the shops open, collecting the rubbish, delivering the post (and all the things we have ordered from Amazon), the shop workers, the police and

fireman and a host of others who are keeping things afloat. May God give them strength, courage and fortitude. My heart goes out to anyone who is at home and struggling – parents with factious children, those not able to visit elderly, sick or dying friends and family, those who just need to be out and not in and those who are facing financial problems – may God give them comfort and peace and help them find good neighbours and friends and ways out of their problems. For the rest of us it is Chin Up and Carry on – keep the fight going by staying at home – do read the lovely poem by Pam Ayres and my thanks to Mike Leverton for another lovely explanation for a famous Easter painting. **God Bless, 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.

Around the Benefice

Nick and Janet Gunn have sent in pictures of our porches, our churches may be closed but our hearts are open and there is something for those who go to find peace when they walk through the churchyards. Keep up the good work as I have had many comments on how welcoming the porches are – we are reaching people!



Easter Garden at Holy Trinity, Weston



St Mary's, Rushden – prayer trees and flowers



St Mary the Virgin, Clothall – window and prayer tree



All Saints, Sandon – Easter Welcome, a place to sit!



St Mary's, Wallington – Prayer Tree



Easter Porch Flowers, Holy Trinity, Weston



Caravaggio: The Supper at Emmaus (1601)

This is a matter of split-second timing, the exact moment (Luke 24.30-31) at which the risen Jesus blesses, breaks and gives bread to the two disciples who have met him on the road to Emmaus. 'Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him'. But upon the very instant depicted by Caravaggio Christ vanishes from their sight.

This is a work of immense power and drama from the greatest of the many artists who have sought to define the contrast between darkness and light in life as well as in paint. We'd call this level of detail near photo-realistic, from the startled grip upon the arm of his chair of the disciple on the left revealing the torn elbow of his sleeve, to the pilgrim's shell badge worn by his counterpart on the right; also to the array of food on the table and the quizzical expression of the uncomprehending cook/innkeeper whose shadow thrown on the wall creates a dark halo for the beautifully lit face of Christ which is the focus of the work.

We are all but dragged into the scene by the out-thrown arm of the disciple on the right. And do we not feel as though we should rush in and prevent that basket of fruit from toppling onto the floor? But is the fruit worth saving? The grapes have taken on the bloom of decay, the apples are bruised and worm-ridden and a fig with split skin displays mouldering flesh within. Just beyond the fruit basket the yellowy cooked fowl which Christ might at first sight seem to be blessing looks a rather scrawny specimen too.

But this is a painting about error being replaced by truth, and how what is concealed is revealed. The innkeeper has no knowledge of the resurrection and so is utterly bemused; the disciples, although 'in the know' have failed to recognize Jesus. But look beyond that chilly image of mortality represented by the fowl to see what Christ is really doing, says Caravaggio. For appearing behind it (and taking a moment or two to spot) is the bread which Christ is blessing. He and the two disciples sit before healthy hunks of the bread by which the resurrected life is imparted in blessing. Here is the Eucharist by which we 'recognize' Christ in worship and the fresh new life of Christ is overthrowing tired old ways of faith. Caravaggio, a tempestuous man whose awareness of his own sinfulness made his every painting an act of mortified penance, pulls us urgently into his work as if to say 'Come on in, this is saving me, it could do the same for you also'.

Leave your dandelions alone



When mowing your lawn, avoid cutting your dandelions. That is the advice of the president of the British Ecological Society, Prof Jane Memmott. It will help to save the bees.

She explains: "Dandelions are a fantastic source of pollen and nectar for the early pollinators in particular. If they were rare, people would be fighting over them, but because they're common, people pull them out and spray them with all sorts of horrible things when they

should just let them flower. If you leave the lawn to three or four inches, then dandelions, clover and daisies can flower and then you end with something like a tapestry, and it's much nicer to sit there and watch the insects buzzing about."

Prof Memmott encourages everyone to get a bee hotel for their garden. "There's nothing nicer than being sat in a chair with a glass of wine and watching the bees going in and out of your own personal little beehive. Even just a potted plant on a doorstep will provide lunch for a bee or a fly or a butterfly."

A Social Girl

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Pam Ayres