

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

3 May 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter

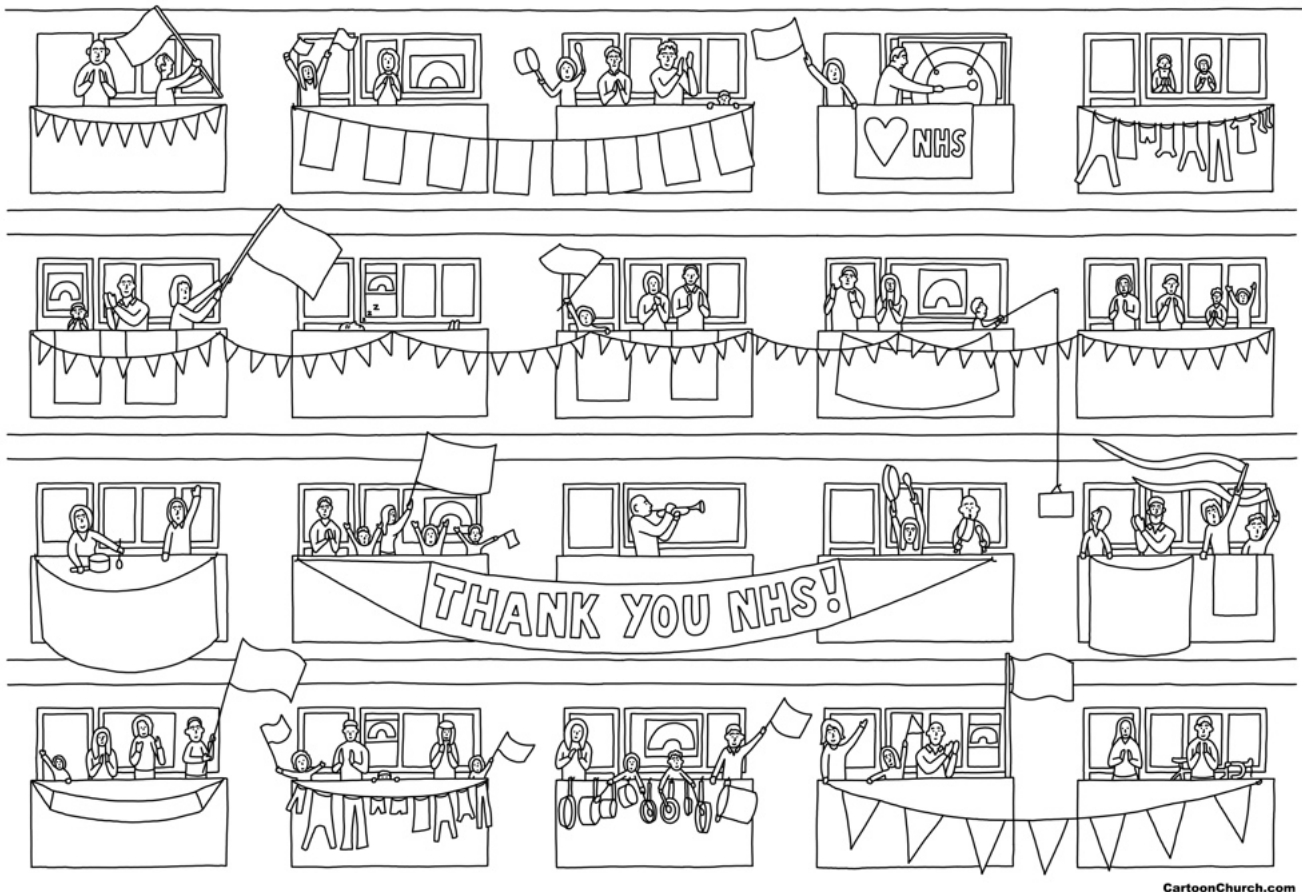
Welcome to the *Viral Bulletin* for the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.

For links to information and worship during the coronavirus restrictions

please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk

THANK YOU NHS



Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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The Fourth Sunday of Easter

John 10.1-10

It is still Eastertide, with the unfolding Spring as our planet makes its yearly travel. Yet we all know this year is markedly different. We face big questions: Is God the same? Why, surely, yes. Is our faith the same? Essentially, yes, but there may need to be some growing and adapting, both within us and among us.

This kind of momentarily different time is so far from 'normal' that it seems outside it, outside the usual chronology, or 'chronos' time. It is new, demanding, with new challenge and opportunity. It is 'kairos' time. We have lived through others. Some of us remember wartime, and the constraints on the country then, with rationing, no unnecessary journeys, the blackout and such like, with also random increased loss of life. Most people have had their own personal kairos times, etched in their memories. Communities have, and so has the universal Church, though in more recent years these have been soon forgotten by the general population.

Twenty-six years ago, on this Sunday now called the 4th in Eastertide, I celebrated my first mass, after the previous evening's Ordination in an event Manchester synchronised in four very large churches, with maximum media coverage. My own visitors came from 20 counties. That year, when women were first priested in this country, (after the years of waiting as deacons), was a kairos time. One thing aroused by it was a new stimulation of interest in belief, soul-searching and the interpretation of the Christian message for the present day. This went far deeper than intellectual preference or assent.

The Gospel set on that Sunday in 1994 ended with Martha's declaration of belief in Jesus (just before the raising of Lazarus) that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. We are then shown his power to restore life out of death; with his voice he summoned Lazarus from the tomb. In today's Gospel he shows the power of the shepherd's voice in the natural response of the sheep, who know it. Voices are individually known, in fact unique, as today's technology can show. (If you're with Lloyds Bank and you 'phone them, you simply have to say: 'My voice is my password'.) Voices do not essentially alter with age, as visual appearance will, yet our present times have become very visual. The stress on constant pictorial recording seems to give a photo almost more authenticity than real presence. Voices get taken for granted, often reduced to 'soundbites'.

However, after a Scripture reading we say 'This is the word of the Lord'. The Lord in the Old Testament, who could never be seen, let alone depicted, spoke words to the prophets, and others, while in the psalms we read 'the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice' and is of shattering power. In the Gospels a definitive voice is heard from heaven at Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration. Some people will tell you they personally heard a voice calling them to a particular line of work - the very word 'vocation' implies this, and the related word 'calling'.

In Jesus' words in today's Gospel, the scene is easily imagined even by those unfamiliar with livestock. In those days the shepherd called the sheep, who then followed his leading. He knew them each by name and they responded; they were not driven or forced. This would be normal practice, 'chronos' time, with the proper gate used. We are given more words of Jesus calling himself that gate for the sheep, that right way of full life,

of salvation. In those days too there were thieves and robbers forcing wrong entry; actual 'rustling' still goes on now, as does fraudulence for gain and heartless cruelty.

In these times we may be feeling like sheep kept in separate pens and hardly allowed out, but awaiting the legitimate call. It is a crisis time, a 'kairos' time, but as Mark Oakley has written, 'a good crisis must not go to waste. It is time for Christianity to do some stocktaking, self-scrutiny and distillation.' But our true shepherd is with us still and we are not left without any sustenance, though the diet may be different. It is a transition time also, in which we're not clear what the emergence will be like. This itself is a parable, since our earthly lives cannot be permanent. But we can more diligently reflect and learn now about what is permanent. We look to the source and anchor of our trust, the true voice we can recognise and follow, whatever kind of time we're in. To Him be the glory.

Marianne Atkinson

Praying through the Easter Season

Each week during the Easter Season, the Viral Bulletin is containing a suggested way to try praying, sometimes with an object to hand to help us focus, or a suggested passage of scripture to read and reflect on. May we all, in these strange and anxious times, bit by prayerful bit, be drawn ever closer into the arms of God who loves us with a love stronger than death and longs to see us live life in all its fullness. You're always welcome to drop Laura a line at curatelaura@gmail.com and let her know how you're getting on, or you can give her a call to talk something through on 01284 599356.

SHELL

The scallop shell is an ancient Christian symbol, used to represent both pilgrimage and baptism. Pilgrimages themselves evoke our earthly journey towards heaven, Hebrews 11:13 describes us as 'pilgrims and strangers on the earth'.

The scallop shell is also often used in the sacrament of Baptism. Not only is it a practical tool with which to pour water on someone, it also carried that same symbolism of pilgrimage with it. Baptism recognises the start of the Christian journey.

A scallop shell (pictured) has many lines that run from the outer edge of the shell, all drawing to a central point at the other edge. What has your journey with God been like so far? Are you aware of others whose paths may be different to yours but who are also, ultimately being drawn to reunion with God?

Spend a bit of time this week reflecting on your faith journey, its features and what it feels like, the ups and downs. You could write it in the form of a travel journal or draw a picture to help you explore the landscape of it. What does it look and feel like at the moment? Ask God to help you continue faithfully, whatever the future may hold.





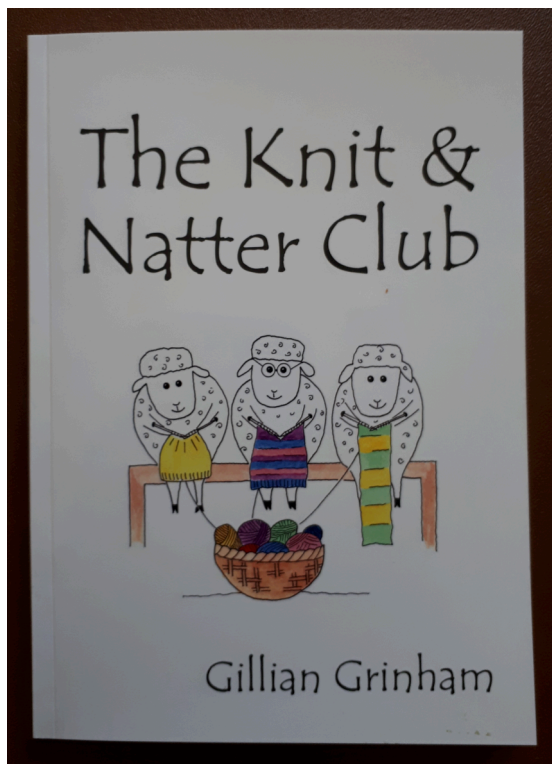
Val Gagen

Easter Garden

A poem which speaks to us across the centuries

VAL GAGEN brings to our attention this poem, written by an Irish-French Catholic writer, Kathleen O'Meara (1839-88), who also used the pen name of Grace Ramsay. It can be found in her novel *Iza's Story*, set against the background of the Polish struggle against the occupation and partition of their country in various stages by Russia, Austria and Prussia from 1772 onwards. She compares the Polish-Russian with the Irish-British situation, but it is also strikingly pertinent in the age of a coronavirus pandemic.

And people stayed home and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and stopped
and listened deeper
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow
and people began to think differently
and people healed
and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
even the earth began to heal
and when the danger ended
and people found each other
grieved for the dead people
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways of life
and healed the earth completely
just as they were healed themselves.



GILLIAN GRINHAM WRITES: Two months ago, John and I were planning the launch of my latest book, 'The Knit and Natter Club', but plans were scuppered by circumstances beyond our control!

'The Knit and Natter Club' is dedicated to Phoebe, my cousin's granddaughter, who suffers from Pitt Hopkins disease. All proceeds from the sale of this book are going to Pitt Hopkins Research Foundation, which is working hard to combat this very debilitating, rare disease which was only discovered in 2007.

To find out more, please go on to Pitt Hopkins Research Foundation at: Pitthopkins.org

The book is a set of children's stories about Archie, who has to stay with his Grandparents in Norfolk. He thought he would be bored until

Grandma's knitting bag revealed some very interesting stories! Here is a link to Dr Chris Thomas, my editor and publisher, talking about the book and reading the first chapter:

<https://youtu.be/v2wUlxTXrNA>

I was delighted to be able to present Ipswich Hospital with a cheque for £650 for Breast Cancer Research from the sale of 'Harriet Hat.' I would like to be able to beat that figure with 'The Knit and Natter Club'!

'The Knit and Natter Club' retails at £6.00. If you would like a copy please contact us by phone or email: [07990 834078](tel:07990834078) or grinham@hotmail.co.uk

Payment:

either by cheque payable to A G Grinham
or by BACS to A G Grinham Sort code 60-04-16 Account 61876011

BULLETIN CORNER

These sentences actually appeared in other church bulletins (not this one, obviously) or were announced at church services:

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

Saint of the week

Julian of Norwich (1342-c1416)

On Friday 8 May the church remembers Julian. She lived as an anchoress attached to the church of St Julian in Norwich, and the name we know her by is taken from that of the church. Living as an anchoress (the male version is anchorite) was an established form of living the religious life in medieval times. It was a life of solitude and prayer with a limited contact with the outside world, although we know that Margery Kempe of King's Lynn visited Julian for spiritual advice. During her lifetime Norwich was subject to more than one wave of the Black Death, with great loss of life.

Julian is remembered for her book *The Revelations of Divine Love*. This is believed to be the first book written by a woman in English. It describes how on 8 May 1373, aged thirty and a half, she was gravely ill and thought to be dying. She had sixteen visions which gave her an understanding of the suffering of Christ and of his great love and compassion for us. She saw that God views us with pity, not with blame and that he enfolds us in his love.

There are two versions of the *Revelations*. The first (the short text) was written soon after Julian's visions took place. Another version (the long text) appeared later and contains Julian's reflections on the visions over a twenty-year period. Interest in Julian's writings has grown in our day, and there are many translations of her book. Pilgrims visit St Julian's church every year and the Julian Centre with its shop next door to the church will continue to welcome visitors when the lockdown is lifted.

For more information please go to: www.juliancentre.org

"With many in our country on lockdown, it's important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are." Archbishop Justin Welby

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England's Communications team such as Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service. A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled 'Hymns We Love', provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by the Connections group.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 10-16 MAY



From Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, CEO Christian Aid

As all of our thoughts are on the Covid-19 situation, we wanted to share an update on Christian Aid's response.

Advice for Christian Aid Week

Many of you will have been planning house-to-house collections and events. Under the current circumstances, sadly, house-to-house collections and delivery-only collections should not go ahead. Instead, Christian Aid Week is moving online! We are building a vibrant, virtual Christian Aid Week so you can take part with our online community. We would love you to join in to show love for our neighbours near and far, as a global family.

During Christian Aid Week

It's more important than ever that we come together as a community to worship and to share fun and fellowship. That's why during Christian Aid Week we will be live-streaming worship each day, and hosting a fun daily quiz to join and raise funds.

In Christian Aid Week or whenever suits you

You can give using our e-envelope, or ask your friends and family for a donation doing so. Or host your own virtual events to pray and raise vital funds. Visit the Christian Aid website to find out more.

Our global response

Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience to continue to stand together with communities living in poverty during this period. If infection rates start to develop as they have in Europe, then people in poorer countries will be hit even harder. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. We will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. Please pray for us in this vital work, and support us where you can by making an online donation.

We are praying for all those affected by this new virus, both in Britain and overseas, for all those working on the frontline and for wisdom for our leaders. We will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves. During this challenging time, we all need to take seriously the science and advice being offered, remaining calm but vigilant.

If you have any specific concerns or questions please email us at info@christian-aid.org or call our helpline on 020 7620 4444.

Everyday Angels



Genista Dunham

A reminder of your contact points ...

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Items for the VIRAL BULLETIN are very welcome
and can include photographs and illustrations.
They should be sent to Adrian Mann:
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