

[View this email in your browser](#)

BENEFICE NEWS

24 May, 2020 - 7th Sunday of Easter

the benefice of saxmundham with kelsale-cum-carlton



ONE CHURCH

four congregations

St Peter, St Mary & St Peter, St John, Connections

ON SUNDAY...

This week we have another Benefice Communion, this time led by Jacqui Studd with Sheila Hart presiding. As usual, access through the [St John's church website](#) from 9am. Comments welcome.

'Live from the Lounge' with Tom & Lou at 10am... continuing the series, *Anchored*. To take part, go to the [Connections Facebook page](#), or later, watch an edited version on the [Connections YouTube channel](#).

As a matter of interest - do you know of any church family member who cannot watch our services online... but has a DVD player and would watch if we gave them a disk? Please let Adrian know, and we'll see what we can do...

From 'locked-up' to 'looking-up'.

For the past six weeks or so in our Sunday services we have been looking again at the time when the disciples were locked up, so to speak, in the upper room, afraid to venture out in case the Jewish authorities would recognise that they had been followers of Jesus whom they had crucified and try to do them some harm too.

I have also been very aware of the parallels with our current situation in which we are

locked up through fear of being infected with Covid 19 or anything else that is likely to put us in harm's way

Not able to worship in the ways with which we are familiar.

Having to make do with unfamiliar acts of worship in unfamiliar places without those with whom we are familiar around us

And all we can do is turn to God and pray for deliverance from the feelings of isolation and loneliness, puzzlement and bewilderment and hope that we will remain healthy and come out of the current situation alive.

And just as the disciples were wondering when things would get back to normal for them after Jesus' death and resurrection so we are wondering when life will get back to some sort of semblance of normality for us too.

How much of what we have doing over the past weeks will become the new norm? When will we be able to really see friends and family again? How much longer will this last? And when will we be able to go to church when we want to? And the big question is 'where is God in all of this?' Has he really deserted us and left us to cope as best we can on our own until we, like the disciples of the first century, have received the power from on high?

The one sure thing is that God has NOT deserted us. He is with us all the time and is suffering with us. God has not caused our current situation but He is in it with us and He will keep us in perfect peace if our mind is stayed on Him. The important thing at times like this is that we maintain our relationship with Him, that we take Him into our confidence and tell Him what is on our hearts, how we feel and even how we feel about His allowing us to be in such uncertain times too. Read the Psalms. If you aren't aware already you will be by the time you have finished that the full range of human emotions are expressed in the Psalms. It's ok to be frustrated, sad, puzzled, questioning and angry as well as full of joy, peace expectancy and love.

Jesus' parting words to His disciples in Matthew's Gospel were 'Lo I am with you always to the close of the age.' So let's believe it and trust Him to bring us through this and out the other side even if it means not going back to things exactly as they were before all this happened.

Sheila Hart

The Bible Readings for this Sunday are:
Acts 1:6-14 - The Ascension
John 17:1-11 - The High Priestly Prayer

Pentecost Worship (31st May)

Pentecost is an important festival in the church calendar and we are planning to mark it this year with a combined service. Tom and Nic are, at the time of going to press, in the early stages of planning a Live in the Lounge with Holy Communion, live-streamed at 10AM. Ways to access the service are still being finalised, though they will include the Connections Facebook page. Stay tuned to the website for other access options. Don't forget to bring bread and wine if you would like to take part in Holy Communion!

Morning Prayer

During lockdown, people have been experimenting with new styles of worship and new ways of offering traditional types. Morning Prayer in the Church of England dates all the way back to the Reformation, though there is no evidence of Thomas Cranmer doing it via ZOOM! Often quite formal in nature, our online Morning Prayer (on Thursdays at 9am) is at the more informal end of the spectrum with an opportunity to study the scripture readings for the day and open prayer. A small but growing band of attendees would like to welcome you to join in the Zoom meeting room at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2907979571>. There's no need to give any advance warning just come along as if you were going to church (it would be useful though to download the Order of Service which is available on the Church web-site, or ask Nic and he will email it to you. (nic@saxstjohns.org.uk)

Thy Kingdom Come

Some years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury came up with the idea of Thy Kingdom Come, a prayer initiative for the season between Ascension and Pentecost. This year in lockdown, prayer is more important than ever and the theme of TKC this year is Prayer and Care. There are useful resources available for church members both at

- <https://www.thykingdomcome.global> and also, in Suffolk, at
- <https://www.light-wave.org/lightupsuffolk>

...where Light Wave, the umbrella organisation within the Diocese for Fresh Expressions, is co-ordinating across Suffolk. Please have a look and pray as you feel moved by the Spirit.

Not Alone

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ - for me and for many I think the hardest thing about being in lockdown is the isolation and social distancing from one another. God has created us to be relational beings so being distant from one another is particularly difficult.

Please remember that you are not alone. Paul, when he writes to the church in Galatia, encourages them to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Members of the Wholeness and Healing team are available to do just this. If you would like someone to pray with you and for you (by phone) please do

contact one of:- Shirley (502866); Fran (602907) or Jill (452423). We would be happy to listen, talk and pray.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Jill

For Your Prayers

- the Marson family following the death of Auriol's mother
- Sue Potter who starts radio/chemotherapy on Monday for 5 weeks
- Charlie Kinsey as he continues with three weeks recovery after the removal of his appendix last Saturday

Prayer for Schools

There has been much press comment about the return of certain year groups to School on June 1st. Please pray as the day approaches for those involved:

- For teachers and staff - for wisdom in decision-making, courage to journey into an unknown risk and freedom from infection
- For parents - for wisdom in decision-making and an easing of fear and anxiety and
- For the children themselves - that those returning will settle in to the strange arrangements but enjoy both the return to school and seeing their friends

As a church, we are in touch with the Primary Schools to see how we can support them in prayer, in Chaplaincy support and practically. If you would like to be involved in this ministry, please contact either Doug (605715) or Nic (452423).

Things you might have missed...

... are not lost forever! Our YouTube channels [[St John's](#) and [Connections](#)], and our websites [[St John's](#) and [Connections](#)] carry recordings of all our services since Lockdown began. Two recordings you might be unaware of are:-

- [Nic's Licensing as Assistant Priest](#) and
- the 'round-Deanery' [Ascension Day service](#).

Sad and Glorious news...

Many will know the name *David Pawson*; Baptist minister, church pastor and renowned bible teacher. He died this week at the age of ninety ... on Ascension Day.

One click here to see the Lectionary readings for every day.

*No Copyright infringement is intended with cartoons and images appearing above.
Copyright © 2020 St Johns, Saxmundham, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

