

All Saints Alive



VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Strength for the struggles ...

Dear Friends,

I feel it is important to keep in touch with the news, don't you?

We do need to know what is happening in the world around us, but it can come at a cost. Sometimes you could almost feel that ignorance would be better, since there are so many challenging situations across the world as well as issues in our own land. Of course, ignorance is not the bliss that the saying suggests, and we do need to live and pray in the world as it is.

Conflict seems to be the main news item these days, from the massive global uncertainties to local disagreements. I find it intriguing that so often with voting nations are often finely balanced between two options. You might imagine that a clearer way forward, acceptable to most if not all people, would eventually emerge, but that seems extremely rare. And sadly in numerous situations groups turn to violence rather than reason to further their aims.

Conflict is very much part of the Passion Story of Jesus. He is in a historical situation where there has been war, violence and ongoing terrorist activity. People are living on a knife-edge and a message of love and peace sounds very idealistic, as ever. Speaking words of love and reconciliation will not appeal to some groups, and Jesus' ministry leads him into many confrontations.

Finally it demands his life, and he remains true to his ideals - and pays the price. It is, however, something that he expected, though he did not welcome it. He knew that he had to sacrifice himself to make peace for our sinful humanity, setting us right with God.

The conflict can also take place within us, as represented in the temptation story that we will hear as Lent begins.

Jesus does have to wrestle with the option of taking the wrong path. We too have a battle for the soul in a world that can impact on us in many ways to pull us away from serving God. If Jesus, the Son of God, struggled, we are likely to struggle yet more as our resistance will inevitably be lower.

Lent is a time of facing up to the hard and harsh aspects of the world and our own inner conflicts and staying close to Jesus.

Jesus and his love will never change, but as the world changes and our lives with it, we need to come to him regularly to strengthen us in living out daily his will of peace and love.

May the God of Peace bless and keep you.

Love
Jo

All Saints' remains "In the Black"

Thank you all for your generosity over the last two months in giving substantial gifts to All Saints' so that we didn't go into the red financially. Over £7, 000 was raised.

This is brilliant news. We will continue to look at how we can ensure that All Saints is financially stable for generations to come.

Please continue to give generously in your regular stewardship and please think about adding All Saints to your Will.

Geoff and Kath Oates

Geoff Oates, one of our two great Lay readers, has asked for some time off, rather like a sabbatical, to 'recharge his batteries'.

He and Kath will be visiting different churches to see examples of all age worship and working with young people. He will be reporting back to us at Easter sharing what they have learned to enable us at All Saints to grow our work with families and young people.

They intend to continue their work running Messy Church, Bible Book Club and the Fellowship Group.

Kath is also pursuing a Mission Shaped Ministry Course run by the Diocese.

We pray for them and wish them well in this time of spiritual refreshment.

Dates for your diaries

Here are the dates of a number of social/community events in 2018:

- 17th March Quiz Evening
- 19th-22nd March Easter Journey
- 29th April APCM & Shared Lunch
- 19th May Plant Sale & Coffee Morning
- 30th June Summer Bazaar
- tbc July Parish Barbeque
- 8th Sept Bike n Hike/Coffee Morning
- 7th Oct Harvest Supper
- 4th Nov All Saints Sunday Afternoon
Family Film Fun
- 24th Nov **or** 1st Dec Christmas Festival



Join other pilgrims from across St Albans Diocese to celebrate the risen Christ on Easter Monday at St Albans Cathedral.

Now in its eighth decade, the annual Pilgrimage and service have become a family event which now includes grandparents, parents, young children (in pushchairs), babies (in prams), the family dog (on a lead) ... and of course muddy boots! **All are welcome.**

We gather on Easter Monday, 2nd April, in the Abbey Orchard around **1.00pm** for a picnic and games together. We then join the procession into the Cathedral for the Easter Monday Service which begins at **3.00pm**. The service finishes by 4.30pm in plenty of time to walk or drive home.

Track the pilgrims' progress on Twitter #StAlbansEMP and keep up-to-date on www.facebook.com/StAlbansEMP

If anyone is interested in this great spiritual day out please could they let Jo know so we can form a party.