

ALL SAINTS'



This week's Newsbulletin

All Saints' Welcomes Everyone

Dear Friends,

The feast of Candlemas that we celebrate on Sunday comes at a significant time in our country's struggle with the pandemic. On Tuesday we marked and passed the heartbreaking number of one hundred thousand lives lost in this country and over two million worldwide. 'Who can compute the sorrow?' our Prime Minister asked, which, although an unusual turn of phrase, as his vocabulary often is, focused attention on the countless people who are also grieving loved ones who have died.

I am not at all sure that sorrow – or joy – can be computed, but I imagine that only a computer could quantify the sheer human cost if it could somehow be assessed on a spreadsheet of miserable graphs as on the "next slide please" brought forward by the well-meaning Professor Chris Whitty.



Candlemas marks the end of the season of Epiphany, this bittersweet celebration reflects on the sadness and hope of the characters in the story. Anna had been a widow for over seventy years, a long time to be alone and waiting – who can compute her sorrow? - Simeon, also a great age patiently going to the temple, daily looking forward to the Messiah; Mary for whom this would have been a great and joyful occasion presenting her child to God in the temple, hearing how Jesus was destined to cause division amongst his own people and to die.

The hope of the season of Epiphany and its revelation of the light of the world now turns towards the road to the cross. The cross points through death to the hope of resurrection, a

glory yet to be known, good news for all people.

In the service the blessing of candles or our lights in our houses expresses the hope of the light of Christ permeating that darkness, overcoming death, suffering ...

Love and prayers, Jo

Lent and Easter



Plans for deepening our faith and reaching out to the community during Lent and Easter are underfoot. Any additional ideas are welcome, and

everyone is invited to become involved and contribute in whatever ways are practical for you.

During Lent:

1. A one day at home retreat, with online or print material available 28/2-7/3.
2. A weekly Lent course, using the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele.
3. The porch – we will be creating something wonderful with this space, building on our Advent/Xmas display.

The Churchyard

1. With the theme of Love for Lent, we plan to use all the different types and sayings of love in the Bible leading up to Easter, the greatest love story the world has ever known.

We encourage everyone to knit/sew/make hearts and come and hang them on the churchyard trees any time from 12 February. Let's bomb our churchyard with hearts and share the message of Christ risen with all of Hertford!

2. Is there anyone who would like to create a labyrinth in the car park? There are some instructions in this Youtube video: <https://youtu.be/f1m5-ygVdaq> Please let

Jo know if this is something that interests you.

3. We would like to put up boards/posters as we did for the Advent trail. If anyone would like to contribute a painting, please contact Nerine.

Letter from the Archbishops

Dear friends,

As we reach the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, we invite everyone in our nation to pause as we reflect on the enormity of this pandemic.

100,000 isn't just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.

We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.

We therefore encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God. We also know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and cry out for the healing of these inequalities. During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines and constraints given by government following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. We show our commitment, care and love for one another by ensuring we do everything we can to stop the virus spreading.

None of this is easy. Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. Also, the necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside. All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is so hard.

Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care and kindness. One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether you're someone of faith, or not, we invite you to call on God in prayer. Starting on 1 February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each

other. Prayer is an expression of love. A number of resources will be made available at www.ChurchofEngland.org/PrayerForTheNation.

Finally, we write of hope. We are grateful for the hope we have because of the service of our NHS and social care staff. What a blessing and lifeline for our nation. We are grateful for the service given in local communities by clergy, other frontline workers and so many good neighbours. We are grateful for the hope of the vaccine. It is a testimony to the God-given wisdom and gifts of scientists and researchers. We urge everyone to take the vaccine as soon as it is offered to you.

Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom every tear will be wiped away.

Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury
The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell Archbishop of York

Sunday 31st (Presentation)

10.00 Family Eucharist on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82607767103?pwd=NXIKcEtPd1d5MXY2ZVhBaExKZGJGdz09>

Meeting ID: 826 0776 7103

Passcode: 760325

Tuesday 2nd

11.00 Morning Prayer on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88015708219>

Meeting ID: 880 1570 8219

'Zoom'-ing by 'phone

Call 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0131460 1196 and use meeting id followed by #

Contact information

www.allsaintshertford.org

   AllSaintsHerf

Vicar (and Team Rector of Herford)

Rev Canon Jo Loveridge BA MTh AKC,
The Vicarage, Churchfields, Herford SG13 8AE
01992 584899

vicar@allsaintshertford.org

<https://vicarallsaintshertford.blogspot.com/>

Office office@allsaintshertford.org

Full list of contacts:

<https://www.allsaintshertford.org/contacts.php>