

## ST PANCRAS NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2021

### EASTER = HOPE

*Dear friends,*

I'm writing on the anniversary of our first national lockdown. Few of us thought a year ago that we would still be in the middle of restrictions now. We had hoped it would soon be over.

For many of us today's anniversary is poignant. People who were with us when this all began in March 2020 are not with us now. As a church, we especially remember Steve Farley's family, Jane Clarke's family and Peter and Brenda Barnes' family, as they continue to live with the grief of missing loved ones. Across Devon, over 1000 people have now died with COVID-19, and the grief is widespread around the world.

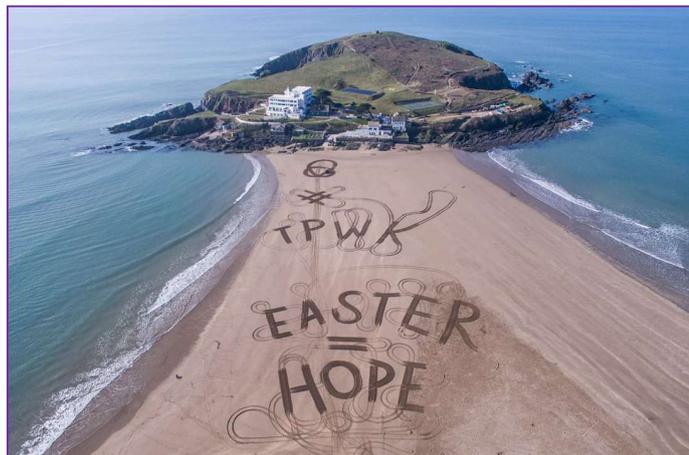
At the same time, we give thanks for all those who have worked so hard in our medical and emergency services, and those responsible for the rapid vaccine rollout across our four nations. As a result, this anniversary also marks hope that the year ahead will be better than the year just gone.

The Church of England, in partnership with Marie Curie, Hope UK, Care for the Family and a clutch of other charities, have organised a National Day of Reflection to acknowledge grief and loss during the pandemic. They have produced some resources which you can find here:

<https://churchsupporthub.org/national-day-of-reflection-2021/>. You may want to use these in your regular prayers or with your Lent Buddy.

Of course, as Christians, we have another 'anniversary' coming up soon: Easter. Even with all the ongoing restrictions and pain at still not being able to see many loved ones, Easter remains a time of hope.

Some friends of ours at Modbury worked with a local farmer to write a short note on the sands of Modbury beach using his tractor. You can see the results in this picture (before they were washed away by the incoming tide).



The death of a solitary man two thousand years ago may seem a remote hope today. Should we not be putting our hopes in ourselves, our families, in the vaccine, in human progress? Maybe we should put our hope in things getting 'back to normal'? This week, it is expected that (for the first time) fewer than half of Britons will say they are 'Christians' on their census forms. Isn't Easter out-of-date?

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## EASTER = HOPE contd.

Yet for billions around the world, young and old, from all nations, tribes and languages, Easter is the ground of all our hopes.

Easter shows us the living God. The living God who is never satisfied with 'back to normal'. The living God who is holy and good and will not leave us sinking in our own half-hearted standards of goodness and love. The living God who chose to experience death, to inhabit this death-dealing world as one of us, so that he could set us free. The living God whose resurrection of Jesus shows us that love is stronger than the grave. Easter shows us the living God who lives in us.

As you trust in Jesus this Easter, may you know the God of hope with you.

Every blessing in Jesus Christ,

*Lawrence*

## EASTER WEEK AT ST PANCRAS

**Mundy Online Last Supper:** 8pm. Share in an online last supper and prayers as we remember Jesus in the Upper Room before His betrayal and Crucifixion. Usual church Zoom details. All welcome.

**Good Friday Prayer Stations in Church:** 11am – 2.30pm. Pray while following Jesus through seven events of Good Friday. From the Mount of Olives, healing the chief priest's servant, appearing before Pilate and to the crucifixion: there will be invitations and encouragements to pray, to read God's word, to know God's presence, to listen to God, and to respond. We expect it will take about a half hour to move through the various stations. To keep COVID safe, please book a time with Sarah or Lawrence before coming.

## Easter Sunday

**9am Holy Communion Service** – In church, using the traditional language of the Book of Common Prayer, this service is a quieter and more reflective celebration for Easter Sunday. All welcome.

**10.30am Easter Sunday Celebration** – In church and online. This Easter there is an invitation to return to church to celebrate Easter through music and hymns, readings and stories, proclamation and prayer. All are welcome to return provided you do not have any COVID symptoms or need to be isolating. We will continue to use Zoom for those who prefer or need to take part from home. Those coming into church will still need to wear masks and keep social distancing.

**From 11.45am Easter Sunday Walking Church** – An opportunity after the church service to walk through the churchyard, with places to give thanks and reflect on the challenges of the year. There will also be a COVID safe Easter Egg Hunt for the young (and not so young) people. To keep to the outdoor restrictions, we will need to make sure only two households (a maximum of six people) are at each station at a time. Please listen to the marshals who will help to show you where to go and how to keep an appropriate distance. Families from our wider neighbourhood are also being invited to take part.

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## Easter Sunday contd.

**7.00-9.30pm Spring Harvest 'Unrivalled' Celebration** in the Church Hall. Join in with worship led by Matt Redman and reflections led by Glenn Packiam. The livestream starts at 7pm and the worship begins at 7.30pm. To keep COVID safe in the hall we will need to wear masks and keep social distancing. All welcome.

The Church of England has produced some excellent resources for use at home during Holy Week and Easter. They include a series of meditations by Paula Gooder for Stations of the Cross, ideas for observing Good Friday, and making an Easter Garden with children. Do check them out and recommend them to friends and family: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches/passiontide-holy-week-and-easter-2021>

## CHURCH NEWS

Our **Annual Church Meeting (APCM)** is tomorrow (23 March), starting at 8pm on Zoom. We will also be opening up the Church Lounge for those who cannot attend online. The meeting provides an opportunity to review the church's life of the past year, submit the annual report and elect church officers and members of the church council.

We are really glad to say that **Duncan and Beckie Hollands will be joining us this summer**. Duncan will be serving his curacy at St Pancras from September. Together with Beckie, he has three young children. Before training for full-time church ministry Duncan was a chartered accountant in London and Beckie worked for the Cornhill Training Course, a Bible-based training organisation run by the Proclamation Trust. They will introduce themselves properly in the next newsletter.

We will also welcome Tim Partridge to serve a placement with us, beginning in April. Tim is the curate at St Andrew's Minster Church in the centre of Plymouth and will come to join in life at St Pancras for a few weeks. He and his wife, Abi, have two young children.

[Just a note to say that this doesn't mean that Sarah Sharland will be leaving us any time soon. Sarah has up to another year with us as she serves out the remainder of her curacy. We continue to be grateful for all that she is bringing to our church's life and witness.]

## A PRAYER for ALL AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Gracious God,  
as we remember before you  
the thousands who have died,  
surround us and all who mourn  
with your strong compassion.  
Be gentle with us in our grief,  
protect us from despair,  
and give us grace to persevere  
and face the future with hope  
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.  
Amen.