



## ST PANCRAS NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2021

*Dear friends,*

How will you decide what to do this month? A life with fewer restrictions is welcome, but it does mean more choices. We can go and get our hair cut, exercise our bodies in the gym, and eat food out. Most of all we can see family and friends again, though not yet indoors.

We have some new choices. I've just received a message that I can book my first vaccine appointment. I'm glad that 37 million other people in the UK have already chosen to receive theirs and it makes me feel young again to think there are so many people older than me in the UK! I'm glad and saddened to think that I can have the choice to have the vaccine when billions around the world do not.

We've all had to make choices over this past year. The results of some are contained in this newsletter. As you keep reading, I hope you'll be gladdened by how some of these choices have affected others. You'll read of the amazing work of so many people here at St Pancras for the COVID food hampers and the relationships built as a result. You'll find an introduction to Duncan and Beckie Hollands as they have chosen to come and serve with us as a church family from this summer. You'll see some of the ways in which we have chosen to give our money so that Tear Fund can bring hope of new life to people who have lost everything. And you'll see the choices we have made for the Sunday services this term as we meet in church (and online).

Choices come through the freedom we all have as human beings. We have the freedom to look backward and choose to be thankful or to complain. We can choose to look forward with hope or with fear.

Choosing to be thankful and hopeful can be hard - really hard. We live in a broken world, among broken people. Family and friends will cause us deep pain and sorrow, good health is elusive and our future continues to look and feel uncertain.

You may well be saying right now, 'Lawrence, if you knew what I had to go through every day, you wouldn't be talking about freedom.'

But choosing to be thankful and hopeful doesn't mean ignoring hardship and pain. It doesn't mean pretending to be cheerful when everything is going wrong. It doesn't mean that we ignore all the hard work or heartache of life. Nevertheless, each day we can choose to find reasons to complain or reasons to be thankful. Each day we choose how to spend our time and our money, who to speak to, and whether to have faith or not.

As a church, we recognise that there is one choice above all; 'Choose you this day, whom you will serve', Joshua tells the Israelites. He asks whether they will serve the gods of this world. Maybe we can think of today's gods as individual success, comfort, money, popularity, personal freedom.

But there is another, more thankful and more hopeful, way; 'As for me and my house', Joshua says, 'we will serve the Lord.' (Joshua 24.15).

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I pray that this term's readings and sermons in Luke and Matthew will be really helpful in making it clear to us who we are choosing to serve. Do let me know what you think!

With every blessing in Jesus Christ,

Lawrence

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## EVENTS AT ST PANCRAS

Given the end of the 'stay at home' notice, we are encouraging people to return to church for our regular **9.00am and 10.30 Sunday Services** if you can. We will continue to stream the services on Zoom so you can still participate online if you are shielding, isolating or unable to attend in person.

**2 May 'Walking Church' (12.00-1.00pm)**, a guided walk through our churchyard with activities for individuals and families to help connect with God through prayer, activity and creativity.

**5 May St Pancras Prayer and Praise, 8pm on Zoom.** Our regular, monthly meeting set aside time to pray and praise God together.

**6 May St Pancras Community Food Larder, 10.00 to 11.30am.** A weekly drop-in food larder in the café space next to the church hall. Free for anyone to use.

**10 May Bridging the Gap, 7.30pm on Zoom** 'Bargain Hunt' special. Estimate the auction price of a number of items and introduce your own antiques or heirlooms. If you would like more information speak with Derek Gribble.

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## ST PANCRAS 'HAMPSERS' WHEEL OUT MORE THAN 30,000 MEALS



At Easter 2020, during the first COVID lockdown and school closures, we recognised that many families in our community would be facing food insecurity. This became more apparent when speaking with several of the families that we already knew from our 'Feast of Fun' activities. So, in cooperation with **Transforming Plymouth Together**, we began providing regular food hampers to families referred to us by local schools (Pennycross Primary, All Saints Church of England Academy and Shakespeare Primary). For part of the year we also helped families referred to us from Mayflower Academy.

With the help of church and community volunteers, staff and teachers from the schools, and in partnership with charities, we were able to provide food hampers for 40 weeks between Easter 2020 and Easter 2021.

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## HAMPSTERS Contd.

### SOME STATISTICS:

- ❖ **EACH HAMPER** included fresh fruit, vegetables, fresh dairy, eggs, bread, tinned goods and packets.
- ❖ The average hamper provided enough food for **25 INDIVIDUAL MEALS**.
- ❖ An average of **30 HAMPERS** was given out **EVERY WEEK**
- ❖ This means that over the year, **ST PANCRAS HELPED TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR OVER 30,000 MEALS**.
- ❖ **£1,700** raised in church gifts, **£4,600** raised in grants
- ❖ **OVER 800 VOLUNTEER HOURS**  
40 weeks, average of 2 hours per volunteer pw, average of 10 volunteers pw

In addition to providing food, the hampers have also helped to build relationships for families and individuals isolated by the lockdowns. For some people, the contact from the church was the only communication they had each week, while for others it provided opportunities to volunteer and give back. The provision of a warm welcome, friendly support, and people to talk to has led to a deepening of community. It is this which is the lasting legacy of the hamper work.

**This has been part of a city-wide initiative involving 14 churches across Plymouth. The final statistics are yet to be finalised, but altogether these churches have reached out to provide 100,000 hampers in the city during the year.**

### SOME FEEDBACK:

Hi Mariska and all the wonderful team of volunteers and donors of our wonderful Christmas hampers which were the best in our time of need. All the help and support every week at the church has been so helpful and gratefully received and then on Christmas Eve **you made it all very special for my family.** You arranged a hamper from Plymouth Argyle and that lifted everybody's spirits. My teenage daughters loving their greatest football goal-keeper knocking on their door. A very special moment. Thank you all of you lovely people. Hope you all have a great new year.

'Thank you for my lovely hamper, it's so appreciated. And thank you for the lovely greeting from everyone and especially the lady who spoke [to my son]. It really makes a difference when people speak, are welcoming and take an interest in you and your family xxx

Thank you for our food parcel and am absolutely going to have to find a way to cook this vegetable. Isn't it the same as what people find on islands to eat on survival programmes

😊 xxx?

'The girls were delighted with the toys we had in last week's hamper and have been having lots of fun with them. We are all much better and things are improving xx.

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## THANK YOU TO ALL THE 'HAMPSTERS'

- ❖ Mariska Minter, Rev Sarah Sharland, Captain Phil and Chris Baul, Justin and Emma, Jo, Elizabeth Owen, Ian Leworthy, Peter Dyson, Marie Fletcher, Jim and Catherine Walker, Lisa Harris, Deni and TJ, Kerrie Willmott, Kat Ellis, Derek Gribble, Liz, Rachel and Stuart Barnes, Sue Staple, Yas, Luca.
- ❖ **Honorary Hampsters** from Transforming Plymouth Together: Chris Forster, Hannah Fleming-Hill, and Dawn.
- ❖ **Honorary Hampsters** from All Saints Academy: Emma Burton, Karen Maher, Kathy Hyde, Kirsty Lidell, Lyndsey Pengelly, Michael Lucas.

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## DUNCAN AND BECKIE HOLLANDS

**A message from Duncan and Beckie Hollands. Duncan is in the process towards becoming a curate here at St Pancras this summer.**

Dear all,

We are excited and glad to be coming down this summer to join the church family at St Pancras (subject to the last couple of stages of the process). You may have seen us visiting either via Zoom in February, or in person in March. It was encouraging to meet some of you, to see the ways that different people love Jesus, and to hear about the different ways that you love and serve the local community.

We have three sons: Phinn is 5, Theo is 3 and Alfie is 9 months. I (Duncan) grew up near Reading, Beckie grew up near Manchester. We both moved to London for university and met there. After university Duncan trained as an accountant, we got married and Beckie worked for a charity.

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After going through the Church of England's discernment process, we have been at Oak Hill while Duncan studies, for four years (including an extra MA year).

Duncan used to have family in the South West and both of us have had occasional holidays in the area growing up. We came across the advert for St Pancras at just the right time and, as we found out more, spoke with Lawrence and others, the more it seemed like the place that God is calling us to come and join and serve.

We're looking forward to meeting the rest of the church family, with love and prayers,

*Duncan and Beckie*

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## A MESSAGE FROM TEAR FUND



Please pass on our huge thanks to the Church, we are so grateful for your gift. Your support is going to transform the lives of people whose homes have been shattered by conflict and extreme poverty. Thanks to you, people like Tamam can have hope again. Tamam used to live a quiet life in Syria with her family. Their small farm in the countryside provided them with an income and food to eat. But one day, everything was left in ruins when armed groups arrived in their village. After her husband died, Tamam took her children and ran. A few precious photographs are all that remain of their previous life. *'My husband, the garden, my home... they're all gone, but I remain.'*

Forced to live in makeshift accommodation in a slum in Lebanon, Tamam couldn't see any hope for the future. But then she found Tearfund's local partner, Tahaddi Education Center. They provide schooling, trauma counselling and healthcare for families like hers.

Tamam was invited to join a sewing programme. Her new skills have provided her with an income, and she can feed her children without worrying. Tamam plans to open a workshop to teach others. She can dream of a better life again.

Home is more than just a place. Home is where hope is. Thanks to people like you, hope is being restored for people like Tamam.

[St Pancras Church Council has committed to giving away 10% of the 'income' we receive from congregational giving to God's mission beyond our parish. We believe this is a good principle for all those who would follow Jesus' teaching on money. We regularly support mission partners in Argentina, Asia and Ethiopia, but also give one-off donations in response to particular situations. Last month the Church Council agreed to give £1,300 to the work of Tearfund in Beirut. Tear Fund work through local church partnerships in the city to provide support to Syrian refugees and to those whose lives have been devastated by the massive explosion last year. You may remember Valerie Dufour spoke at one of our Sunday services back in February about this work.]

## THIS TERM'S READINGS AND SERMONS – FOLLOWING JESUS

11 Apr	Loving Jesus' purpose	Luke 2.34-35; 4.31-35
18 Apr	Loving Jesus' message	Luke 5.4-26
25 Apr	Loving Jesus' mission	Luke 5.27-32
2 May	Jesus turns life upside down	Matthew 5.11-20
9 May	Jesus turns life inside out	Luke 6.17-26
16 May	Jesus turns community inside out	Luke 6.27-38
23 May	Jesus turns the law inside out	Matthew 5.21-30
30 May	Jesus' new prayer	Matthew 6.5-13
6 Jun	Jesus' new community	Matthew 5.21-24, 45-48; 7.1-6
13 Jun	Christian spirituality	Matthew 7.15-29
20 Jun	Christian integrity	Luke 6.39-49
27 Jun	Christian treasure	Matthew 6.19-34
4 Jul	Christian faith	Luke 7.1-10, 36-50
11 Jul	Christian followers	Luke 9.20-25, 51-62
18 Jul	Christian glory	Luke 9.28-36

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