

An Open Letter to our Parishioners

In Scouting and Guiding the 22nd February is known as 'Thinking Day':
A day of friendship where Guides and Girl Scouts put equality and inclusion into practice and fundraise for over 10 million girls around the world.



The theme this year is 'peacebuilding' which has led me to ponder what peace might mean for us at this time. Of course there is the physical sense of building peace in places where there is war or unrest, but what about the internal sense of peace which Jesus, as the Prince of Peace, promises to each who trust in him?

Change does not help build peace. Fear does not help build peace. Grief does not help build peace. For almost a year we have been struggling with change, fear and grief as the pandemic has taken hold of our way of life and changed it beyond all recognition.

Later today the Prime Minister will be announcing the next steps for us all. We hope for good news, for more freedom, for lower rates of infection, we hope that the news will bring joy, but we fear 'more of the same'. Will we still be able to find a sense of peace whatever the news brings?

Perhaps we can think of ourselves as being 'peace-builders': not just waiting to see what befalls us, but actively striving to bring peace to others. Despite not being able to visit, or even come close to our neighbours, we have been reaching out with phone calls, gifts, messages ... in making these connections with others, ostensibly for their benefit, we somehow find that we too feel better about ourselves.

Could the same be said about prayer? For some prayer is a struggle, for others a natural expression of faith. The Archbishops continue to call us to prayer each evening at 6pm; perhaps if we all strive simply to light a candle and say the Lord's Prayer at this time, we shall begin to feel a deeper peace? What if, in saying a simple prayer for others, we find a peace for ourselves too?

In Memoriam

Later today we say farewell to Mavis, a much loved member of St Michael's in West Andover, and on Thursday in The Wallops to Anita and Adam. Please hold their loved ones in your hearts.

Worship

St Michael's, Quarley and St Leonard's, Grateley are open for worship, but pre-booking is essential. Please contact the relevant churchwarden for more info. All our rural churches are open for private prayer.

Dawn will be sending out Zoom links for the Sunday services (with prayers and hymns) on Friday.

A reminder that **Compline** is livestreamed each evening at 6pm here www.facebook.com/thewallopingvicar/live

With love and blessings,

Vanessa