



The Parish of  
**ST NICHOLAS,  
SUTTON**

*Priest-in-Charge: The Revd Frances Arnold*

The Rectory,  
34 Robin Hood Lane,  
SUTTON  
SM1 2RG

10/17 May 2020

**St Nicholas Church and Coronavirus (8)**



'...God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark' (Genesis 8.1)

This tortoise is my favourite of all the animals depicted in the alleyway that links Robin Hood Lane with the churchyard:  
and it is the best equipped of all God's creatures for self-isolation, with its own shell to withdraw into!

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

'But God remembered Noah...and God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided'

These were the opening words of our Old Testament reading for Sunday 10 May (eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis):  
Why are those words so significant? Well, because chapter 7 had ended with the chilling words: '(God) blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred and fifty days.'

Do read the story of Noah's Ark (chapters 6.11-9.17). It is best to read it all in one go.

The earth suffered a cataclysmic event: 'in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month...all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights'.

Noah and his immediate family were prepared for this mortal threat and responded by self-isolating in a home-made ark three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and 30 cubits high. We are told that 'the Lord shut him in.' Noah and his sons and their wives took every kind of animal into isolation with them, but they were unable either to take any daily exercise themselves or to take the animals out. This was because 'the waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.' But the ark itself floated on the face of the waters.

The Noah family lockdown was far bleaker and more isolating than ours – for only Noah and those with him in the ark were left. Even if they had had our modern means of communication, there was no one to communicate with. But chapter 8 gives Noah's timetable for coming out of lockdown. It is more straightforward than the plan announced to us on 17 May and it has something to say to us about what we might expect in the weeks and months ahead.

At the end of one hundred and fifty days the water had abated  
In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat  
In the tenth month on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared

It was only at this point, when he could see the mountain tops, that Noah began a period of testing by sending out birds from the window of the ark

*The raven went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth*

*The dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him in the ark*

He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and *the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf;*

so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.

*Then he waited another seven days and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.*

*...in the first month on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying.*

*In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry...*

Noah didn't fling open the doors of the ark as soon as the dove came back with the olive leaf (even though he was cooped up with all those animals as well as with his own family). And he continued to wait when the dove didn't return (which meant it had found dry land). Then he waited again, for almost two months, after he saw the ground was drying.

Self-isolation and testing. Thousands of years later, we too are making our way out of a global catastrophe. And our sign of hope is also that which was a sign of God's covenant with Noah and with all future generations: the rainbow.

The story ends with God saying,

'When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh.'

### **Church of England worship**

Bishop Christopher is encouraging everyone to say the Lord's Prayer daily and suggests either 1 or 7 pm.

You can find national online resources including weekly streamed services and daily audio at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

as well as additional worship provision on the BBC, for example Radio 4 Sunday morning worship at 8.10am (or later using BBC Sounds) and the service on BBC1 later in the morning.

### **Pastoral Network**

A big thank you, as ever, on behalf of all of us, to the Mothers' Union/Lunch Team joint initiative who are continuing with their marvellous work in co-ordinating telephone/WhatsApp support and supply of provisions to those self-isolating.

A particular thank you to Nicki Richards, Jeff Richards, Emma & Keith Cann, Liz & Chris Cann, Lily Bande, Helen Yately, Paul Butler and Diane Young.

### **Staying in touch**

Stay in touch about ways that we can care for you and pray for you. I'd be glad to hear from you.

My contact details are: [rector.stnicholassutton@gmail.com](mailto:rector.stnicholassutton@gmail.com) 020 8642 3499

Thank you for your calls. I love receiving telephone calls from you.

In particular can I make a plea to those who find themselves in pressing need (or who know of others of our number in difficulties)? Please don't feel that you have nowhere to turn. I really want you to contact me in the first instance. When you do, I will either be able to help you myself or point you in the right direction for access to food or emotional support for people who are struggling during the pandemic.

### **Love one another**

Please continue to watch out for each other and contact me or the wardens, John Kerr or Geoff Rendall, if you are concerned for someone.

And do be assured of my prayers for you. May almighty God keep us safe in body, mind and spirit as we ask him in Jesus' name. Thank you too for your continued prayers and support.

With warmest good wishes to you all, *Frances*

# ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SUTTON

10 MAY 2020 EASTER 6

## IN THE PAST WEEK...

### BLESSINGS...

- Clap for Carers
- NHS staff
- Sutton Community Support Hub
- Retail staff
- Sutton Police
- Bus drivers
- Childcare for Key Workers
- Sky, a deeper shade of blue
- Less pollution
- Awareness of social justice issues during the pandemic

### WE MISS...

- Worshipping together
- Sharing the Peace (hands or elbows)
- Hearing from JAM & Spectrum
- Coffee on Sundays and soup on Thursdays
- Light coming through the church windows
- Strolling through the churchyard

### AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THIS WEEK I...

- Took part in a weekly Zoom meeting with the Churchwardens
- Was impressed with assistance we received from Age UK
- Enjoyed hearing some of your memories of VE Day

### Southwark Diocesan Prayer Calendar (monthly)

can be found at  
<https://southwark.anglican.org/information/resources/prayer-calendar/>  
(this includes the Anglican Cycle of Prayer)

### PRAYERS for...

- those suffering the economic, psychological & social effects of the crisis
- the disadvantaged & the vulnerable
- those in authority, including our local leaders in the Council, the Police, the NHS & our MP's
- essential workers including NHS/Care Workers, Emergency Services, Refuse Collectors/Retail Staff
- faith leaders
- those who mourn

## Worship

There will be an Order of Service for 10.30am Sunday morning worship each week. I will be leading worship from The Rectory. Please join me by following the Order of Service (which is sent to you and can be found on the website) and singing confidently in your own homes. I think of you all and pray for you each day.

**Sunday 17 May** is the **Sixth Sunday of Easter**.

**Ascension Day** is on **Thursday 21 May**. Ascension will be the theme of next Sunday's service.

In the meantime, here is the Collect for you to pray on Ascension Day itself:

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ  
to have ascended into the heavens,  
so we in heart and mind may also ascend  
and with him continually dwell;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

I encourage you to make a habit of daily prayer, whether *A Way of Daily Prayer* (attached, or on website under Useful Information-Service Sheets);

Common Worship *Daily Prayer* <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>;  
or *Book of Common Prayer*.

Bible readings for Morning and Evening Prayer:

#### Sunday 17 May

MP Job 14.1-2, 7-15; 19.23-27a, 1 Thessalonians 4.13-end

EP Zechariah 8.1-13, Revelation 21.22-22.5

#### Monday 18 May Rogation Day

MP Numbers 16.1-35, Luke 6.27-38

EP Deuteronomy 26, 1 Peter 4.1-11

**Tuesday 19 May** Rogation Day Dunstan, archbishop, monastic reformer, 988

MP Numbers 16.36-end, Luke 6.39-end

EP Deuteronomy 28.1-14, 1 Peter 4.12-end

**Wednesday 20 May** Rogation Day, Alcuin, deacon, abbot, 804

MP Numbers 17.1-11, Luke 7.1-10

EP 2 Samuel 23.1-5, Colossians 2.20-3.4

**Thursday 21 May Ascension Day**

MP Isaiah 52.7-end, Hebrews 7.26-end

EP 2 Kings 2.1-15, Revelation 5

**Friday 22 May**

MP Numbers 20.1-13, Luke 7.11-17

EP Deuteronomy 29.2-15, 1 John 1.1-2.6

**Saturday 23 May**

MP Numbers 21.4-9, Luke 7.18-35

EP Deuteronomy 30, 1 John 2.7-17

**Prayer List** – Barbara, Vere, Stan, Roger

**Departed** – Timothy Goodier, Rosemary Armstrong, The Revd Peter Holmes (Norbiton), Alastair

## NOTICES

**GIVING DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. THANK YOU** to those of you who are able to continue supporting the church by your regular giving during these unprecedented times. This is greatly appreciated.

The church is still functioning at local, national and international level; and it continues to need the financial, as well as the spiritual, support of its members, not least to maintain its support of local parishes and communities.

Some of you have kindly asked for guidance about the most helpful ways in which to make payments at this time and you will have received a message about this from the Treasurer.

St Paul's letters are full of useful advice about Christian giving, especially 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9; he even gives specific directions in 1 Corinthians 16.2. It is almost as if he had foreseen our needs nearly two thousand years ago.

With renewed thanks for all your support in word, deed and prayer.

**Church of England Service, Sunday 10th May** from 9am on Facebook and Youtube

Celebration of nurses and healthcare workers in this online service.

Bishop of London and former Chief Nursing Officer Sarah Mullally led the service, with contributions from the current Chief Nursing Officer and many more, in recognition of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

**RAMBLES IN THE CHURCHYARD – permitted!**

Jeff Richards is posting a series of Churchyard rambles.

Take a look. It seems we can take a ramble, even in current times!

I attach a link to YouTube, where you can find Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard Rambles exploring the history of St Nicholas Church and Sutton

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyTT2iWuCCrqVLU-c81xTmmDcyhmz5hCk>

**LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP** (St Nicholas, Sutton Baptist, Trinity Methodist/URC – *Churches Uniting in Central Sutton*)

**Christian Aid Week, 10-16 May 2020.**

The United Service planned for Sunday 10 May 10.30am at Sutton Baptist Church will not take place.

We look forward to worshipping together again when that becomes possible.

Please take a look at the Christian Aid website [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) and support the CUCS fundraising activities:

**Christian Aid recipes**

For the quiz and recipe book fund-raising activities across CUCS, please see these two web pages

Christian Aid Lockdown Quiz <https://www.trinitychurchsutton.org.uk/quiz>

Christian Aid Recipe Book <https://www.trinitychurchsutton.org.uk/recipes>

[www.stnicholas.suttonteam.org.uk](http://www.stnicholas.suttonteam.org.uk)

[PCCSecretary.StNicholas@suttonteamministrv.org](mailto:PCCSecretary.StNicholas@suttonteamministrv.org)