



The Parish of
**ST NICHOLAS,
SUTTON**

Priest-in-Charge: The Revd Frances Arnold

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

17 May 2020

St Nicholas Church and Coronavirus (9)



Chapel of the Ascension, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Thursday 21 May is Ascension Day. This year it is also a saint's day: the day when we celebrate St Helena, 'Protector of the Holy Places.' The Empress Helena came to power in the Roman Empire when her son Constantine became Emperor in the year 306. (She is reputed to be the daughter of Coel, a Romano-British king after whom Colchester is named – the 'Old King Cole' of nursery rhyme fame). She was a Christian and gave her support to their cause. Constantine himself was converted to Christianity, partly through the influence of his mother, in the year 312. Pilgrims began to travel to Jerusalem to visit and pray at the places connected with the life of Jesus.

Constantine wished to make the holy sites in Jerusalem, especially Calvary and the Sepulchre, visible to all and given over to veneration. His mother Helena made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326 and oversaw the excavations. The temple to Venus (built by the Emperor Hadrian on the site of the Crucifixion) was demolished. Underneath, the mound of Calvary and the rock face containing Jesus' empty tomb were revealed. Constantine wrote to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, 'No words can express how good the Saviour has been to us...that the monument of his Holy Passion, hidden for so many years, has now at last been restored to the faithful...My great wish is, after freeing the site of impious idols, to adorn it with splendid buildings.' A basilica was built on the site and dedicated in 335. The church has been destroyed, rebuilt and restored over the centuries. The church today is the one which was erected by the Crusaders in 1149.

Helena is also said to have discovered a cross on this site, which many believe to be the Cross on which Christ was crucified. This event is commemorated by Christians on Holy Cross Day (14 September). Helena's excavations were a real inspiration for me. The reason why I was bitten by the history bug at the age of 17 (deciding to study history rather than literature) was as much because of archaeology and artefacts as through written records. I love to be in the actual place where something happened or to see or hold the real object.

There are multiple churches in Jerusalem marking significant places in the life of Christ, even where there are no tangible remains, the Ascension being one of them. St Luke records that Jesus ascended into heaven from a place on the top of the Mount of Olives, where the high ground rises above the Kidron Valley to the east of the (Old) City. There is a small octagonal shrine at The Place of the Ascension which was built in 1102. It is owned by Muslims. (Jesus is honoured by Muslims as a prophet. They are unable to accept the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but they acknowledge the Ascension). Although there are no artefacts, within the chapel is a rock upon which there is an indentation – reputed to be Christ's last footprint. Annually on the Feast of the Ascension, the Armenian, Coptic, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Syrian Churches are each allowed to celebrate mass within the compound.

Let us rejoice in celebrating with Christians throughout the world:

'All praise to thee who art gone up
triumphantly to heaven;
all praise to God the Father's name,
and Holy Ghost be given.'

(from the 8th century Ascension hymn, *Jesu, our hope, our heart's desire*)

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.

From Sunday 17 May, Bishop Christopher's service will be available on his Twitter stream:

@BishopSouthwark and on the Diocesan Facebook and YouTube channels

at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthwarkCofE> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/SouthwarkDiocese>

Please see separate sheet/the website for information about materials available for **Thy Kingdom Come. Nine Days of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost, 21-31 May 2020**

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.

'I want to thank once again all those people who phone to ask if I need anything.

It is so comforting to know that help is available should I need it ' (a thank you received this week).

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 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

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:

increase and multiply upon us your mercy;

that with you as our ruler and guide,

we may so pass through things temporal

that we lose not our hold on things eternal;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SUTTON

17 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
- The organ and the piano and Pam, Isabella and Paul's playing
- 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



Southwark Diocesan Prayer Calendar (monthly)

can be found at

<https://southwark.anglican.org/information/resources/prayer-calendar/>

(this includes the Anglican Cycle of Prayer)

AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THIS WEEK I...

- Saw my first ladybird of the year
- Took part in a weekly Zoom meeting with the Churchwardens
- Started a week-long residential diocesan training course by Zoom instead! (I'll miss the food at Wychcroft & the walks!)
- Received a certificate for taking part in the Scouts Virtual Camp: 95,000 Scouts and Guides from 68 countries across the world beat the cabin fever and became record breakers!

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 24 May is the **Seventh Sunday of Easter** *The Sunday after Ascension Day*.

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 24 May

MP Isaiah 65.17-end, Revelation 21.1-8

EP 2 Samuel 23.1-5, Ephesians 1.15-end

Monday 25 May Bede, monk, scholar, historian, 735

MP Numbers 22.1-35, Luke 7.36-end

EP Deuteronomy 31.1-13, 1 John 2.18-end

Tuesday 26 May Augustine, archbishop, 605

MP Numbers 22.36-23.12, Luke 8.1-15

EP Deuteronomy 31.14-29, 1 John 3.1-10

Wednesday 27 May

MP Numbers 23.13-end, Luke 8.16-25

EP Deuteronomy 31.30-32.14, 1 John 3.11-end

Thursday 28 May

MP Numbers 24, Luke 8.26-39

EP Deuteronomy 32.15-47, 1 John 4.1-6

Friday 29 May

MP Numbers 27.12-end, Luke 8.40-end

EP Deuteronomy 33, 1 John 4.7-end

Saturday 30 May Josephine Butler, social reformer, 1906

MP Numbers 32.1-27, Luke 9.1-17

EP Deuteronomy 16.9-15, John 15.26-16.5

Prayer List – Barbara, Vere, Stan, Roger, Phyllis & Hollis

Departed –Rosemary Armstrong, Alastair, Gwen

Our dear friend Christine Griffiths sadly died on Monday evening. Please remember Christine and all the departed and pray for her family and friends.

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 I 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.

RAMBLES IN THE CHURCHYARD – permitted! Jeff Richards is posting a series of Churchyard rambles.

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

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

Report on **Christian Aid Week activities** from John and Deborah Wroe:

Christian Aid Lockdown Quiz.

This was a fun evening. Twenty-two people took part via Zoom: most from Trinity, but also from St Nicholas and from Sutton Baptist.

CLIVE ORTON WON on the tie-break. Congratulations Clive!

Christian Aid Recipe Collection. The Recipe Collection contains over seventy recipes contributed by members of our central Sutton churches. So if you would like to make Peter's cookies, Gill's butternut squash soup, Frances' St Nicholas biscuits, Beverley's Caribbean fish curry or Rebecca's chocolate fridge cake, go to the Trinity website [here](#) and donate five pounds to Christian Aid. The Recipe Collection will be sent to your email address as a PDF document by the end of the month.

Christian Aid Organ Recital. The recital by Stephen Haylett is now available to listen to [here](#).