

## Letter from the Vicar

Saturday 20 February 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Lent has begun. On Wednesday we observed Ash Wednesday virtually with a Eucharist with Blessing and Imposition of Ashes (this can still be joined via our website if you would like to attend). Sadly, due to the suspension of Public Worship and a lack of authentic and sincere ways of marking folk with ash during these difficult days it was not possible to invite you physically to the service, but you were none the less held in our thoughts and prayers as the Mass was offered. Those who did join have wondered why I marked a big stone with the sign of the cross in ash. The stone was meant to symbolise our hardness of heart and, since we could not all be there, to be a rather poor substitute for everyone who was missing.

In other pieces I written I have encouraged you to be kind to yourselves this Lent since it feels like we have lived Lent for the past 11 months. I am not expecting huge challenges and disciplines to be undertaken this year. As some of you may recall I normally give up biscuits for Lent but over lockdown I have tried to cut-down my consumption any way. But recently (perhaps because of home schooling) I have noticed that my alcohol consumption has increased. To go 'cold turkey' and cut out all booze would, I think, be a mistake this year so instead I have committed to not having booze on 'school nights'. I am very interested to see if I can do this and will keep you posted (if you are interested).

From Monday night I will begin a series of Lenten devotions by posting a Compline prayer service each week to our website. The service lasts approximately 15minutes and is a quiet and peaceful way to end the day. I hope you may find this a helpful way to grow in prayer and faithfulness this Lent.

As you may recall I have had the week off with my family. Obviously we have not been able to go anywhere other than for our daily walks – one of which was at a very muddy Dockey Woods. Instead, we have spent the time tidying the house. But as anyone with, or has had children will know, as fast as you tidy one area another area is being destroyed! This is certainly what it has felt like this week... but progress has been made. Hopefully by Easter we might have a clean house!

Speaking of Easter, we have some fun ideas planned for our Junior Church to do at home and corporately as we are still hopeful to be back in church for Public Worship on 21 March. We need to be cautious but we from experience we know how to make our churches Covid-secure.

As ever I leave you with my prayers and best wishes. Keep safe; keep positive; keep warm; and remain steadfast in faith that God loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.

In Christ,



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Vicar

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