



January 31st 2021

**Greetings in the name of our
Lord Jesus Christ.
In this time of uncertainty,
we declare: Jesus is Lord!**

Becoming Like a Child...

“The disciples came to Jesus asking, “Who gets the highest rank in God’s kingdom?” For an answer Jesus called over a child, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, “I’m telling you, once and for all, that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you’re not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God’s kingdom. What’s more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it’s the same as receiving me.” Matthew 18: 1 – 5 (The Message)

This last week we’ve had a new lockdown experience – lockdown snow, and not just a sprinkling, but real, proper snow! My first reaction was to reflect on how beautiful it is, from the mesmerizing flakes drifting down from the sky to trees and gardens submerged in white. My second reaction was somewhat less charitable – what an inconvenience! Snow is a pleasure to watch from the inside cradling a cup of tea...but when we need to get to places (work, shops, schools, vaccination centres) it quickly becomes less of a joy and rather more of a bind.

Of course both of those reactions are valid – and despite the inconvenience, reflecting on the beauty of creation has definitely won overall! But what’s been even more moving is to see the delight of the children in my cul-de-sac, out in the road, laughing and enjoying snowball fights, building snowmen, captivated by the freedom and delight of the present moment and blissfully unaware of the challenges dominating our lives and our media at the moment.

We may not be able to so easily forget the realities of what we face at the moment – and nor should we. Faith can never be an escape from the challenges of life. But even in the midst of it all, we are called to a childlike, joyful faith which finds delight in the simple things. *“I’m telling you, once and for all”, says Jesus, “that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you’re not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God’s kingdom.”*

We are surrounded with so much loss at the present time, and yet we are also surrounded with so many blessings of hope – people who encourage us, the song of the birds, the spring bulbs appearing, and even snow! May we try to be ‘simple and elemental,’ with our eyes open to joy, and to God’s presence all around us.

With my prayers and love,

Anita

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

27th January is the day for everyone to remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and the millions of people killed under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. 27th January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

It is an opportunity for us to reflect on those whose lives were changed beyond recognition, and to challenge prejudice, discrimination, and hatred in our own society today. On HMD, we all have a role to play to ensure that we learn the lessons of the past, to create a safer, better future.

The theme for HMD 2021 is 'Be the light in the darkness'. It encourages us to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities lit the darkness before, during, and after genocide. Every Holocaust Memorial Day is unique, but our commemoration in 2021 is especially so.

First, HMD 2021 is the first commemoration since the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2020. That anniversary was marked by international observances in Israel and Poland, and was the last major anniversary at which survivors of the Holocaust will likely be present; we stand on the threshold of a new era of Holocaust education and commemoration in which we won't have the living witness of survivors. Second, the Covid-19 pandemic has magnified inequalities and social tensions, and enabled a worrying spike in racism and antisemitism in many countries. Here is a prayer to pray on or around 27th January:

Called to be a light: A litany

When faced with religious discrimination,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with a global pandemic that threatens our wellbeing,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with the darkness of shame and rejection,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with human beings not being treated in a dignified manner,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with discrimination for 'being different',

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with injustices caused in the name of religion,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with people who are unable to live in their own countries and homelands,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with a lack of generosity towards refugees and migrants,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with genocide,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

When faced with denial of the Holocaust,

Jesus calls us to be a light shining in the darkness.

We look to the light of Jesus, so that as we reflect his light in the world, it is filled with the harvest of his good works.

Amen.

A Reflection – Frederick Buechner

Listen to your life.

See it for the fathomless mystery that it is.

In the boredom and pain of it

no less than in the excitement and gladness:

touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it

because in the last analysis all moments are key moments,

and life itself is grace.

Prayer Meeting – from Geoff

In our series on the parables before Christmas, I spoke on the parable of the friend at midnight. The lesson I drew from this was the need for persistence in prayer.

As Christians we believe prayer changes things. We have begun a New Year and we anticipate returning soon to worship at St. Peter's with all the challenges this will bring. Prayer is essential for those responsible in the appointment of our new vicar. In the meantime let us seek the Lord to guide us in developing the life of St. Peter's. Our nation and government face major decisions in the future of our economy, our businesses and individuals struggling financially. We need to pray for this those in authority as we begin anew chapter following Brexit and Covid 19.

A couple of days ago I received a letter from Bible Society telling me about martyred brothers Jonas and Joseph, who were part of Bible Society team sharing the Bible in Africa. Jonas lived in the Cameroon and Joseph lived in Nigeria. Both were brutally murdered by Islamic extremists Boko Haram. They have left families behind bereft of a father. We need to pray for our wider world.

So please join me on Zoom for a 45 minute weekly prayer meeting. Can you please call the Church Office 01332 360790 saying which days and times are most suitable. I will choose a date and time which the majority decide. I look forward to hearing from you. Remember, "prayer changes things". God bless you all, Geoff

Prayer ...

In this testing time, do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray for you.

Sunday Worship

10:15am Holy Communion: Despite being allowed to stay open during the current lockdown, the PCC has made the decision to pause our 10.15am service to reduce social contact and the possibility of transmission of the new and highly contagious Covid strain. We continue to monitor the situation, and we will reopen when we feel it is safe to do so. Watch this space for more details. In the meanwhile, everyone is welcome to join us for our Zoom worship (see below).

11am Worship via Zoom: see below for joining details.

Joining Details for Zoom Worship

On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet:

The easiest way is to click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VIOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0203 481 5240 ; 0131 460 1196 ; 0203 051 2874 ; 0203 481 5237
2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
5. You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening

If you have problems with accessing the service on Sunday, please call Anita

St. Peter's in the City Staff:

Acting Vicar/Associate Priest: Revd. Anita Matthews
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Vicar's PA and Church Administrator
Vacant
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Inside Out Project Worker: Wayne Haycock
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Building Manager: Melvyn Wood
Kitchen Supervisor: Gillian Wood

Church Wardens: Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city
Follow us on Twitter: @stpetersderby
www.stpetersderby.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Link: Revd. Anita Matthews

IN THE WEEK

The church office is closed until further notice, but telephone calls to the Office on 01332 360790 and emails to office@stpetersderby.org.uk will be monitored