

REFLECTIONS

Simeon and Anna have been waiting expectantly for hope in a world where suffering has become a way of life. The hope they have been longing for is now before them in the Christ-child... but this does not mean the end of suffering. Instead, it seems that this child of hope will deal with the suffering by sharing it himself.

Paul picks up this theme in his letter which is a moving reflection on his own recent suffering and how it has deepened his faith. He is resolute that God is the God of all consolation, offering us consolation that we can in turn offer to others. For Paul, there is no such thing as an isolated individual. Consolation is given that it may be given away again, and the source of all comfort is God's own Self. We can take heart that there is nothing we will be asked to endure that God has not already sent Jesus to endure for us.

Going deeper

The word Paul uses for consolation is *paraklesis* which literally means a calling to one's aid. N.T. Wright says: "The whole idea of the word is that one person is being with another, speaking words which change their mood and situation, giving them courage, new hope, new direction, new insights which will alter the way they face the next moment, the next day, the rest of their life....It meets people where they are, and brings them right on to the point where they are strong enough to see new hope, new possibilities, new ways forward."

I wonder...

... who might you be called to comfort in this time?

PARISH DIARY

TODAY 22nd March 2020

NO SERVICES

NEXT SUNDAY 29th March 2020

NO SERVICES

THIS WEEK (All at St Mary's Saffron Walden, unless stated)

Monday 23rd March

Tuesday 24th March

No Services except

11.00am Funeral of Daisy Peach **at Ashdon**

Wednesday 25th March

Thursday 26th March

Friday 27th March

Saturday 28th March

SAFFRON WALDEN & VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN, WIMBISH,
DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Mothers' Sunday
22nd March 2020

Collect

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: 2 Corinthians 1.3-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

Gospel: Luke 2.33-35

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

 See St Mary's church, SW, website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.

 Please 'Like' our Facebook page so we reach more people! Click on the link on our website, or go to: www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Churches Together Prayer Cycle: In March please pray for:
Abbey Lane & Newport URC, incorporating the Methodist Church, Dame Bradbury's School

The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Mary Knight, Clare Kenny, Daisy Peach

EVENTS

WITH APOLOGIES, PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS ALL EVENTS ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

NEWS

Revd. Dr Caroline Curren has been appointed **TEAM VICAR**, with responsibility for Ashdon. *Barbara Marshall*

THE TEAM RECTOR AND AREA DEAN VACANCY advertisement and profile are now on St Mary's website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/teamrectorvacancy. *Denis*

CURATE'S LETTER

Dear friends,

In these extraordinary times, when we are no longer meeting together, we have a new opportunity to learn what it means for us to be the Church in a different way. Church is not dead because we cannot meet together. We are still the Body of Christ.

In their letter, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York encourage us: "*We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.*"

We are people of hope. Let us turn to God at this time and take comfort from the words of Psalm 46.1 *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

When all around us seems to be crumbling, let us turn to God with renewed faith and pray for the needs of the world. Please do keep an eye on our website www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/coronavirus and Facebook page www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden during this time as we post resources for prayer and worship, and please do offer practical and prayer support where possible (see Judith's note overleaf).

On a more personal note, during this time I will be working from home until I go on maternity leave on the 1st April. You can reach me in the usual ways of email (curate@stmaryssaffronwalden.org) or by phone and please let me know how I can be praying for you in this time.

With love and prayers,
Rachel

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER We are setting up a team of church members who are ready to help by

- * Collecting essential shopping and medical supplies
- * Providing a regular friendly chat by phone

If you are self-isolating and would like some support or, if you would like to be part of the team who can help, please contact the Parish Office by telephone or email. *Judith Hasler*

PARISH OFFICE From Monday 23rd March, Dawn will be working from home. She will be accessing telephone and email messages as usual but the office itself will not be open. If you need physical access to the office, please contact Dawn and she will endeavour to arrange someone to meet you there by appointment. You can view the church and parish room diaries and lots of other useful information on the church website.

CHURCH OPEN DURING THE DAY Please note that the Church remains open for personal prayer during this time.

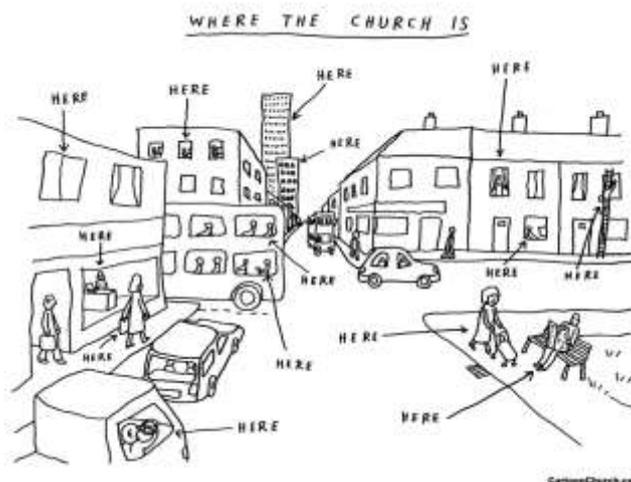
GIVING Members of the stewardship scheme may put their collection in the blue safe by the West Door if they are dropping into church – please use your usual numbered envelope or a yellow gift aid envelope so that our treasurer can identify it to you. Thank you. *David Birchall*.

TODAY Sunday 22nd March is a national day of prayer organised by The Churches Together in England. All are encouraged to pray wherever you are. You are invited to light a candle at 7pm and display it in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

THE TRANSITION PROJECT Whilst the Tuesday clinic is **CANCELLED**, on line support continues – *contact us at* www.transitionproject.co.uk

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX HOLDERS Please continue to hold on and await further instructions sometime in the future. Thank you for your co-operation. *Eunice Harris*

CARTOON BY DAVE WALKER



MINISTRY TEAM

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