

Vicar and Curate's Musings

*and any other information we found interesting,
funny or a need to share!*

Vicar's Musings

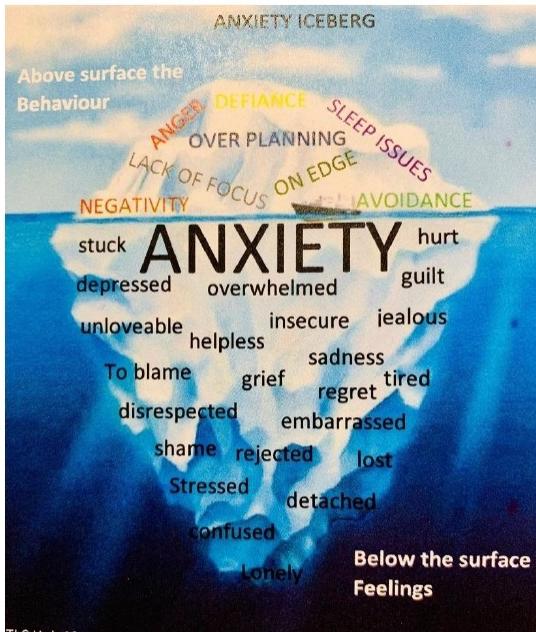
Hi

Two songs I've been listening to are 'Blessed be your name' by Matt Redman and Kelly Clarkson's 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger'. Both in their own way provide hope that things will get better.

I have had a bit of a topsy turvy year. I love two people who both in their own way impact my life in many different ways.

One of them has had to deal with a diagnosis that changes their outlook on their future and present. I've also realised people treat them differently because of their diagnosis. As well as this they need operations as their bones aren't what they were due to many falls.

The other person is my 'worry wort' who at the moment is a ball of anxiety. The bible says 'do not be afraid' but that's not easy to hear or take onboard when you feel so terrified and backed into a corner. Recently like many people who struggle with anxiety it's become debilitating for them to cope since 19th July and the release from regulations and guidelines. So much so that they live in constant fear even of me due to my role as a Vicar. It's



heartbreaking to see.

Why am I telling you this? It's to explain why I am so cautious when opening the churches back up again. I have to balance the needs of 4 congregations, 3 churches and my home life.



What needs are these? Some members of our congregations are older and more frightened or cautious to come out to worship or sing. Some have medical issues and can't come out yet or feel they can't. Some are frightened to come and worship whereas others want to get on with it.

So even knowing that not singing is disappointing for some, keeping distancing,

asking you to wear masks as it protects others even though we don't have to. As it's been pointed out to me some churches aren't even worshipping yet back in a church building so at least we're doing that.

As part of the coronavirus support network the only calls I get now are from people struggling to cope either mentally coming out of lockdown or with life as they've been made redundant and how to cope practically (which is why we put out a call to help with food vouchers).

Mental health at the moment is the thing a lot of people are struggling with and it's no joke. It's not about getting a backbone or bucking up. People struggling with anxiety or depression at the moment live with real fears and lows. Sometimes they know it isn't rational. It's how we can help them process the transition from 'stay safe pull up your drawbridge and stay at home' to 'freedom is now go out and enjoy'. They can't. Their brains don't work like that and families, people who care about them are helping them to cope with a world that's changed its message seemingly overnight.

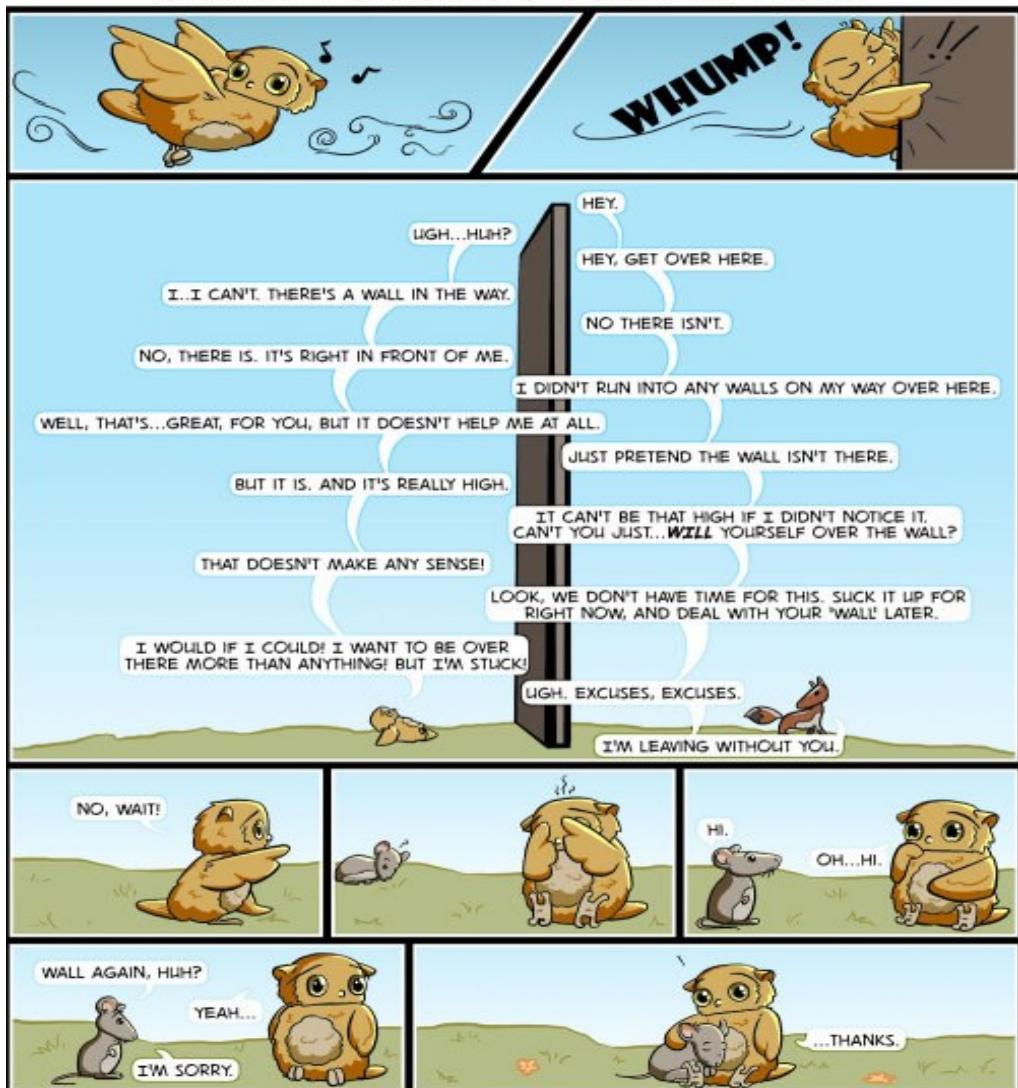
Please include all who are struggling in your prayers and try to be kind when someone has a differing view of the world. Mental health is

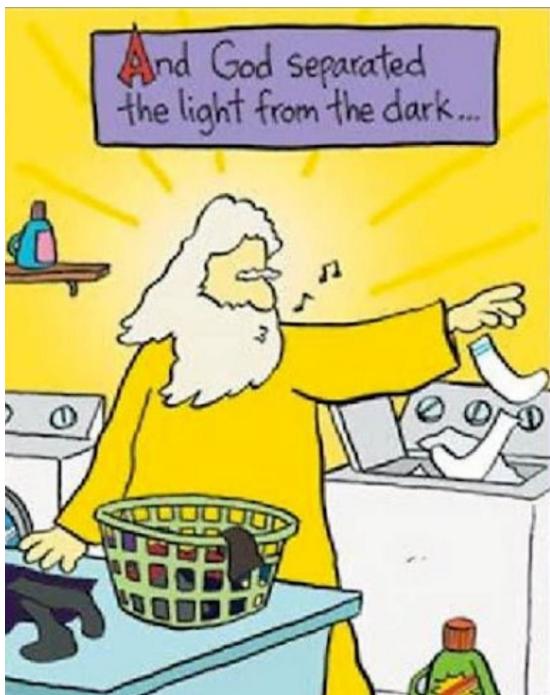
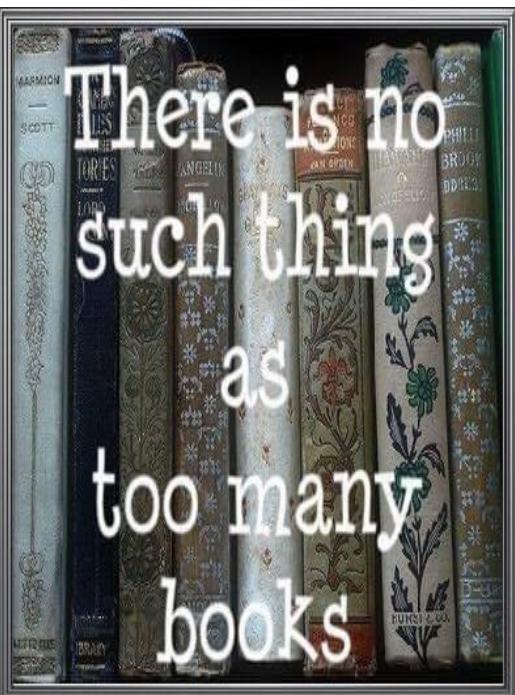
like an iceberg and there's a lot we can't see.

We will get there and back to a new rhythm but it's best to do so together taking everyone with us and that is what I'm / we're trying to do.

Stay safe
Shellie

WHAT ANXIETY FEELS LIKE





Curates Musings

Have you been half asleep all day because you've been up most of the night watching the Olympics? From time to time, I've heard commentators say, excitedly, 'The whole country has been glued to their screens, watching the swimming/BMX racing/taekwondo...' and I feel guilty to admit that I haven't been 'glued', because I've been otherwise occupied.

It reminded me of a poem - *Musée des Beaux Arts* – in which W H Auden discusses times when something dramatic is happening, but most people are busy with their own concerns, and don't notice.

As a little girl, I was once driven to a funeral and was amazed that people in the streets were just going in and out of shops, doing their normal errands. Why were they chatting and laughing, as usual? I suppose they had places to go and people to see; it meant nothing to them.

At that time, in the 60s, it was the habit to close your curtains if someone in your street had died. At least superficially, it demonstrated that you had noticed: that you were feeling for the bereaved. That fashion has perhaps it's been replaced by people taking the trouble to stand along the route of the cortège, to show respect for the deceased and sympathy for the living, in a very simple and moving way.

To a large extent, we're all in our own worlds, ignorant of what is important – even life-changing – to other people. We can't necessarily be blamed. We can't all know what it's like for the family pet to die; or to win the lottery; or find new love in later life. Experiences differ and we aren't omniscient! But we can keep our eyes and ears open, and look for the signs – not just in the words, but in the body language; not just in people, but in events around us. We can look and listen.

W H Auden describes the moment when Icarus, the would-be human bird, fell to earth: "The expensive delicate ship that must have seen something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky, had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on." Let's not sail calmly on when our friend has something to tell!

Jo

People wonder why I give so many compliments out to strangers. I'm not being fake and I'm not looking for people to like me. But if I pass someone and I like something, I say it. "Love those shoes!" or "Great hair!" or "Wow your eyes are beautiful!"why?

Because life is hard and this world can be a shitty place, and people are mean. You never know how much those few words mean to someone, you never know what hell they may be going through; and when you put positivity out there into the universe YOU yourself become a happier person. It's hard to be nice and be miserable yourself. It'll reflect from the outside in. I'm telling you random compliment giving will change your life; and maybe someone else's, too.

— JORDAN SARAH WEATHERHEAD

Will you be wearing a mask?

I will



Noah's Ark Complaints Department



YOU ONLY
BROUGHT
TWO ANTS?



Recalling her doctor's advice.
to eat more fruit,
she popped off to put some
cherries in her gin.

ST GARGOYLE'S



Peter missed singing so much he went to a football match

A message for July from the Bishop of Worcester

One of the most important – and enjoyable – roles of being a bishop is ordaining people as deacons and priests. I shall be ordaining nine new priests in the Cathedral at the beginning of July. I find it arresting to think that my predecessors – I am the 113th Bishop of Worcester – have been doing the same there for well over a thousand years.



In preparation for the ordination, it's always moving to learn from the candidates of how God has moved in their lives and they have felt his call. Very often that call has been mediated through the encouragement of others. Most people don't think that they are up to the task of serving God in any capacity and they need the prompting and help of others.

Ordination in the diocese takes place at 'Petertide' - around the feast of St Peter, when we give thanks for the 'rock' on which Jesus chose to build his church. I find Peter very encouraging – as we read the scriptures we see him 'getting it wrong' over and over again, even having to be rebuked by Jesus as 'Satan', and then denying Jesus in his hour of need. But Jesus restored him, giving him the confidence to serve and lead.

God's call is a wonderful thing. I wonder how much you have thought about God's call on your life? You might not become a priest, but God certainly has some role in store for you which you will find gloriously fulfilling if you respond to his call. If you have found it, rejoice in it and relish it. If you have not, pray that it may be revealed to you. Only then will you experience life in abundance which Jesus yearns to give you. Whatever you do, don't succumb to 'imposter syndrome' and think you are not up to serving God as he calls you. Remember Peter and take heart from him!

Bishop John

A message for August from the Archdeacon of Worcester

I'm getting the sense that we're all looking for time off after such a long time of good behaviour! We have learned to be self-consciously safe in the way we interact - in the shops, in church, at home and at work. We've made a pretty good job of obeying the rules, following the guidance, and thinking everything through so carefully. Now we'd like some time off, and I think we've earned it.



We have learned a whole new vocabulary. I don't remember social distancing before March last year, and now we all talk about having been jabbed. We have learned to appreciate little things more, such as that kind phone call, or the encouraging wave. We have celebrated key events in a low-key way – at some personal cost in some cases; but in many ways returning to the essence of them, be it the wedding, the funeral, the baptism. We have learned to adapt and keep things simple.

There will, of course, be some serious unfinished business, most of all in the area of death and grieving. We will need to give ourselves time and be gentle with one another. For what strikes me is that we have had to face our frailty. We human beings, though capable of much, are fragile. When Paul wrote to the sometimes fractious Christians of Corinth, he said, 'We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.' Clay jars are fragile: Corinthian clay was, it seems, particularly so, and more likely to crack. Cracked pots were no good for holding wine, for example, but brilliant for holding light, making a good lantern.

Paul suggests that we are those fragile containers, and yet are all worthy of being bearers of God's light. Fragility can still contain much love. So in this month of August let's give ourselves a bit of time off for good behaviour, time to lick our wounds, acknowledge our frailty, and wonder at so much love revealed in such tough times.

Archdeacon Robert Jones

Leaves of hope at Worcester Cathedral

During August, Worcester Cathedral is hosting *The Leaves of the Trees*, an installation of 5,000 steel 'Hope' leaves, as a reflective memorial to the effects of the pandemic.

The installation has been designed to honour those who have lost their lives, but also to allow everyone to take a moment to contemplate what we have been through and to think about loved ones. Designed and produced by internationally renowned sculptor and artist, Peter Walker, the installation features a sycamore maple leaf, which was chosen specifically for its symbolism of strength, protection, eternity and clarity.

The leaves will be laid out on the Cathedral floor, creating a beautiful impression of autumn leaves fallen from the trees. Appearing as though naturally scattered by the wind, the leaves collectively symbolise both what has transpired in the past and what is to come in the future.

The exhibition will be available to visit during normal Cathedral visiting hours until Tuesday 31 August. Further information is available [on the Cathedral's website](http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk). www.worcestercathedral.co.uk



Why Simone Biles' withdrawal from the Olympics is a lesson to Christians everywhere

[Why Simone Biles' withdrawal from the Olympics is a lesson to Christians everywhere | Opinion | Premier Christianity](#)

By Chris Llewellyn

**God calls us to rest in him, not run ourselves into
the ground, says Chris Llewellyn**



I was so tragically uncoordinated as a child that my horrified rugby coach took one look at my clumsy tumbling and immediately declared it “too risky” for me to ever participate in gymnastics again. So I feel totally unqualified to be anything other than utterly in awe of the talents and achievements of USA Olympic gymnast, Simone Biles. But, apparently, not everyone feels the same way.

**“WHEN YOU PRIORITISE YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL
WELLBEING, YOU WILL MEET RESISTANCE “**

The internet is currently overflowing with commentary about her decision to withdraw from competition in Tokyo to preserve her mental health. You've surely encountered some of it by now. It was hard to miss Piers Morgan's declaration that her withdrawal, and the rationale behind it, was "a joke". Then Aaron Reitz, a Texas deputy attorney general, took it a step further, calling Biles a "selfish, childish national embarrassment". Finally, never to be beaten as a source of hateful rhetoric, Youtube activist, Charles Kirk, referred to Biles as a "selfish sociopath" and "shame to the country".

A CULTURE OF SACRIFICE

Even though many also spoke up on her behalf, including USA Gymnastics and a whole cast of celebrities, calling her actions heroic and declaring her a role model, my main takeaway from her experience is this:

When you prioritise your mental and emotional wellbeing, you will meet resistance

Unfortunately, this is not just true outside the Church. It is also deeply embedded within our Christian subculture. It is part of the Christian tradition to place emphasis on 'sacrifice' – of which, of course, the cross is the supreme example. We have always had a tendency to celebrate those who "suffer for the gospel". I still remember the book *Jesus Freaks*, by DC Talk, which recounted, in gory detail, the deaths of Christian martyrs as an illustration to inspire young people to embrace trials.

"TOUGHNESS IS MAKING A DECISION THAT MAY DISAPPOINT OTHERS RATHER THAN RUNNING YOURSELF INTO THE GROUND "

To some extent, it is indeed an inescapable part of Christianity that we must, at times, "carry our cross". But in this atmosphere, it's no wonder so many church staff suffer from 'burnout'. How do you draw the line between suffering for the gospel and self-harm? Doesn't God also invite us into his rest in the very first pages of the Bible?

It may not be the same kind of pressure as that experienced by international sportspeople, but the expectations and demands of a congregation are intensely stressful. The phone never stops buzzing

with urgent requests; life and death situations, hospital visits and funeral services are just a text away. I'm sure many ministers and missionaries can empathise with Simone Biles when she says she felt "the weight of the world on my shoulders at times."

A STRONG EXAMPLE

As the Church, we can learn a few things from Biles' example.

Sometimes it is both brave and necessary for us to say "no" to that which is being asked of us, even if it is seen as being unhelpful or lazy.

Sometimes it is critical for us to take time and space for ourselves, even though people may not understand and may label it weakness.

And sometimes, toughness and grit express themselves in making a decision that may disappoint others rather than running yourself into the ground.

It's not un-Christian to put on your own oxygen mask first in a plane crash; it just allows everyone around you the best chance of survival too.

If you're struggling with burnout, maybe the best step forward is actually withdrawing for a season.

And no, Piers Morgan, that's not "a joke".

I can't stand your religious meetings.
I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions.
I want nothing to do with your religion projects,
 your pretentious slogans and goals.
I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes,
 your public relations and image making.
I've had all I can take of your noisy ego-music.
When was the last time you sang to me?
 Do you know what I want?
I want Justice—oceans of it.
I want Fairness—rivers of it.
 That's what I want.
 That's all I want.

Amos 5:21-24
The Message



**Jesus spent
his whole
life engaging
the people
most of us
have spent
our whole
lives trying
to avoid.**

Bob Goff

We can do better than Starbucks worship

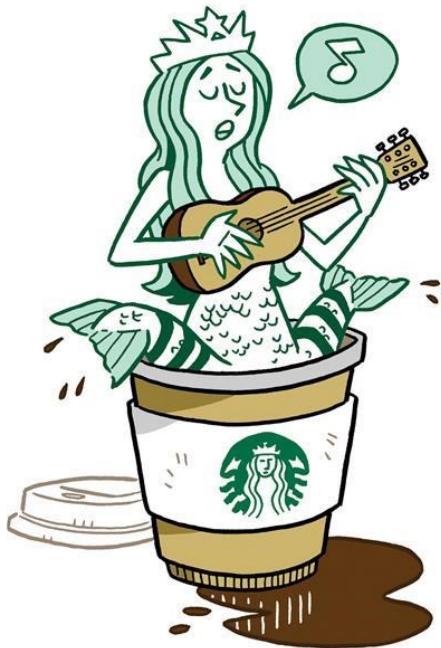
[We can do better than Starbucks worship | Regular Columnists | Premier Christianity](#)

I like Starbucks. I like the way I can be on literally any street, in any major city on planet Earth and know that there is a ready supply of reliably average coffee and baked goods just around the corner. But I don't want every cup of coffee that I drink to be Starbucks.

How I feel about my coffee is a handy analogy for how I feel about the current state of modern worship music. A small clutch of influential, wealthy churches are currently producing almost all of the music we sing in congregations around the world. And much like Starbucks, the songs are OK. Largely reliable. Sometimes they are even excellent. (Much like Starbucks' hazelnut hot chocolate.)

But I have to wonder what artisanal treats we are missing by choosing the convenient path of least resistance and continually importing our Sunday set lists from the big, corporate church record labels? (Yes, you read that right – many big churches are also major record labels, with a keen financial interest in what you sing, bleary-eyed and off-key, on a Sunday morning.)

As an independent worship artist who has not enjoyed the powerhouse backing of a megachurch, I know from experience that it has become increasingly difficult – sometimes almost entirely impossible – to make the global Church aware of new songs that don't drop off the conveyor belt of these big church labels.



I have seen friends painstakingly craft deep, and vitally important, songs, exploring uncharted creative territory and addressing blindspots in our worship theology, only to watch, horrified, as fluffy, superficial songs sung by the right person with the right network steal the spotlight anyway.

I don't think the worship industry is 'bad' per se. Most of what's happening is well-meaning, earnest and good. It's just that by flooding the worship space with heavily marketed 'not bad' songs, we can end up drowning out the truly excellent songs that quietly rise from the fringes.

Think about it like this. Where do prophetic voices tend to come from? The centre of the big religious industrial machine, or from the wilderness?

Personally, I *want* to hear from the megachurches. But I *need* to hear from the prophets on the edges too.

I want to hear from more writers of colour.

From more women.

From voices outside of Western Christian culture.

From those striving to make worship more accessible.

I can't help but think that we're missing out by worshipping using the borrowed perspectives of primarily white, affluent, well-connected Western men.

I wonder what revelations we might receive by singing songs of faith through a less overused lens?

If you're a worship leader, maybe it's time to start voting with your set list. To forage for fresh nourishment for your congregation (may I suggest Chris Renzema, Sean Curran, Jon Guerra, Jonathan Ogden, Elle Limebear and Porter's Gate as a starting point?) Or better yet – create something bespoke for your congregation.

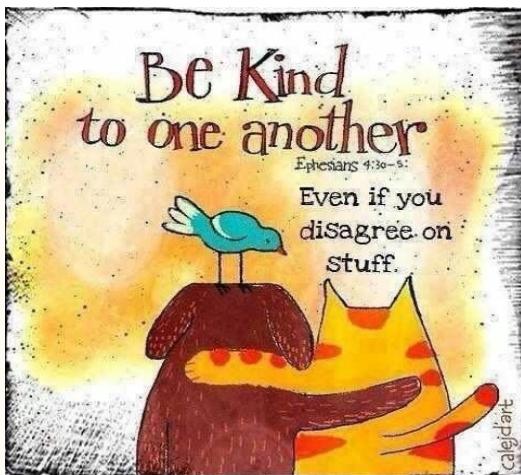
And if you're a churchgoer, maybe it's time to stop requesting the 'greatest hits' and present some alternatives. Or even simply (and kindly!) point out some themes and perspectives that are underrepresented in your worship times.

We can seek out new expressions of our faith.

We can push the boundaries of Christian art. We can do better than Starbucks worship.



Chris Llewellyn Chris Llewellyn is best known as the lead singer of the Northern Irish worship band, Rend Collective. He tours the world alongside his wife, Gabriella, and two-year-old son, Daniel. In his spare time, he is one of those people who obnoxiously mentions Crossfit every two seconds



It's hard to throw stones when you're busy washing feet.



Church Information

Give a little



The diocese is trying to help churches, which due to Covid19 cannot fundraise or meet weekly as they did before March 23rd. This has had an impact on churches across the diocese and church including our own churches that still have weekly and monthly expenses that have to be paid but are struggling to fundraise and as yet aren't meeting for gathered worship.

To help support St Michael's and St Eadburgha's churches—give online to Broadway PCC please use this link from SUMUP: https://givealittle.co/campaigns/517bdd8b-33bf-4a59-92f4-7b8d88840249?fbclid=IwAR0RNYX2EJfHX_J5A2RjB6SpuCyYU0DrtPL4CynAYu7Shdy8NIxBe_vq6vFI

You can also give to any of our churches by cash or cheque made out to either Broadway PCC or Wickhamford PCC and post to me or the relevant church treasurer



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

New guidelines re covid-19 / pandemic

Having looked at the Church of England Guidelines and also the data re the new delta variant and listening to all of our congregations, we would like to inform you of the decisions taken for the next few weeks, which will be reviewed and reassessed in August.

Socially Distancing

We are going to keep the bunting and social distancing in place until the end of August and will reassess for September following feedback.

Masks are now legally optional.

Whilst we would prefer people still to wear masks to protect others, we realise not everyone is comfortable wearing them so they will be up to personal preference in church.

Singing in Church

We are concerned about the new delta strain and the statistics. With the age of our congregations taken into account and the reasons we were given for lockdown last year (e.g. protect our 70 plus and the NHS) we propose that we won't sing yet but will look at what the Delta covid variant numbers are doing and make a decision in 2 weeks' time and keep reassessing our decision.

We didn't make this decision lightly and know some people will be disappointed but we need to look after everyone in our church family.

As there is a wider mix of age ranges at weddings and funerals, we will allow congregations to sing if they wish to do so.

Communion

Communion will be at 10.30am in St Michael's on the 4th Sunday of the month until August and we will reassess for September. Communion will be distributed as before, in one kind only.

Coffee / tea after services

At present, we will not resume serving tea/coffee.

Church Services August & Opening times

St Michael's Church, Broadway

Open 10am –4pm each day
Weekly worship 10.30am on Sunday's
1st / 2nd & 3rd Sunday Morning Worship
4th Sunday Holy Communion

St Eadburgha's Church, Broadway

Open 10am—4pm each day
6pm 2nd & 4th Sunday's Evening Prayer (1662)

St John the Baptist Church, Wickhamford

9.15am 2nd & 4th Sundays Morning Worship

St Mary's Church, Childswickham

Open each day
1st & 3rd Sunday Morning Worship
2nd and 4th Sunday Holy Communion with Rev J. Thomson

Zoom Evening Prayer

Zoom Worship Sundays 6pm
Meeting ID: 878 2679 6838
Passcode: 577647

The Friends of St Eadburgha's
present

A Concert at St Eadburgha's Church

Chipping Campden School performing

4th September—4pm

Contact Janet Mason: 01386 852570

Tickets £10 at the door.

Benefice of East Vale and Avon
Villages
is hosting a knitted Bible
Exhibition

St James Church, Badsey

14th August—22nd 11-4pm

Wed 18th 11-7pm

Free entry

Groups over 10— call Anne 01386
640801

Further information
www.eastvaleavon.com/the-knitted-bible

Parish Registers

Baptisms

Poppy & ollie at St Mary's, Chilswickham
Stanley at St Mary's, Chilswickham
Felicity & Martin at St Eadburgha's, Broadway

Weddings

Stephanie & Jason at St Michael's, Broadway
Rochelle & Michael at St Michael's, Broadway
Olivia & Jack at St Michael's Broadway
Arianna & James at St Michael's, Broadway
Hannah & Matthew at St Michael's, Broadway

Funerals and Burial of Ashes

Edna John at St Michael's, Broadway
Margaret Williams at St Eadburgha's, Broadway
Joy Mortlock at St Eadburgha's, Broadway
Eric Hicks at St Michael's, Broadway
Doreen Fisher at St Eadburgha's, Broadway
Alan Shufflebotham at St Michael's, Broadway

We were deeply sorry to learn that on 24th July 2021 we lost our good friend Martin Grinnell to Covid-19. Martin was under treatment at Worcester Royal Hospital where he passed away. He was a much loved character, entrepreneur and had been a funeral director in Evesham for many years.

We remember his family at this difficult time.



NSPCC
0808 800 5000
(24hrs)

National Domestic
Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247
(24hrs free)

Mind
0300 123 3393
(Mon-Fri 9-6)

Victim Support
0808 168 9111
(24hrs)

Cruse Bereavement
0800 808 1677
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

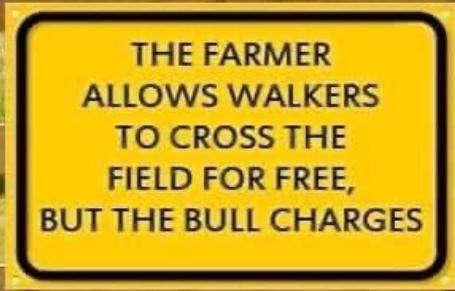
ChildLine
0800 1111
(24hrs)

Action on Elder Abuse
0808 808 8141
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

Respect - Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327
(Mon-Fri 9-5or8pm)

Samaritans
116 123
(24hrs free)

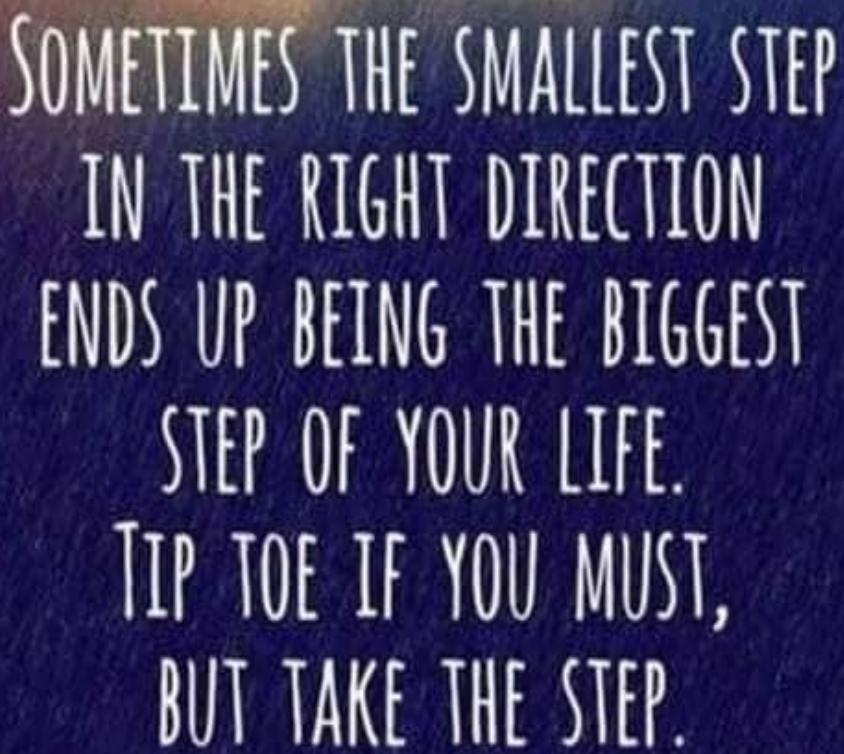
National Centre for Domestic
Violence
0207 186 8270



THE FARMER
ALLOWS WALKERS
TO CROSS THE
FIELD FOR FREE,
BUT THE BULL CHARGES

**ORGANIST WAITING FOR A SUPERTONIC
OR SUBMEDIANT CHORD**





SOMETIMES THE SMALLEST STEP
IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION
ENDS UP BEING THE BIGGEST
STEP OF YOUR LIFE.
TIP TOE IF YOU MUST,
BUT TAKE THE STEP.