

# Glastonbury Together in prayer

A news sheet for members of Glastonbury churches during the crisis caused by Covid 19



## New life, new growth

The weather has been very settled for a while and is forecast to be similar to the end of the month. It is a time to celebrate the new life in our gardens and in the fields. This new life is sometimes used to tell the story Christ rising from the grave helping us to understand.



John's Gospel uses a grain of wheat in this way in verse 12:24. Now we see seeds that are germinating rising from the ground as if from death. They will provide beauty and or food for us later in the year. The Easter season also provides a time for us to grow ourselves, to nourish and encourage our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been through a difficult year with signs that the situation may be easing. We should compare this to the story of the resurrection following the trials of Lent and the suffering of Good Friday. Use this time to reflect on the glory of God's creation as you continue your journey in faith.

## New mental health helpline set up

Second step have set up a safe space service for adults going through a mental health crisis who need extra support. The service operates in Glastonbury on Friday evenings from 6pm to 11pm. The crisis provision will provide support developing a safety plan, calming techniques, grounding and breathing exercises, active listening and will provide introductions to other services. If you know anyone who may need such support they should call Mindline on 01823 276 892 giving their details and asking for a Crisis Safe Space appointment. Health professionals can also make introductions to the service.

## Rest in Peace - rise in glory

In the last year we have been made aware of numbers of people who have died as a result of the Covid pandemic. As the situation eases we have recently heard of a number of notable people who have passed on other than through the work of the virus. Our Christian faith tells us that they have passed to a new life in Christ so although we may mourn we should also celebrate. The faith of those who die is not always clear but the recent death of the Duke of Edinburgh provided a strong example to the nation of a man of faith. Locally there has been a death of note in our Christian Community.

### Colin Anderton

Rev Colin Anderton was a Methodist minister who came to live in the area on his retirement. He continued to serve the community and living in Baltonsborough was regularly seen preaching in Glastonbury. Current circuit superintendent minister Rev Tina Swire writes: It is with both sadness and thanksgiving that we note the passing of our brother, The Rev. Colin Anderton, a much beloved brother in the faith and known to many through his preaching in Glastonbury Methodist Church. Colin was born on 28 September 1938 and was ordained in 1983. He died in the 38<sup>th</sup> year of his presbyteral ministry. He served in circuits in the north of the country, such as Huddersfield, Manchester and Blackburn. Colin came to us as a Supernumerary Minister. We were honoured to have him continue to preach and share his faith in this role. We have valued his ministry, faithfulness and wisdom in our midst. He will be greatly missed. We will continue to hold Colin's family and friends in our prayers.

# God's Living World

## Caring for our environment

The last year with lock downs and a slowing of much human activity has allowed many to become more aware of God's Creation. With less traffic bird song has been easier to hear and many have spent more time in gardens. It is a time to think of how we affect the whole of creation and how we need to act to protect the planet for future generations. It is now six years since Pope Francis wrote his encyclical on caring for the planet, time enough for us to reflect on how we should take things forward using the experiences of the last year. Talking about the loss of biodiversity the Pope said that the loss of species may impact on future needs for food, curing disease and other uses. Much of the loss of diversity is due to man, can we learn to protect what we have for the future? The Archers radio programme has an thread on "rewilding", this is not just a gimmick but a real movement to improve our environment. What might it mean here in Somerset where the land has been shaped by agriculture over the years? Left alone by man our landscape would be largely forest supporting a variety of species not just the trees. Agriculture around Glastonbury is mainly dairy with some crops grown to provide winter feed for the cattle. Over relatively short timescales the nature of this farming has changed and so has the local diversity. A century ago most farms would have grown standard apple trees, often for cider, with cattle who would have grazed around the trees. Some orchards still exist but most have been removed and where they have been replaced it has been with smaller trees more suitable for mechanical harvesting, the livestock have been moved elsewhere. Mechanisation has improved land yields but is a source of pollution and reduces the need for labour. With pollution and loss of jobs being current concerns can we adjust our consumption so that farmers can reduce these impacts whilst still meeting our needs and their own?



## The king of love my shepherd is

Nearly sixty hymns are listed on Hymnary.org written by Sir Henry Williams Baker, Bart. Living in the 19th Century he took Holy Orders in 1844 and became Vicar of Monkland Herefordshire in 1851. The good shepherd story in the lectionary leads us to his hymn:- *"The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never. I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine forever."* Reading through the hymn the second and third verses address aspects of a shepherds life. The flock is led to living water and then to verdant pasture to feed on celestial food. When they stray he rescues them carrying them home with rejoicing gently laid on his shoulder. The wording used throughout brings to mind scriptural references that must have inspired the text. In this way verse four will seem familiar as it says:- *"In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me; thy rod and staff my comfort still, thy cross before to guide me."* The hymn ends with the words *"Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever."* Which seems very appropriate for a hymn.

## A look at the Lectionary - Easter 4 / 5

The lectionary continues to look at Acts and also takes time to look at the Gospel of John which does not have its own "year" in the lectionary cycle. On the 4th Sunday the Acts reading takes part of chapter 4. In Chapter 3 Peter had healed a beggar and preached in the temple. In chapter 4 The authorities were not happy with this and arrested Peter and John so they could question them the next morning. In the set reading Peter tells them that the healing had been in the name of Jesus and then quotes scripture at them - "the stone the builders rejected has become the corner stone". They were amazed at Peter who they saw as an ordinary man. As the chapter continues they tried to threaten Peter and he asks if they thought God wanted him to obey them instead of Him? The Gospel reading for the 4th Sunday is the story from John 10 of the good shepherd who sacrifices his life for his sheep. Jesus himself is the good shepherd who knows his sheep. Going further, and referring to the later expansion of the church beyond its Jewish foundation, Jesus says that there are other sheep not in the sheepfold who will listen to his voice so that there will be one flock and one shepherd. On the fifth Sunday the agricultural theme continues with the story in John 15 of the vineyard. Pruning is relevant both in the time Jesus was speaking and now. Pruning of vines and other fruit bearing plants helps them to produce a better crop. By listening to the word of Jesus, we are told, we have been purified by the message. We become the fruitful branches that remain on the vine to produce much fruit. If we produce much fruit we are true disciples to bring glory to the Father.