

## Leam Valley Messenger



Flecknoe



Grandborough



Leamington Hastings



Willoughby

December 2020/January 2021

**Dear Friends** - I am in the midst of preparing for retirement from Leam Valley Benefice. It's a strange sensation as I have invested my energy into the people that live here, these four churches, and our school. My life now has themes of loss, sorrow, and change, all without the possibility of saying goodbye in the way I would wish, with celebration and meals together.

It took some time to come to a real decision: I knew my eyes were not so good with the computer, and my general health decreased, but I did want to serve for another two years with you. I wrestled with it, and once I had made the decision, I knew it was right; I must let go and find my way home.

So how could I approach this time? Margaret Sentamu, the wife of our ex-archbishop of York, described how important it is to say goodbyes and to grieve properly – a process that takes time. It's important to name the loss, and not just move on regardless. Covid has robbed so many people of the 'threshold' rituals, leaving school, graduation, freshers week, and losing loved ones without being able to say goodbye in hospital or care home, or to have the full funeral that would have helped the sense of closure.

We all face loss in different ways. One thing that has stayed with me over the years is to accept being uncomfortable – it's ok not to be ok. To attend to what threatens to overwhelm us is the first step to facing it and growing through the experience; perhaps the disappointment of things not fully achieved.

When I slow down and reflect, I remember my Godmother persuading me to 'give thanks in all situations'; it sounds counter-intuitive, but it works in all sorts of surprising ways. It enables me to grow in trusting the outcomes to God, the one who has promised never to leave us, or forsake us. And good friends have been so kind to me and listened when I needed to talk.

It was soothing to go to another church on a Sunday off, and receive the liturgy, the bread of Christ, the blessing. No need for me to lead or speak, but simply receive.

As for music, Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano concerto in C minor expresses the emotional roller-coaster of sadness and transition. And Sibelius' Karelia Suite expresses setting out on a March, then the tiring sadness, and finally great joy.

A good distraction has been decluttering, packing, handing over the tasks. As I pick up each mug, each card that holds memories, I try to use that moment to give thanks.

Though I don't leave until after the Christmas services, I hope to be more ready to say to myself, and to all of you, "Go well, and God be with you."

With my love and good wishes, *Anne*

## Flecknoe

**Remembrance** - Many thanks to all who contributed to the poppy display outside our church and also to 'Flecknoe Rocks' for the decorated rocks along the path up to the door. Together they made a magnificent display.

**Carol Service** - We are planning to hold a Carol Service in our church on Sunday 20th December at 6.00 pm. This will not be a normal service as we are still not allowed to sing in church. Instead we will be able to listen to carols, mouthing them to ourselves. Please come, we hope to serve socially distanced mince pies and a glass of wine after the service.

Our Holy Communion service on Christmas morning at 9.00 am will be the last taken by Rev Anne before she retires. **Please let Andrew Grant (07761 727452, text or WhatsApp or aaggrant@aol.com) know if you plan to come as Covid-19 restrictions mean we may have to limit numbers to ensure social distancing.**

## Grandborough

**Churchwarden/Organist** - Having been a Churchwarden for 12 years, with a 2 year break in between, Peter Johnson has decided that now was the right time to stand down. We are extremely appreciative for his dedication and hard work. He will continue on the PCC and, for the time being, will still cut the grass in the churchyard. After a 1½ year break, we welcome back Pauline Stratton, who has returned as our new Churchwarden.

We are also very sorry to be losing our Organist, Kay Worrall, who has decided to retire from her duties, after playing at St Peter's for many many years. She, too, will remain on the PCC.

**Pennies from Heaven** - Many thanks to everyone who has donated their 'small change.' The sum of £200 has just been collected in the village and we are very grateful.

**Renovation** – Work has started, replastering and painting the chancel and south aisle and this should all be completed by 18th December.

**Christmas Eve** - Unfortunately we will be unable to have our traditional Candlelight service this year. However, we are still planning to have the church open from 11.00 am until 5.00 pm to enable people to come in and see the decorated church with Christmas tree, crib, candlelights and floral decorations. We also have 4 organists who will be playing a selection of music throughout and a small choir will be singing for part of the time. A programme will be sent around the village, once we know what the Government and Church of England guidelines are for Christmas. This will also be advertised on Facebook as well as our web page, [www.stpetersgrandborough.co.uk](http://www.stpetersgrandborough.co.uk). Pop in at any time during the day.

## Leamington Hastings

On 24th October around 20 of us from surrounding villages and some from further afield, braved the wind and rain to take part in our now annual churchyard tidy, brought various equipment and enthusiasm, and spent the morning, bringing the new church yard up to the beautiful looking place it should be. Many thanks to all who turned up and hope to see you all again next year. It really is appreciated and makes a huge difference

Further maintenance/repair work is currently being planned and will probably start now in the New Year. The damage to the wall next to the road caused by a high sided truck pulling down a yew branch will be restored, partly funded by our insurers. Also work will start to re-bed the ridge tiles of the chancel roof and replace some damaged/missing tiles. We will also be replacing the Via Beata carving which became detached from the south porch wall.

We would like to thank all our benefactors, Friends and others for their long term contributions to maintain the church – and also express our frustration that current circumstances make it impossible to fund raise in the ways planned by the Friends at the start of the year! All contributions therefore are particularly welcome and valued enormously – thank you so much.

## Willoughby

St Nicholas continues to face challenging times with a roof in need of replacement. We are researching grants and seeking advice. The plans for the servery and disabled toilet are progressing. With a year like everyone has had, sometimes it is hard to remain upbeat and positive as we all have our own lives with personal issues and challenges. However, the journey of life is not smooth, and with prayer and fortitude we shall hopefully win through. A massive thank you goes out to those who support and give up their time to help. We couldn't do it without you. Everyone is welcome, it is a church for the village and a village needs its church.

On Saturday 5th December we want to invite people to help decorate the church for Christmas. (Lockdown Rules permitting). There is a tree inside the church which will be needing a Christmas touch. Contact Jackie Gibbard on 891191. Skylark Farms

have very kindly donated an outdoor tree and we really want people to make decorations to hang on the tree. Please support local businesses where you can.

This outdoor tree will be up in time for the Santa Trail on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December. 4.00 – 7.00 pm, £1.50 per person. Find the pictures, find the secret message, refreshments and raffle. A real community event. People from across the Benefice are invited to join in. We really want the village to get involved by decorating windows and participating. Sue Waddington has all the details and can be contacted at [cmc@willoughbyweb.net](mailto:cmc@willoughbyweb.net).

Church Services			
6th December	Grandborough Leamington Hastings	9.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion
13th December	Flecknoe Willoughby Grandborough Chapel	9.00 am 11.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Crib Service Evensong
20th December	Leamington Hastings Grandborough	9.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion WtW
24th December	Grandborough Willoughby Leamington Hastings	11.00 am 9.30 pm 9.30 pm	Open Day until 5.00 pm Midnight in Bethlehem Midnight in Bethlehem
25th December	Flecknoe Grandborough	9.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion
3rd January	Grandborough Leamington Hastings	9.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion
10th January	Flecknoe Willoughby Grandborough Chapel	9.00 am 11.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Family service Evensong
17th January	Leamington Hastings Grandborough	9.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion WtW
19th January	C of GS, Broadwell	9.30 am	Healing Service
24th January	Flecknoe Willoughby	9.00 am 11.00 am	Breakfast Service Holy Communion

The Editor would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy Christmas and trust we will all be able to spend some quality time with our families over the festive season. With best wishes for good health in 2021.

Hopefully we will be back to some normality in the New Year and be able to start publishing the Messenger every two months. The next issue will be for February/March 2021. *Dorothy Johnson*

**The enclosed Christmas card is sent with good wishes from the joint Anglican and Methodist churches in the Benefice for a blessed Christmas and New Year.**