

## VICAR'S LETTER

### *The view from the study.*

I am frequently perplexed by the way people are so easily moved to outrage nowadays, especially on social media platforms. Often, when you look into the issue that has so enraged them, you may find that the context of whatever was said gives a different interpretation. Yet that does not seem to matter – once outrage is sparked it spreads like wildfire and nobody seems to care about the truth of the matter.

This is unfortunate, as context really does matter. Take the example of a photograph I once saw of a child holding a Nazi propaganda poster. It looked shocking, but as part of a school project on the second world war it made sense. Or think about statistics: this Easter we had 30 in church. In 2019, the last time we were able to have an Easter service, it was about 120. I really hope that future researchers will consider the context of the Coronavirus pandemic and the regulations currently in force, or they might conclude that there was a particularly dreadful vicar in post who must have driven people out of church!

Context matters when it comes to statistics and historical records, just as it does when it comes to opposing what someone has said on social media, just as it does when it comes to interpreting the scriptures. We have just celebrated Easter, reflecting once more on the death and resurrection of Christ. When we think of the crucifixion alone, it can move us deeply, or we may have questions about why it happened and what it signifies. But it helps if we know the scripture in John 3.14-15: *And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.* And to understand that we need to go back to the Book of Numbers, chapter 21: many Israelites were dying because they were bitten by poisonous snakes, so God commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent and raise it up on a pole, so that anyone who was bitten could look upon that serpent and would live.

Suddenly, from the deceitful serpent in the Garden of Eden right through to the raising up of Christ on the cross, a wealth of symbolism falls into place and makes more sense of that day when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

The concept of speaking 'your truth' is an odd one. You may have your interpretation, but the truth is something far trickier to pin down. If we want to understand what the Christian faith is all about, let's make sure we get the context right – and read the source material in the Bible!

Every blessing,

*Neil.*

## **Annual Meetings**

**16<sup>th</sup> May, 11.00am (straight after church service).**

The **Annual Meeting of Parishioners** (for the election of churchwardens) and the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)** will take place after the main service on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May, starting after the morning service around 11.00am. *Please note this date is subject to review if there is any change in the restrictions or advice arising from the coronavirus pandemic.*

Nomination forms are available in church for those wishing to stand for election as Churchwardens or Parochial Church Council (PCC) members. Forms may also be obtained electronically from the PCC secretary by contacting Liz Emmott at: [eaemmott@hotmail.com](mailto:eaemmott@hotmail.com)

To attend and vote at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, you must be on the church or civil electoral roll for Grimsargh. To participate in the APCM or stand for office as a PCC member, you must be on the church electoral roll.

At the APCM we will elect up to 5 members of PCC.

We will also appoint sidespersons to assist the churchwardens, with a special focus on the ministry of welcome on Sunday mornings.

There are no elections to Deanery Synod this year, but there is still one vacancy.

PCC members will need to complete a declaration that they are ‘fit and proper persons’ to serve as trustees of a charity (which is the status of the PCC, even though we are not registered as a separate charity). They will also be asked to complete a basic introduction to safeguarding.

May I take this opportunity of expressing my personal thanks to all those who have, in any way, served the parish over the last 12 months. Thank you for being prepared to offer your time and skills in the service of Christ through his church here in Grimsargh.

## **Covid-safe Services**

In order to maintain our services in a safe manner, please remember the basics:

- social distancing (both in the church and outside)
- hand hygiene (use sanitiser)
- face coverings to be worn in church (covering mouth *and* nose)

It is also important that we all keep an eye on our own health, so if you are unwell, and especially showing symptoms of Covid-19, you should be self-isolating and seeking medical advice. If you have been advised to self-isolate due to contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, you must not attend church. Also please consider whether it is wise to be coming to church if your own health remains vulnerable.

Some people have been coming to services but not receiving communion physically – this is perfectly acceptable if you are concerned about any risk of hand contact. We are using wafers instead of bread in order to minimise hand contact with the sacrament. In getting the communion wafers ready, my hands are always washed and sanitised before touching them, a face covering is worn, and then the wafers remain covered during the service. They are only uncovered again when my face covering has been put back on and hands sanitised again. A spoon is normally used to offer the bread to each communicant. This mitigates the theoretical risk of passing on the coronavirus through contact with the bread.

Ours is quite a small church with narrow aisles and various pinch points, so please do give due regard to keeping your distance at all times. Remember also this applies outside.

As you will know, the advice about dealing with Covid 19 changes quite rapidly at times, so please be prepared for new instructions and guidance. The diocese issues regular updates, following government and Church of England instructions, which we will implement as required.

Sunday services are at 10.00am and there is a midweek Thursday morning Communion at 11.00am. At present we are not requiring people to book in, but if numbers increase, we may have to consider this option. Meanwhile, apologies if we have a particularly busy Sunday and you are not permitted to enter the building. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Confirmation**

We look forward to celebrating the much-delayed confirmation service on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 4.30pm. With ongoing Coronavirus restrictions, this is likely to be family only, but please remember all those being confirmed in your prayers: Joe Barker, Rob Blatcher, Holly Dewhurst, Josh Holt, Theo Rae, Beth Rowland and Livvy Smith.

### **Your Magazine**

Thank you to all who have renewed their subscriptions. The cost is now £6 for 10 issues. We will be **combining the Dec and Jan issues**, so the magazine will reduce to 10 editions a year, rather than 11 at present.

If you wish to contribute items for the magazine, please send them to Bernard Mackley or Nellie Cowell. Anyone willing to help with the distribution of the magazine, please speak to Nellie.

You may be aware that the diocesan newsletter (The See) is no longer produced, but from the next issue, we will be offering a new insert: 'The Sign', published by The Church Times / Hymns Ancient and Modern. This will feature a range of articles of interest to readers of the parish magazine

### **Website**

Thanks to Bernard Mackley, we are now developing a new website. You can find it at: [www.e-voice.org.uk/grimsarghstmichael](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/grimsarghstmichael)

It is still under development and needs more material adding, but it is in operation and can be accessed. The previous website will cease to function when the BT Community Kit service ends later in May (though it should redirect to our new one for a while).

Please remember also that we have a new facebook page. The previous one was a closed group, but this is accessible to all (please do bear this in mind if you make any comments on the page). Thank you to Jayne Woollam for managing our facebook presence.

### **“Whit Walks and Afternoon Teas”, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

During lockdown, many of us have been taking to the highways and byways and have enjoyed discovering the local lesser travelled roads. On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, we are hoping to lead several socially distanced guided walks, in small groups, around Grimsargh, before heading back to Church for a delicious boxed afternoon tea, kindly supplied by Sarah Putland and family. The cost of the walk and the tea will be £5.

There will be several short circular routes, some buggy and some dog friendly. What better way to explore Lancashire's countryside than a short walk in the lovely Spring sunshine? This year has made us all realise how valuable fresh air and exercise can be, and you won't have to travel miles to enjoy several great walking routes on our doorstep. Time and routes to follow in May's magazine.

If you would like to sign up for the walk, please contact any "FAF" member, or call Jayne on 01772 – 704112 or email, [jaynewoollam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jaynewoollam@hotmail.co.uk)

## MOTHERS' UNION

This month I feel it is appropriate to reflect on the passing of Prince Philip and to remember the Queen in her grief. May she be comforted by the many happy memories she has over the years they had together. We ask God to strengthen her and be very close to her. I would like to pass on some statements from the Mothers Union as they summarize much of what I would like to say this month.

At Mothers' Union we share the royal family's sorrow at the death of Prince Philip. A stalwart supporter and helpmeet for the Queen, he brought humour and insight to his public role, and kept the royal family on course through the many storms of recent years, as well as sailing through calmer waters, in keeping with his Naval background.

He exemplified Mothers' Union's own beliefs about the value of family life, through care for his children and grandchildren and his long marriage to the Queen. Faith is also central to the royal family, as it is to our members, as a Christian movement. Prince Philip fulfilled his faith role publicly and privately through his friendships with Church of England clerics.



Reflecting on and giving thanks the long marriage of the Queen and Prince Philip, The Mothers Union would like to congratulate Bernard and Marlene on their Golden Wedding anniversary this month. We ask for God's blessing on them and wish them good health and many more years together.

The members of the MU gifted them the Bee and Bug House, shown left.



Finally in our own group we send birthday greeting this month to Frances Gornall. She will celebrate her birthday on 30th May. When I called to see her. She said she's doing well after her cataract operation and is surprised how bright everything looks now! She will soon have her other eye done. She's very grateful to the NHS for all their care. We had a long chat about her growing up in Grimsargh and her

being at school with Philip Cowell. Nellie has found this photo! Frances is on the left and Philip Cowell in the middle. Happy memories!

**And of course to St . Michael's Mothers Union celebrates its 90th birthday this year!**

We feel that we cannot let this special event pass without celebrating in some way. The vicar has kindly agreed to incorporate this milestone into his usual Thursday morning service and we would like to encourage all members to attend if you are able so that we can come together in celebration. Let's face it, we can all do with something to lift our spirits and celebrate. There will be cake, and more! We look forward to seeing you all !

**Put it in your diaries .....**

**Ascension Day Service in church**

**Thursday 13 May**

**11.00am Holy Communion. ”**

Love Ruth

### **SCHOOL REPORT**

There have been 5 school weeks since the Government lifted restrictions on children attending school and so it has been great getting to know all the children, especially those who hadn't been attending as children of critical workers. We are still operating in class bubbles but with the recent good weather, I have been able to spend some time outside chatting with the children which I have really enjoyed and am looking forward to continuing to do. I have also enjoyed being able to see and speak more easily with the children's parents/ carers at drop-off time as I am no longer requesting that masks are worn outside on school grounds.

In the last few weeks, our new school electronic signing in/ out system has been installed which increases safety, especially in case of a fire and our new school website has also gone 'live'. We will be adding to the website content over the coming weeks and months. I have also sent a welcome letter to our new starters- we are really excited to meet the children and their families and we are in the process of organising an induction evening and our induction arrangements.

We recently had two very special visitors– Brenda & Gertrude. Two newly born calves! Our children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 paid the calves a special visit and enjoyed spending time with them. They also enjoyed exploring the farmer's tractor!

We are looking forward to what the summer term has to offer- we have many exciting plans ahead. Gathering together as a school community in our hall to Worship is something we have all missed, as despite continuing to Worship each week virtually, there can be no substitute for doing so in person.

On behalf of our school staff, I hope our school community continues to support each other and remains safe.

Kind Regards

Mr Stuart Booth

Headteacher

# JIGSAW CLUB

For the children of St Michael's, Grimsargh.



As lockdown starts to ease, people are looking forward to seeing loved ones again in person that they may not have seen for many months.

Have a read of John 15:9-17.

Think about how you like to feel love? Do you like a nice cuddle?  
Spending time doing something nice together?

How do you show your love to other people?

Why not have a go at baking these biscuits to give to a loved one when you get to see them? You could use some coloured icing to decorate them however you like!

150g plain flour  
50g caster sugar  
100g butter.



- Mix the flour and sugar together.
- Rub in the butter.
- Bring the mixture together to form a dough.
- Roll out to 5mm thick.
- Use cutters to cut into whatever shape you would like!
- Bake at 180°C for 6-10 minutes.
- Transfer to a cooling rack and leave until cold before decorating!

## CHURCH COLLECTIONS

March	21st	£180.61	
March	28th	£69.00	
April	2nd	£48.56	Good Friday
April	4th	£329.50	Easter Day
April	11th	£129.20	

## FLOWER ROTA

May	2nd	Vacant
May	9th	Vacant
May	16th	L Fisk
May	23rd	N Cowell
May	30th	Vacant

## SIDESPERSONS, READERS AND COFFEE ROTAS

	8.30am	10.00am	Communion Assistant	Readers	Coffee
May	2nd			M Lamberty Vicar	
May	9th			B Holt Vicar	
May	16th			B Mackley Vicar	
May	23rd			D Rusling Vicar	
May	20th			J Eccles Vicar	

### Funeral

**Jesus said “I am the Resurrection and the Life”**

**Burial of Ashes**  
April 10th

*‘Deep peace of the Son of Peace be with you always’*  
Sylvia Alma Billington, 76 years.

## ST MICHAEL'S DIARY DATES FOR MAY

*The coronavirus situation may change again - apologies for any sudden alterations*

- 2nd 5th Sunday of Easter**  
10.00am Holy Communion
- 6th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 9th 6th Sunday of Easter**  
10.00am Holy Communion
- 13th Ascension Day**  
11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
With Mothers' Union
- 16th 7th Sunday of Easter**  
10.00am Holy Communion  
11.00am Annual Meetings
- 20th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 22nd** Whit walks around the Parish (see feature in magazine)
- 23rd Pentecost (Whitsun)**  
10.00am Holy Communion
- 27th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 30th Trinity Sunday**  
10.00am Holy Communion

**DEADLINE for the June magazine 15th May.**  
**Articles to be sent to Mrs Cowell and/or B Mackley**