

VICAR'S LETTER

The view from the study.

Poor Bruno – he tries his best. Since last month, when I introduced you to our loveable yet silly boy Bruno, we have been working with a trainer. He has helped us understand some of Bruno's behaviours and showed us how to use a different type of lead to ensure better control.

It is largely about knowing your dog better and knowing how best to handle him on his walks. One thing we have learned is that Bruno doesn't need to be pack leader. He naturally tries to occupy that position, but when he is shown that he isn't, and doesn't have to take control, he behaves so much better: he is less stressed and feels safer.

The last year has surely shown us that we are barely in control of life. When I wrote to the congregation recently I referred to a passage from Isaiah 30.15-18 that begins: *For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you refused and said, 'No! We will flee upon horses' — therefore you shall flee!*

Of course we are right to praise human ingenuity – after all, it is people of science who have brought us the vaccines to help lift the dreadful burden of the ongoing pandemic. It is right to celebrate this huge achievement. We know, however, that further variants and future pandemic threats have the power to turn the tide back against humanity. Ultimately, we need to recognise that although we may find answers, we do not have the control we imagine. Isaiah urges the people to remember that, in the end, only God has control. If the people wait upon him, listen to him, walk faithfully with him, they will find a way through the dangers they face from the enemies around them. Their own strategies are not going to win the day.

As we come to the great celebration of Easter, think of Bruno: he doesn't need to feel he is in control, and nor do we. The empty tomb declares that mankind's darkest excesses could not overcome the light of Christ. The self interest of humanity was no match for the selfless love of God. The risen Christ is a powerful reminder that we do not have control. Nor do we need to seek it, for in the end we can only rest and rejoice in the light and love of God, who really does have everything covered - for eternity.

Wishing you a very Happy Easter. May you know the joy and peace of the risen Christ.

Every blessing,

Neil.

Annual Meetings

16th 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 16th 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 will be available in church and online for those wishing to stand for election as Churchwardens or Parochial Church Council (PCC) members. 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, which is being revised this month (see separate article from Jenny Soper).

At the APCM we will elect members of PCC. Of current members, three are coming to the end of their term of office (three years) and will need to stand for re-election if they wish to continue. There are two vacancies unfilled from last year. Therefore, up to five members may be elected at the APCM.

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.

Neil

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 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

Having been postponed twice, the service is now scheduled for **Sunday 6th June 2021**, at 4.30pm with Bishop Jill.

Your Magazine

Those who pay an annual subscription will be asked to **renew this month**. The cost is £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.

Thank you to all who help with the magazine, especially Bernard, Nellie and James, along with the great team of distributors.

If you wish to contribute items for the magazine, please send them to Bernard, Nellie or the vicar.

MOTHERS' UNION

Easter Greetings to you all! May the power & love of the risen Jesus fill your lives with hope and strength ! As things are still very uncertain it is good to be reassured by the Easter message. The vaccine programme offers us hope too that we will soon be able to see friends again, but 'til then we will find new ways of getting to know each other!

This month's birthday girls are Jean Harrison and Shirley Brown. Speaking to the birthday girls each month is so exciting, re-minds me of a treasure hunt, discovering for hidden treasures and that each one of us is like treasure. God says 'You are precious in my sight .. and I love you' Isaiah 43:4.

So what have I discovered about Jean Harrison? She is very well-known in Grimsargh. Before retiring, she worked in the Post Office for over 14 years, working with six different bosses. During Lockdown she, and her husband, Ken have become

'hooked' on jigsaws! They have completed over 30 jigsaws during the winter Lockdown. Although they find it addictive and a good way to relax together she is looking forward to getting out to do gardening, once the warmer weather arrives when the jigsaws will be packed away!

Shirley Brown's birthday is on April 30th. She moved to Lancashire from her

beloved Newcastle, (I love her Geordie accent!) to Blackpool initially, then to Longridge with her husband's job in the Water Authority 60 years ago. She has a very big close-knit family... 2 daughters, 8 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren! They are all keen sports people. Her daughters competing in the Great North Run and her grandson Carl, coaching the successful Preston Girls League to mention just a couple of their activities. She is very grateful to her friends in Grimsargh and the family for all their phone calls during Lockdown.

I receive many clips by WhatsApp. Some are thought provoking and worth passing on, I particularly like this one about children catching up!

So as we place our families and friends in His hands, we remember particularly Hilda who has been in Chorley hospital but is now back in Alston Lodge. I would like to end in a great verse from

Yes, children DO need to catch up!

- ★ They need to catch up with their Grandparents.
- ★ They need to catch up with their cousins.
- ★ They need to catch up with their friends.
- ★ They need to catch up with visits to family.
- ★ They need to catch up with swimming and sports clubs.
- ★ They need to catch up with trips to the trampoline park, the bike park, the play park.
- ★ They need to catch up with trips to the cinema and the theatre.
- ★ They need to catch up with birthday parties, playdates and sleepovers.
- ★ They need to catch up with their scouting groups.
- ★ They need to catch up with trips to the zoo, wildlife centres and aquariums.
- ★ They need to catch up with visits to museums and castles.
- ★ They need to catch up with trips to the beach.
- ★ They need to catch up with caravan and camping holidays.

Yes, they DO need to catch up this summer, but what they don't need is more school work. TEACHERS also need the break - they have worked through every lockdown and also deserve some 'catching up' time so they can return to work in September refreshed and be able to really have an impact.

Everybody's mental well being is important.

Romans 8. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present, nor the future, nor any powers can separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

Happy Easter to you all.

Love Ruth

Golden Wedding

Congratulations to Marlene and Bernard Mackley who celebrate their Golden Wedding on the 17th April. They were married at St Mary's Church in Preston and immediately came to live in Grimsargh.

It was several years before they began to worship here at St Michael's (having continued to attend St Mary's) but are now both very active in our church community.



“FAF Zoom Meeting”, Wednesday 7th April 10am

The first meeting of “FAF” was highly productive and great fun! If you would like to come along and join us, albeit virtually at the moment, please contact Nellie, Ruth, Penny, Hazel, Eileen Parker or Jayne. Hopefully, we will be able to meet face to face in the very near future. We are busily planning lots of fun fundraising events and activities, and warmly welcome new faces!

“Whit Walks and Afternoon Teas”, Saturday 22nd 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 22nd 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

SCHOOL REPORT

On March the 8th we were extremely happy to welcome back all our children and families. Our new members of staff had only spent one day with their full classes before lockdown restrictions were imposed by the Government. I had also only spent one day with a full school as the new headteacher so it was great to welcome back our families and great to see so many smiling faces as our children arrived at school.

During these first few weeks with a full school, we have focused on trying to ensure children are happy and safe. Teachers have spent time talking to children about their lockdown experiences and about the importance of talking and sharing worries.

We are looking forward to...

- Celebrating Comic Relief on Friday 19th March and taking part in our very own ‘Grimsargh Groove Danceathlon’!
- On March 23rd, we will be reflecting on the past year of Covid restrictions as part of the National Day of Reflection. Each class will be completing an activity to as a way of reflecting.
- We are excited about celebrating British Science Week and have a variety of activities planned. The official week has been and gone but we decided to celebrate this towards the end of term and with all children back and more settled into school routines. We are particularly excited about our virtual visits with some of our parents/ carers who have volunteered to talk to us about their job and what it entails.

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.

This is a fantastic range of ideas taken from the Blackburn Diocese board of Education website. Have fun doing as many as you can!

Outdoor EASTER



Outdoor Easter Challenge: how many can you do? Tick the box next to each challenge once you've completed it.

Name of Explorer:.....



Egg Seed Bombs

Make seed bombs using scrap paper and seeds (instructions below*). Scatter in your garden & watch the flowers grow.

Discuss the new life we have in Jesus.



Giant Birds Nest

Using lots of different objects, (twigs, paddling pool, brown blanket, etc.), create a giant birds nest and snuggle in it.

Talk about the ways God cares for us and looks after us.



Mudcakes

Get messy and make mudcakes - pick some pretty flowers to decorate them with.

Thank God for this season of new life, growth and the food that we eat.



Rock Rubbing

Making rock rubbings with paper & crayons to reveal it's pattern. Discuss how it would have felt to find out that the rock had been rolled away to reveal the empty tomb. Jesus is alive!



Go Running

Have fun and run around a field - enjoy it!

Thank God that through His Son Jesus, we have been set free; death's curse has lost it's grip on us.



Nature Impressions

Mould discs out of play dough or clay. Find natural items, press them into the discs then lift them off to reveal an impression.

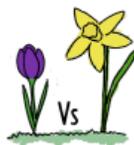
What impression does Jesus leave on our lives?



Garden Bunting

Make bunting to decorate your garden or outdoor space (see inspiration below*).

Write or draw prayers on the bunting for people or places that are suffering.



Crocus vs Daffodils

Go on a walk and see which flower you spot the most. If you're in a group why not split into teams and assign each team a flower to look for.

Praise God for creation.



Poohsticks

Enjoy spending some time playing this classic game.

Whilst holding a stick say sorry for things you have done wrong. Drop it and remember that God washes those things away.



Bird Feeder

Make a bird feeder; either a whole seed fat ball or one to put loose seeds in. Research ideas. It's important that we feed ourselves with God's word from the Bible. When do you do this?

*Instructions for all these items can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/shop>

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

FLOWER ROTA

April	4th	Easter Flowers
April	11th	Vacant
April	18th	M & B Mackley & N Cowell
April	25th	Vacant

SIDESPERSIONS, READERS AND COFFEE ROTAS

	8.30am	10.00am	Communion Assistant	Readers	Coffee
April 4th				B Holt Vicar	
April 11th				J Eccles Vicar	
April 18th				D Rusling Vicar	
April 24th				N Cowell Vicar	

Funeral

March 16th
March 17th

Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life"

Glynis Elizabeth Hill, 66 years.
Roy Vickers, 76 years.

Burial of Ashes

March 11h

'Deep peace of the Son of Peace be with you always'
May Taylor, 99 years.

ST MICHAEL'S DIARY DATES FOR MARCH

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

- 1st Maunday Thursday**
7.00pm Holy Communion (No Morning Service)
- 2nd Good Friday**
10.30am Family Worship for Good Friday
- 3rd Easer Eve**
7.30pm Easter Vigil
- 4th Easter Day**
10.00am Holy Communion
- 8th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 11th 2nd Sunday of Easter**
10.00am Holy Communion
- 15th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 18th 3rd Sunday of Easter**
10.00am Holy Communion
- 22nd** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 25th 4th Sunday of Easter**
10.00am Holy Communion
- 29th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

DEADLINE for the May magazine 12th April.
Articles to be sent to Mrs Cowell and/or B Mackley