

Parish Church of  
**St. Edmund King & Martyr**  
West Kingsdown



**Rector:**

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## Newsletter 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (15)

Dear Friends

As I write this newsletter the rain is pouring down outside, and it hasn't let up all day. The sky is grey, and my garden resembles more of a duck pond than the usual football pitch. I have to admit to having not ventured outside the door very much today. I feel so much better if I have at least been out in the fresh air for a short while. Yesterday the weather wasn't that much better but there were 'let ups' in the rain and I did manage to go down to church to record this morning's service. It was lovely to be down in the peaceful surroundings of the churchyard. I took the two pictures below just outside my vestry door, I know they are not very clear but they are the first signs of the snowdrops appearing from the deepness of the earth. Perhaps with a magnifying glass you can just see the white bell flowers



This beautiful photograph is one that Jon took this week. I'm not sure where he took it but it shows clearly the growing snowdrops. It is so appropriate that the snowdrops are appearing at this time because they are also known as Candlemas Bells. They are the earliest flowering plant of the year. According to folklore an angel gave them as a sign of hope to Eve, who wept in despair over the cold death that had entered the world. Many Christians see the flower as a symbol of Jesus bringing hope into the world. How appropriate for where we are as a world at the moment. We certainly need those signs of hope. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February we celebrate the festival of Candlemas. As a Christian Festival it can be transferred



to the nearest Sunday and so today is Candlemas Sunday. It was the day of the year when all the candles that were to be used in church during the coming year were brought into church and a blessing was said over them – so it was the Festival Day (or “mass”) of the candles. In times gone by it was the custom to place a lighted candle in every window on Candlemas Day to bring light to the long dark winter. In those days’ candles were of great importance not just because there was no electricity but because some people thought they gave protection against plague, illness and famine. Candlemas marks the midway point of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the Spring equinox. Candlemas is also the day on which we are told we can predict the end of winter. There is great HOPE! Of course, for Christians, candles are symbolic of the light of Christ in our lives which links in beautifully to the other name of this festival, ‘The Presentation of Christ in the Temple’. If you can do link into the Eucharist service recorded in our beautiful church for this occasion either via this link <https://you.tu.be/3tHxlyVKTKA> or via the link on our website [www.st-edmunds.co.uk](http://www.st-edmunds.co.uk)

This is a still photo as we prepared for worship. You will see that as well as the lit up stable scene, reminding us of Christ, the light of the world that the candle stand was full with lighted candles bringing light into the darkness of our world.



### **Worship**

A reminder of other sources that you can link into -

Rochester cathedral, (which is closed for worship) is live streaming worship twice a week, a Sunday Eucharist at 11am and Choral Evensong at 5.30pm on a Thursday. [www.rochestercathedral.org](http://www.rochestercathedral.org) On the top left-hand side of the Home page there is a box ‘Online service’, click here. The Church of England also hold online services on a Sunday and throughout the week [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

If you are without internet remember that you can watch Songs of Praise on BBC1 at 1.15pm each Sunday. I have managed to catch up with several people by phone this week and each one of them told me how they enjoyed watching Songs of Praise on a Sunday afternoon and, because they were in their own homes, they were able to sing along with the hymns.

### **Morning Prayer Readings**

Date	Psalms	Old Testament	New Testament
31.01.21	71:1-6, 15-17	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Mark 1:40-end
01.02.21	57, 96	Hosea ch9	1Cor 12:12-end
02.02.21	48, 146	Exodus 13:1-16	Romans 12:1-5
03.02.21	119:1-32	Hosea 11:1-11	1 Cor 14:1-19
04.02.21	14,15,16	Hosea 11:12-12-end	1 Cor 14:1-19
05.02.21	17, 19	Hosea 13:1-14	1 Cor 16:1-9
06.02.21	20, 21, 13	Hosea ch 14	1 Cor 16:10-end

## **Our beautiful church**

I am very fortunate that I am still able to get to our church in the woods to keep a check on the building as well as record services. Each time I go in I am reminded of how lucky we are to have such a beautiful place to call our spiritual home. It is so lovingly cared for, even during this time of closure people have been going in to keep it clean and to make sure there are flowers in place. Thank you to the flower ladies especially Pauline and to all those on the cleaning rota.

During the whole of the Christmas and Epiphany season we have kept a light shining in the crib scene so that anyone looking through the window in the main door will be drawn to Christ the light of the world shining out into the darkness of the world. The crib scene will be taken down on Tuesday afternoon.

## **Prayer**

So often the more elderly in our congregation say they wish there were something that they could do, especially at this time when they are not able to get out and down to church. I can't emphasise enough that there is something that we ALL can do from our own homes. We can PRAY.

This week all clergy were sent this email from Bishop James and Bishop Simon. "Following the sad news of 100,000 Covid related deaths this week, the Archbishops have written a letter encouraging people **to spend a short time in prayer and reflection at 6pm each day from February 1, praying for the victims of the pandemic, those on the front line and the public bodies and private businesses that make up our common life.**

It seems fitting to begin this season of prayer on the eve of Candlemas, when we recall Anna and Simeon and how they embraced the presence of God in a disciplined spirit of patient waiting and intercessory prayer for the hope of the Messiah.

If you are able to, please could you encourage as many people as possible to join you in this venture. You can find all the resources you need at: [www.churchofengland.org/resources/prayer-nation](http://www.churchofengland.org/resources/prayer-nation)"

"I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:1).

With best wishes

+James,  
Bishop of Rochester

+Simon,  
Bishop of Tonbridge

For those of you unable to access the internet for the resources I print two prayers for you to use.

**Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.**

**Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ.**

**Rest your weary ones.**

**Bless your dying ones.**

**Soothe your suffering ones.  
Pity your afflicted ones.  
Shield your joyous ones, and all for your love's sake.  
Amen.**

*Attributed to St. Augustine*

**Gracious God,  
as we remember before you the thousands  
who have died,  
surround us and all who mourn with your  
strong compassion.  
Be gentle with us in our grief,  
protect us from despair,  
and give us grace to persevere  
and face the future with hope  
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.  
Amen.**

**R.I.P. Brian Jones** - advanced notice

The funeral of Brian Jones will take place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February. Brian was a member of our 8am congregation who had a love of the Book of Common Prayer and attended our First Sunday of the month BCP service. If any of you would like to pay your final respects the cortège will be leaving Mitchem Close at 12pm and heading down past the Co-op and out on to the A20 heading down towards Brands Hatch and then in through the main entrance of Brands through the circuit past the track and out the back entrance on to Scratchers Lane and then heading on to Vinters Park Crematorium at Maidstone.

### **Our wonderful community**

If you have been offered an appointment for a vaccine and are unable to get to the location, please phone me. One of our congregation has kindly offered to help.

### **Birthdays**

There is nobody on my list for this coming week. If you are celebrating a birthday this week I hope you have a lovely day. Remember I can only wish you a Happy Birthday if you have given me your details.

I hope you all have a good week.



**Every Blessing Rev Sarah**