

...a letter to a recently bereaved friend continues

Honesty can make our best prayers

Talking isn't all bad and you are fortunate to have some friends who raise the subject of Peter, referring to him by name, acknowledging his foibles and even his imperfections. Let these good friends know that you appreciate their strong love.

Continue to rage and weep, letting it all hang out when you need to and that includes being honest about your faith seeming to let you down. Such honesty can make our best prayers. God can take your real feelings and your honest questions and doubts. Remember Job and Jesus. At the point of agony the experience of abandonment by someone who is supposed to love you is authentic. Besides, to challenge and cry your questions to God says that you still believe he is there.

I loved him too

Apologies for such a long letter but it all seems so important. When we meet up next week we can cry and laugh together. I loved him too.

Yours ever

Len



FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

St Andrew, Rockbourne

9th November	Jill Ellis (at Poole Crematorium)
1st December	Monty Wilcox
18th January	Robert Snowball (Bertie)

St Leonard, Whitsbury

24th November	Ian Elton
27th January	Nick Locock

NB. For general enquiries please contact, in the first instance, the Benefice Team Administrator for the four parishes of Western Downland, Harriet Roe. Tel. (01725) 519220. Email: harriet_tazzi@hotmail.com

For all pastoral enquiries including baptisms, marriages, funerals and other related matters, please contact the Rector, Rev'd Les Player, The Rectory, Mill End, Damerham, SP6 3HU (01725) 518642.

For information concerning individual parishes including matters of a general nature, please contact the Churchwarden: -

Damerham	John Godber (01425 650044)	Cathy Godber (01425 650044)
Martin	Fran Eardley (01725) 519423	
Rockbourne	Patrick Thompson (01725) 518246	
Whitsbury	Chris Harper (01725) 518324	Chris Cobb-Smith (01725) 518313

THE COURIER

Please send contributions for the next Courier to the Editor, Midge Connell meconnell53@gmail.com.

News and Views from the Church of England
in Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and Whitsbury

THE COURIER

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2021

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland



credit: Marcia Mitchell watercolour.

The Government recently announced that 2020 had seen the most excess deaths since the Second World War. How do we think of those who are bereaved?

Canon Nigel Cumming offers a shortened version of an imaginary letter written by the Revd. Len Lunn to someone recently bereaved.

My dear Mags,

Thank you so much for your letter. You seem to be surprised that you feel confused and disorientated and not at all yourself. You do, however, seem to be clinging to your real feelings and grieving in the way that you need to—regardless of the expectations of others. Being in some turmoil is normal, this is the biggest loss of your life and changes everything.

Grief is a sign of love

Those who have sent you cards saying things like, 'death is nothing at all' and, 'he is only in the next room' are well-meaning but as you say just very wrong. Peter's death is everything and your pain is probably the greatest that you will ever feel and will never completely leave you. If there is any comfort at this time it may be your insight that your grief is a sign and expression of your love for Peter, which is why you don't want to get over it. Time may bring some healing but who wants to be healed of love?

Try to forgive those friends and neighbours that cross the road or pretend not to have seen you in Tesco's because they don't know what to say. Be a bit selfish; don't worry about protecting yourself even to the point of being a little short with those who go on. Even insensitive folk are normally forgiving of the bereaved. When you feel like it, you now have the perfect excuse to indulge some of your innate eccentricities.

Yes, you are entitled to have those odd moments of fun when you seem to have forgotten that he has gone. Just ignore those who think that you don't cry enough or indeed those who think that you cry too much. Day by day trust your instincts and your own feelings.

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IN MEMORIAM

As we approach the anniversary of the first national lockdown, we will be sharing in a service of commemoration for all who have lost their lives during the current pandemic; both those who have died from the direct effects of catching the virus, and those who have died under the constraints of separation from family in care homes or hospitals from other illnesses, including some not diagnosed or treated. Although this is not the end of our story, and a further service will be held when we can gather physically without restriction, this will be an important moment of remembrance.

A SIMPLE AFFAIR

This year we will not be able to meet on Ash Wednesday for our usual Humble Lunch, which in recent years has raised funds to provide medical support for poor communities in Sudan and South Sudan. However, you can still participate and donate. On Ash Wednesday have a simple soup meal (either lunch or dinner) and donate the cost of your normal meal – or an additional donation – to: Lloyds Bank (Salisbury Branch) sort code 30-97-41, Account no. 00007237 (name: Salisbury DBF), marking your donation: 'Medical Link Fund'.



SHROVE TUESDAY

Don't forget to make your pancakes!
This year Shrove Tuesday is 16th February.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

All meeting via Zoom

8th February 6.30pm Whitsbury PCC
15th February 3.00pm Rockbourne PCC

TUESDAY REFLECTION & PRAYER

We meet each Tuesday at 9.30am using a simple structure, offering a 20-minute space for reflection and prayer, based around the daily scripture reading, a little liturgy and a brief thought. To join us click here:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/87190762729>.

Meeting ID: 8719076 2729 Passcode: 325626

FAITH ROOM

Meets on the following dates: Thursday 11th & 25th Feb;
11th & 25th March <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85457354869>

Meeting ID: 854 5735 4869 Passcode 677505

SNOWDROPS AT ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Now is the time to enjoy a peaceful outdoor interlude in our churchyard with its beautiful carpet of snowdrops. The Church is currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic so our usual fundraising weekend of fellowship and refreshments is not possible but if you are able to make a donation to St George's Church we would be immensely grateful. Please contact the Treasurer, Tom Harris by email teharris@btinternet.com or send a cheque to him at Laurel Cottage, South End, Damerham, Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 3HS

ROCKBOURNE THERMOMETER SIGN OF HOPE & HEALTH



We are deeply grateful to all who responded so generously to the appeal letter distributed in Rockbourne relating to urgent repairs on the tower at St Andrew's. £75,000 has so far been pledged. This is an encouraging first step, allowing us to begin serious preparations for the commencement of the works. However, significantly more funding will be needed. If you have not so far responded, but could help support this vital work, please do make a donation. You can donate directly to St Andrew's Church, Rockbourne via: **Lloyds Bank (Ringwood branch) Sort code 30-97-08, Account number 01237750**, indicating your donation is for **The Tower Appeal** or via cheque to: **The Churchwarden, Priory Cottage, Rockbourne, Fordingbridge, Hants, SP6 3NA** making your gift payable to: **Rockbourne PCC**. Thank you.

ALL SAINTS NOMINATED CHARITY—THANK YOU!

Thank you for your support for Martin Park. All Saints, Martin's nominated Charity 2020. Despite the lockdown, £680.82 was raised by local donation. We foresee that the Parish Council will be in a good position to develop the park by planting trees, shrubs and flowers as well as adding sports facilities which will provide young and old with a valued place to rest and play. If you would like to propose a charity to be the 2021 Nominated Charity, please provide the Charity's name and some information on it to any member of the PCC by the Annual Meeting.

***** SERVICES DURING FEBRUARY & MARCH *****

These Services are all on Zoom. If physical services resume during this period (due to a reduction in lockdown restrictions and virus transmission rates), they will be advertised through the church website - westerndownlandchurch.org - and the weekly Update. If you would like to receive the weekly Update, which is sent by email, please send your email address to leslieplayer@hotmail.com

Tuesday 2nd February	9.30am	A Reflection on Candlemas
7th February	10.30am	2nd Sunday before Lent
14th February	10.30am	Sunday next before Lent (Love is the Key)
17th February	10.30am	A Morning Reflection on Ash Wednesday
21st February	10.30am	First Sunday of Lent
28th February	10.30am	Second Sunday of Lent



7th March	10.30am	Third Sunday of Lent
14th March	10.30am	Fourth Sunday of Lent. Mothering Sunday
21st March	10.30am	Fifth Sunday of Lent: A Commemoration of Lives lost in the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Anniversary of the first UK Lockdown
28th March	10.30am	Palm Sunday
1st April	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday
2nd April	10.30am	Good Friday: 'The Way of the Cross'.
4th April	10.30am	Easter Day: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!