

## Easter Newsletter

Palm Sunday, April 2020

### *Hello dear friends of Pilsdon*

Thank you for your messages of good will and encouragement. We realise just how fortunate we are to be in this beautiful place at this time in the history of our world. Because we are one household we are not socially distancing and are gratefully able to share in the common life. I closed the Community on 17th March to all non-essential visitors and we hope this will have protected our most vulnerable members. Our great sadness is that we are currently unable to offer hospitality in our usual way; we are dearly missing our wayfarers, volunteers and visitors, as well as all those, as yet unknown to us, new guests. We so look forward to the day when our doors are flung open again.

We are 17 adults and 2 children, aged from 79 to 2 years old and we will go through these next months together. Our last visitor, Rev Lynn Uzans from Nova Scotia left us on the 25th March to return home after three weeks visiting and volunteering as she has done many times before. It was a nail biting time wondering if she would get her scheduled flight back, but the angels were with her and she arrived home safely



Rev'd Sue Langdon, Warden



### Prayer for our community and for all Pilsdon's Friends

*O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, Amen.*

With thanks to Richard Rohr and all at cac.org for this prayer

As you might imagine, in a place where authenticity is the only lingua franca, black humour has been a great way to let go of the normal fears and anxieties we are all experiencing. There is also a good deal of sensitive listening, sharing and making allowances for each other. The telling of more stories, the life blood of Pilsdon, makes meaning of our individual and collective lives, often bringing a hilarity and some tears too. Being real is the gift we give to each other. The Grace before meals I've used since arriving here rings more deeply true: 'For water, food, shelter, the chance to live in freedom and for each other we give you thanks, O Lord'. The freedom I speak of is an 'internal freedom' to become more fully ourselves and to be the person God sees in us all the time!

### A Ritual to Read Each Other

If you don't know the kind of person I am  
and I don't know the kind of person you are  
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world  
and following the wrong god home we may miss our  
star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,  
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break  
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood  
storming out to play through the broken dyke.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,  
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,  
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty  
to know what occurs but not recognise the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,  
a remote important region in all who talk:  
though we could fool each other, we should consider--  
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,  
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;  
the signals we give--yes or no, or maybe--  
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

William Stafford



*Madeleine's prayer*

*Dear God,*

*Thangk you for the frens and fam-  
ily we have pleas help those who  
don't have those things that we  
have rite now.*

*We live in freamd o Lord*

*Armen*

Practically we are busier as there are fewer of us and our wonderful volunteers are prevented from coming. Gosh do we miss them! They bring so much with them, most haven't a clue how important they are to us; it's much more than anything practical they might do for us.

Mary is taking on more administration as Jane our wonder-woman office coordinator is working from home. The kitchen is buzzing with food inventories, the rituals of sourdough bread making and new ways of working together to take account of limited supplies; as my mother used to say: 'We are short of nothing we've got!' Our abundance is sometimes overwhelming and we are blessed with great cooks.

Frantisek has been running the farm and tenderly caring for our flock of ewes. As we have been eagerly awaiting the birth of our lambs, he has been like a first time father watching over them so carefully. Following a difficult labour and a visit from the vet, the first ewe to give birth did so by caesarean section on Palm Sunday. Three beautiful (and big) lambs came into the world. Soon after her procedure the mother managed to get up and began to nurse her babies. We wait in expectation this Holy Week for the rest of the lambs to arrive.

Jim is leading the garden team and we are planting every seed known to do well here and hope to share our produce with the food bank 'in due season'. We are so grateful for all our suppliers and especially our delivery Drivers, their graciousness in continuing to come to us have warmed our hearts as well as filled our bellies. Thank you.

We have also made an infirmary and kitted it out so we can more easily look after folk rather than running up and down stairs into everyone's room. We hope it will not be needed. All this of course couldn't happen without our fantastic community who are, without exception, just wonderful and share their gifts generously. Milking, mucking out, pasteurising, butter and yogurt making, baking, making, mending, strimming, digging, weeding, cleaning, tidying, ideas abound and opportunities created. Being busy is good for us as our 'thoughts' could go into overdrive, but we are encouraging each other not to let our 'thought's' .... 'run the show'. Keeping a distance from 'difficult thoughts' needs more practice than the discipline of social distancing.



Our first lambs



Our cows enjoying the spring!





All ready to bless the palms before our procession

'Tis a fearful thing  
To love  
What death can touch.  
To love, to hope, to dream,  
Ah oh, to lose.

A thing for fools, this  
Love,  
But a holy thing,  
To love what death can touch.

For your life has lived in me;  
Your laugh once lifted me;  
Your word was a gift to me.  
To remember this brings  
painful joy.  
'Tis a human thing, love,  
A Holy thing,  
To love  
What death can touch.

Judah Halevi

Listening to the radio and to friends on the phone dealing with sudden change can be devastating and some are suffering badly. Some are finding they have an internal resilience they didn't know they had.... others find they have a new purpose and more meaning to life and are able to step out in confidence, knowing they are needed more than ever before. Others by contrast are learning how to receive and this can be equally challenging as they find ways to be gracious and grateful when they have always seen themselves as the givers in society.

We are expanding our prayer ministry of intercession and welcome requests by email. Our community prayer life is increasingly less wordy, more reflective and each evening apart from Sunday is completely silent. More guests come into the silence with us and are enjoying being together in this way. This way of meditating taps into some of the courses they 'used' to go on. In the meantime nothing is wasted and there are many conversations that look into deeper issues that offer solace and hope for healing of old hurts.

Over Holy Week, there is likely to be more people who will die from the Corona Virus and many will be greatly grieved by being unable to visit their loved ones in their final hours. If you are among them we especially send our love to you.

As we go through Holy Week, we are personally called to walk with Jesus and each other towards Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday into the dawn of Easter morning for a meeting in the early light with Christ, to recognise a transformed life. Our deep surrender to uncertainty, the little deaths involved in a release of control, required of everyone will hopefully

enable whole communities to co-operate in a bigger transformation. Something is happening already, and our prayer is that those who have lost their lives will not be dishonoured by a return to “normal” following this crisis. We have an opportunity to learn how to live more simply and to accept the invitation into new, transformed lives, where what really matters is called out of our leaders, called out of all of us into a future yet to be born.

The Church, other faiths, and many different groups of people who gather in solidarity for a whole host of reasons are now moving, really moving. The constraints of these days have created opportunities unheard of before.

When we break our bread at communion we pray the prayer below, you can pray it too at home. If you eat alone in these days it is even more important as it connects us all, in the heart of Christ where there is no separation.

Our love and blessing to you all this Easter,

Sue Langdon

We break this bread for those who love God and seek after truth.  
For those who follow the path of the Buddha  
and worship the God of the Hindus;  
for our sisters and brothers in Islam,  
and for the Jewish people from whom we come.  
We pray that one day we may be as one.  
We break this bread for the great green earth;  
For the great seas, mountains plains, and deserts  
and for the creatures that inhabit them.  
For the forest, field and flowers which we are destroying,  
that one day with the original blessing,  
God's creation will be restored.  
We break this bread for those who have no bread,  
The starving the homeless and the refugees,  
that one day this planet may be a home for everyone.  
We break this bread for the broken parts of ourselves,  
the wounded child in all of us, for our broken relationships,  
that one day we may glimpse the wholeness that is of Christ.

**Though we are many we are one body  
because we all share in one bread.**

Written by Donald Reeves former Rector of St James, Piccadilly