



St Paul's
Little Eaton Church

Parish Magazine



Summer 2020

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The Vicar's Letter

JAMES HUGHES



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first of a new-look magazine from us here at St Paul's Little Eaton, which we are hoping to produce regularly through the year. In it you will find a number of articles from church members, as well as information about services and other events—which of course at the moment are a little sparse.

It's also an opportunity for me to introduce myself as your 'new' vicar. Now that David Barnsley has moved on to work at a church in Buxton, you've got me. As many of you will know, I have been in the benefice since September 2016, and have got to know the church at Little Eaton much better over the last year, since we have been having our services at 4.30pm. Some of you I will have met at Remembrance, or at another event in church, and I look forward to meeting many more of you, although at the moment, we cannot be certain when that will be. I am looking forward to opportunities to get involved in schools, with the carnival, and with other community activities as lockdown eases.

In the meantime, our online services continue at 4.30pm on Sundays, and from September we are planning to reopen the church building for worship on Sundays, whilst continuing our services online. Do join us at www.youtube.com/c/TheUnited

Benefice of Duffield Little Eaton. We also have a weekly email that goes out with more information about services and events across the Benefice; do email the church office, office@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk for more information.

And in the meantime, some words of encouragement in what remains a challenging time. Many of us are self-isolating, or shielding, or otherwise restricting our social interactions. We may have a bit more time to think. At a time where we are perhaps more conscious of the frailty of human life than we normally are, let me offer to you some words from the beginning of Psalm 46:

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the
earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart
of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their
surging. (Psalm 46 vv 1–3, NIV)*

The Psalmist calls us to reflect on who God is, the one who is always reliable however much the world around us changes. Join us online as we continue to explore that truth over the coming weeks.

And I look forward to meeting you in person.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "James". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Vicar of Duffield and Little Eaton

Reflections & hope – a personal view

It was 26 years ago when we arrived in Little Eaton. This was my fourth job-related move in 14 years of marriage. None of us—my wife Eileen, two daughters or yours truly—had any wish for there to be a fifth!

Looking back now, Little Eaton was just ‘right’ for us from the outset. We had done our ‘homework’ but first impressions also count. I remember the impact of seeing St Peter’s Park overlooked by St Paul’s church for the first time. Such a beautiful and traditional village setting.

After initially attending St Alkmund’s church in Duffield I have become increasingly immersed in the life of St Paul’s. As a member of its family—its people **are** the church—and the PCC (its decision-making body), I feel both fortunate and privileged to be involved in decisions concerning its future.

2019 will go down as a special year, certainly in St Paul’s recent history. A lot of prior work and prayer had already been committed to proposed changes in two major areas of our church life. Firstly, we wrote to every household outlining planned improvements to ensure the building would be fit for use in the 21st century and beyond. In reality it has not been significantly updated for over 150 years so the provision of some modern comforts are well overdue. An invitation was also extended to everyone to come to the church last July to talk about these ideas and see some illustrative examples of how the interior could look following refurbishment.

2019 also saw us transition to a main afternoon service. The new format was preceded by tea and refreshments, giving further opportunities to socialise and chat. It also provided a glimpse of how the new service might ‘look’ in the future.

The responses to these changes were overwhelmingly positive, and it was greatly encouraging to see some new members joining. Slight modifications to the service took place in response to feedback, and we looked forward to further developing our plans in 2020. Then life changed for all of us . . .

Prior to lockdown the PCC had finalised planned improvements to the church, and these have now been formally approved. It’s not really possible to fully convey or illustrate in this brief article all the various planned improvements, but in the coming months we are hoping to show things in much more detail. One of the prior requirements to giving the final go-ahead is a public consultation. This will give everyone the

opportunity to come along, ask questions, and get an idea of exactly how things will look.

When this will take place is difficult to predict in the current circumstances but, rest assured, you will be informed. In the meantime, our overall plans are:

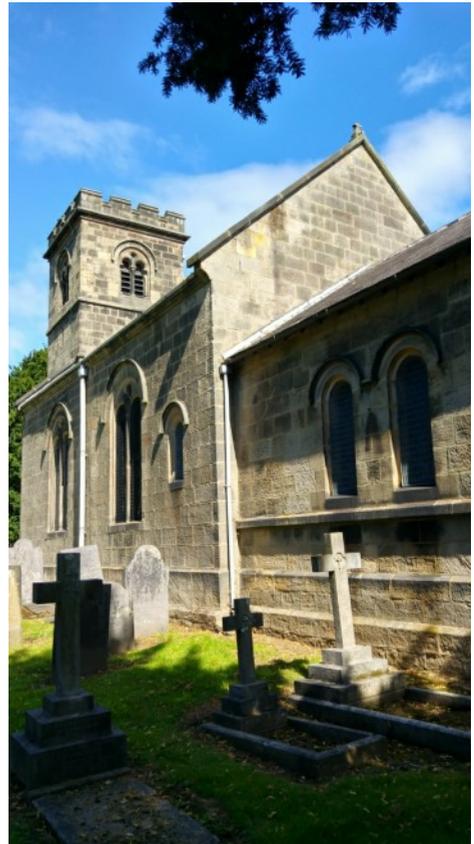
- ◆ Removal of all pews (with the provision of new seating) and levelling of the existing floor throughout the building
- ◆ Installation of a new heating system
- ◆ Provision of a disabled access toilet in the body of the church
- ◆ Installation of kitchen facilities
- ◆ Installation of screens to allow varying church activities to take place
- ◆ Provision of disabled ramped access to the church entrance foyer

The above is not comprehensive but summarises some of the major work.

We further advised last year that we would be selling the Church Hall (with planning permission to convert it to a single residential property) and to use the funds generated towards the cost of refurbishing the church. Formal approval to apply the proceeds in this manner has now been obtained and the PCC is currently liaising with architects regarding the planning application.

Looking forward, I hope and pray that outreach and relationships with our community grow stronger by the year. That more people of all ages come to see the church as open and welcoming; where they feel comfortable to come and hear the true Gospel message. St Paul's has been an important part of village life for over 300 years. May it remain so for many centuries still to come.

Chris Asker



Youth and Children

What a whirlwind it's been over the last few months for us all trying to adjust to life in lockdown! As we have all scrambled to get the hang of Zoom and Hangouts and filming ourselves so that we *actually look at the camera*, I'm so pleased to say that we've still managed to have some fun along the way!

Our children's work has had quite a change at St Paul's as we said goodbye to the lovely Helen Barnsley—our wonderful Children's worker—who has moved with her husband David to Buxton Trinity Church this summer. So we have joined up our children's work across the benefice during lockdown and spent some time looking at the "I AM" statements that Jesus makes in the gospel of John together.



Water sports Carys investigates Matthew's gospel account of Jesus walking on water.

rupting us. (My cat Lola, has decided that she rather likes the camera; I don't think she's missed a single Zoom meeting yet!). Saying all that though, we've had some real fun with paddling pools, pirate hats and even our pets!

Being total amateurs, Carys and I have had to adapt to "life on the telly", and by that I don't mean fame and glamour, but working out how to do our church children slots in our own homes, with limited props and lawnmowers, building work and cats inter-



In disguise Helen in pirate garb to illustrate the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matt 13).



Both our youth groups have transferred to Zoom meetings on Tuesday nights and these have been the personal highlights of my week, still being able to meet together and see everyone’s faces! We’ve been reading the Letter of 1 John together, which has been a great encouragement to us in these fearful times. John says “God is light, in him

Easter egg hunt Helen interrogates a suspect in her search for the missing chocolate eggs.

there is no darkness at all”, reminding us that even though life is confusing and frightening at the moment, God is wholly good, loving and kind. Regardless of how things seem at the moment, God is *for* us and day by day giving us opportunities to become more like Jesus. Yes, lockdown is a chance for us to cultivate real love, generosity and kindness, no matter what age we are. It’s been a joy to see our young people care for one another during lockdown.



You’d better believe it! Carys uses a “blue leaves” prop as a help in remembering a memory verse (John 3:16).

We’ve also met some new faces along the way: one of our brilliant Sunday Club leaders from St Alks has been helping our children during the week remember what we’ve learnt on Sunday, by introducing us to a couple of fun puppet characters: Sir Pants a Lot and Gwendoline. These two have been having adventures on our YouTube channel and getting up to all kinds of mischief!



Of course, there is no real substitute for meeting together in person, and we really can’t wait for when we can actually all be together again. But for now, we’re trusting God, praying for one another and doing our best to keep everyone smiling.

Helen Hawley

My Lockdown Experience

By Andy Hardwick

When lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister on March 23rd what was the first thing that you realised you would no longer be able to do? See family, browse around the shops, travel? Perhaps I should ask why wasn't church the first thing? Well, it wasn't for me either. Mine was: how will this affect bowls?— Because the new season was due to start in early April.

As a team captain at Little Eaton Bowls Club, I had already sorted out my squad, checked the fixtures and was looking forward to meeting up with old friends and enjoying the challenging competition to come.

Playing around 85 matches per season across five teams would get me out of the house, provide much needed exercise (yes, you do walk up to a mile per game!) and also provide the perfect excuse to share a few pints after evening matches (well it's important to put the body fluids back).

So, what did I feel when Boris spoilt it all? For three or four days I was angry. My plans were in tatters, yet I knew that I could do nothing about it. I don't remember thinking that it was unfair, because it affected everyone, yet I wanted my bowls season back! Then, I began to dwell on what I was missing. Discussing sport with my opponents or swapping book recommendations. Also hearing the tall tales of what really used to go on at the Railway or Bemrose.

The situation wasn't improved by the lack of live sport to watch as an alternative. So, what have I done instead? Well, a lot of reading, some large jigsaws, crossword

puzzles, listened to the radio and watched too much TV.

Then of course there has been the time spent on Zoom. Family get-togethers, church meetings, growth group meetings, which have been really encouraging, and saying farewell to our former minister Dave Barnsley and his family. Not to mention watching our church services, together with plays and musicals, on YouTube. Plus, the scary stuff of recording myself for the online services, where I've been involved doing prayers, etc.

But the one niggling frustration is that after two years of fighting adverse weather conditions, the hard work done on the bowling green has changed a rough brown surface into a lush green carpet which we can't use! It's a poignant reminder of the small sacrifice I have been forced to make during lockdown, especially when compared to those working in the NHS and healthcare sector, those whose jobs or businesses have disappeared, and those who have lost love ones. Thank goodness that throughout history God has proved again and again that he is indeed sovereign and in control of his world, even in dark times, and that at least there is next season—hopefully.



‘Monday to Friday Living’

*In this article **Lee Parkin** reflects on how he gradually came to faith, the impact his faith has had on his work, the witness of his extended family, and how his Grandma's persistent prayers for him were eventually answered!*



I used to attend Sunday school when I was growing up and I've always felt close to God, but whenever I was in church it somehow never felt quite like I thought it should, especially through the eyes of a 10-year-old (and the Sunday school teacher and I just didn't see eye to eye, but that's a whole other story). My Grandma would ask me questions about faith in little snippets and obviously saw there was something there in me somewhere and she always prayed for me to come to faith. Grandma's faithful prayers were ultimately answered—although not till many years later!

Growing up, I had a very bad time at school. Basically, I despised being there and I was always getting into trouble, with fighting and violence a recurring theme. I got some tattoos at 14 years old and generally rebelled against pretty much anything and everything as an adolescent. Yet, even as a very unruly teenager, I would still speak to God and

pray and during this time I learned the Lord's Prayer from a Gideon's Bible that was given to me at school. Saying the Lord's Prayer gave me a real sense of comfort, even through difficult times.

After I left school, I mostly meandered about a bit. I joined the Royal Marines but came back from that; then I tried labouring and farming, but I was still misbehaving. Eventually I realised I needed to shape up and got a proper job at the Peak District National Park, which I loved. I found new friends, sorted myself out a bit and then decided I would have a crack at joining the Police...

As a young lad, we had a Police Dog handler come to our school and I was completely amazed by what the dog could do. To say I was completely mesmerised doesn't even begin to describe it—and I knew ultimately that's what I wanted to be. So having finally sorted myself out, I then set about becoming a Policeman. The application process was like school, but the big →

→ difference this time was that I *wanted* to learn and so I took to it quite easily. Come August 2000, I'd passed every test available and made it through.

At this stage I still hadn't come to faith, but I always felt that God had my back and I always carried my Gideon's Bible, which still sits in my pocket in my ballistic vest to this day. And looking back, my extended family was also gently steering me towards the Lord, too. The faith of my late Uncle Peter (with whom I shared the same birthday and always had a very special bond) had an especially positive impact on me, and listening to the eulogy for him at his funeral was a real "wake-up call"—the belief and hope Peter had shone through; and deep down I knew I had to take action.

Moving on, sadly I lost my Grandparents and my Dad, my wife became poorly and of all this—combined with the general pressures of police work and looking after the kids—just became too much. Things got to the point where I felt I almost couldn't go on—it was as if there was a huge weight pressing me to the floor. So I prayed for Jesus to come in to my life and take over, because it all seemed too much—and instantly—and I mean instantly—life changed. I felt lighter and everything now seemed clearer. But, I've learned as a Christian that real change doesn't happen overnight!

After coming to faith, initially I attended the church where we got

married. But I knew I wanted more in-depth biblical teaching, and having attended one of Dave Barnsley's Christianity Explored courses, I joined St Paul's Little Eaton at the end of 2017. Here I've found a real church 'home'.

Now I'm walking with Jesus, I can't believe I waited this long to come to faith! When I'm dealing with people now as a Police Officer, I try to look beyond what's immediately in front of me and see the person behind the situation. I try and reason and be far more patient (loving my neighbour as myself) than I ever used to be. My colleagues have seen a real change in me and mentioned that I'm far more patient and relaxed and I know that this is all down to my faith. Inevitably I still have to tackle many tricky situations at work and things can often be very challenging, but I'm in the business of dealing with people who can be difficult and hard to reach.

When I look back and I see the path my life took, although as I've said I went through some very difficult times, in hindsight it all seems to have been necessary to bring me to where I now am today. I firmly believe I am part of God's plan and I'm very happy to be a part of it. I am blessed with many successes—my career, my children and my wife, I am eternally grateful to the Lord for them all. I am far from perfect, but I continually return to scripture to bring myself back on track. Amen!



Jerry Lee Lewis's "Old Time Religion"

—a quite unique live album—

It was a brief exchange of text messages with my eldest cousin Paul that led me to discover this unusual live recording by Jerry Lee Lewis. A keen guitarist like me, Paul was due to perform an evening of acoustic roots music at his church in Portsmouth and he asked me if I could think of any classic old Gospel numbers which he might include. I suggested one or two songs to investigate (such as "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"), also adding that I was fairly sure Jerry Lee Lewis had sung Gospel music at some point. I subsequently decided to explore further and—thanks to the wonders of Google and Amazon—I turned up this album.

Like many musicians born and raised in the Deep South "Bible Belt" of the USA, Jerry Lee grew up singing and playing in church, and *Old Time Religion* features various classic hymns that clearly held great significance for Jerry Lee in one way or another. The album includes "Amazing Grace", "The Old Rugged Cross", "I'll Fly Away" and many others; some 20 numbers in total, over 65 minutes.

Captured at an unspecified church venue, the live recording was made on Sunday 13th December 1970 (it must've made for quite an Advent service!). Located just south of the city of Memphis, Tennessee, and led by a Brother Davis, the unknown church in question was the fellowship that Jerry Lee's then-wife Myra Gale Lewis regularly attended.

As he alludes to during the live album, it appears that sometime around the end of 1970 Jerry Lee had some kind of 'road to Damascus'-style conversion experience. Publicly proclaiming his newfound Christian faith, Jerry Lee subsequently made this live recording at his wife's church and he also renounced performing any kind of secular music for a short time afterwards.

Perhaps not surprisingly, at the time his record label simply didn't know what to make of the recording, and it subsequently went unissued for many years. The album really is a proverbial 'hidden gem', though—and when we sadly lost my Mum to cancer back in 2015, it also proved to be an unexpected source of comfort, too. Virtually all of

the songs speak of the great future hope of heaven Mum had in Christ as a Christian.

If one were to look up on YouTube almost all of the hymns Jerry Lee performs on this album, pretty much any other version is essentially sung by dungaree-and-lumberjack-shirt-wearing Hillbillies. Performances by musicians such as those—with straw in their hair, fingers in their ears and whining pedal-steel guitars, make the songs sound—unless one happens to be a Life Member of the Bluegrass Appreciation Society—frankly rather awful.

But, in the hands of "The Killer", all of the numbers become something else entirely. As only he can, Jerry Lee positively tears his way through one high-energy, rousing rendition after another, in his trademark style that got him expelled from Bible College as a young man. He even manages at one point to fling a right boot-heel onto the church's piano, much to the Pastor's considerable chagrin!

Notwithstanding his great enthusiasm displayed on this album, Jerry Lee's self-imposed exile from secular music didn't last for long, however. Both in terms of music and lifestyle, he was soon back to his former rock'n'roll ways, which might lead one to question as to whether his 1970 conversion was, in fact, genuine. We'll never know for sure, although matters of Christian faith have clearly stayed with him throughout his life, from right back when he first recorded his famous rock'n'roll numbers at Sun Records in the Fifties (studio out-takes reveal a memorably heated exchange with producer Sam Phillips over concerns about playing "*the Devil's music*").

What we can say with certainty, though, is that at the time he recorded *Old Time Religion*, Jerry Lee definitely sang it like he truly meant it. Do check the album out if you're a fan of either Jerry Lee Lewis or old-time Gospel music. Or both. Just put the banjo away first.



James Rollin



St Paul's Little Eaton Church

You are very welcome to join us for our 4.30pm afternoon services

Currently these are being held online via our Benefice YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUnitedBeneficeofDuffieldLittleEaton>

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