Welcome to this week’s edition of the Bulletin. This week’s edition serves as a double offering as both Rachel and I will be away on holiday as this goes out for circulation to you all. As such there will be no Bulletin on week commencing 9th August. Today, therefore, I am writing this piece, as I prepare and make arrangements for being away on leave for two weeks; And I am sure most of you will relate to the busyness of having to sort so many things out, ahead of being able to stop and taking a break. In fact, I often feel you need to work doubly hard before you go away, just to create that space to be able to lay ordinary life down for a short period of time.

Preparations, and getting ready for events and activities, are features of life we take for granted. For example, I am someone who likes to plan, dare I say almost religiously, for any event, occasion or holiday. I like to make lists, get things organized and probably, if I am honest, quite enjoy the stress of preparing, feeling the more organized I am, the better I will enjoy the experience when it eventually happens. My husband Bob, however, is quite different: He enjoys doing things pretty much at the last moment, and as I watch his lack of preparation for a holiday, I start to worry that things will be forgotten, and worse, that we will be late in arriving at our destination. This used to cause some tension in our household, particularly in the earlier days of our marriage, but over the years I have learnt to trust that Bob does prepare in his own way, for he has his own systems for packing, and by leaving him to do things in his own time, we are both less stressed by the time we inevitably leave the house; And generally all things are well, even if we do forget the toothpaste or item of clothing we thought we couldn’t manage without.
Whilst thinking about getting ourselves ready for a holiday or an event, it has caused me to reflect on the fact Jesus tells us, that we are to make preparations for the time when Jesus will return to bring to fulfilment, the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, because its timing will be unknown. For this reason, we are warned not to be caught out, and as such, to make sure the way we live our lives should be worthy of an unexpected coming of the Kingdom.

Now anyone who has been involved in getting our churches fit for a return to public worship, will know that it took a lot of work – there were risk assessments to complete, surfaces to be washed and sanitized, water systems to be flushed, areas to be cleared of soft furnishings and prayer resources and hymns books to be put away, all of which were intended to reduce the potential risk of spreading the Virus. However, once all this work had been completed, and people have once again returned to services and public worship, it is still not enough for this to work to then stop, because of course as we know, every time the church is used it has to be cleaned and left vacant for some time to allow the space to become once again risk free.

Being prepared for the coming of the Kingdom therefore requires us to be continually making sure our spiritual lives are in good order. Therefore, to assist us in this perhaps we should regularly be carrying out a metaphorical risk assessment, to make sure we are living our spiritual lives as we are called to do. For example, we can question whether we are reading the bible on a regular basis; Are we engaging in a daily prayer routine which ensures our relationship with Jesus remains real and vibrant; Are we looking at ways in which we can use our particular spiritual gift for the further development of the church and the care of others; Are we looking at ways in which we can challenge inequalities or injustice in other areas of the world and are we being good stewards of the world which God has given into our care?

If we were to consider these, and other aspects of our Christian lives, against a risk assessment schedule, we might consider how far we fall short of God’s standards and whether in each of these aspects, our standards present a high, medium or low risk to our spiritual development. For example, if we pray at least twice a day, morning and evening and at various times in the day, then we might consider ourselves to be at a low risk when we inevitably face spiritual attack or opposition. However, if we only hear the word of God at a service a couple of times a year, then we are definitely in a high risk category. For how can we hope to grow spiritually, if the source of food for spiritual growth and development from the word of God, is taken in so sparingly?

Being prepared for God’s Kingdom therefore does require regular maintenance, and let’s be honest, as such it requires time, energy and commitment. Therefore, during my time off, I know that I need to spend some quiet time reflecting where my spiritual life is most at risk, and what remedial action I need to put in place to make myself more spiritually fit and ready, to be a member of the Kingdom.

Maybe this is something you might like to consider doing over the coming weeks, and maybe when you do, these two quotes from well-known Christians may help:-

"Since it is likely that, being men, they would sin every day, St. Paul consoles his hearers by saying ‘renew yourselves’ from day to day. This is what we do with houses: we keep constantly repairing them as they wear old. You should do the same thing to yourself. Have you sinned today? Have you made your soul old? Do not despair, do not despond, but renew your soul by repentance, and tears, and Confession, and by doing good things. And never cease doing this."  
John Chrysostom

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."  
John Wesley

I am sure we can all benefit from some inward scrutiny of our spiritual preparation for the Kingdom at regular times in our lives, and if this is something that you need further pastoral or ministerial support with, then please do not hesitate to contact me on my return from leave. There are so many
resources available now to assist in developing prayer life, bible study or how to make space for some quiet reflection, and I will be happy to discuss these with people, if anyone would find that helpful.

In the meantime, our schedule of services for the forthcoming weeks can be found later in this Bulletin and I do hope that for those who are able to, and who wish to attend, that you will find a new joy and refreshment in our worship as we return to services of Holy Communion. Therefore, until I return from my break, I hope that many of will be able to enjoy some time away, seeing and appreciating being in different places, but for those who are unable to get away, that you enjoy the summer weeks, and that there will hopefully be some sunny weather in which to enjoy the glorious outdoors when you can.

So, I wish you a happy and blessed few weeks, and until my return, may God bless you, and all whom you love and care for, as we live out our lives in the hope of the glories of the coming of God’s Kingdom.

Allison
Reverend Allison Davies
Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group

Collect
Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Reading: Romans 9: 1-5
I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 14: 13-21
Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Post Communion Prayer
Strengthen for service, Lord
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise
be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your
wove shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed
with your body
be refreshed with the fulness of your life;
glory to you for ever.
Amen
Reflection for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity 2020  
Sunday 2nd August by Bishop Michael Hooper

When Rowan Williams was Archbishop of Canterbury he was asked, where God was on the day of the terrorist attacks in New York. He said, “where he always is: always in the centre of things, always in the acts of love and generosity that people give to one another in times of crisis”. He went on: “people expect, when they ask that question, where was God-they expect sometimes an answer in terms of a God who steps in and solves it all, stops it happening, or mops it up. But the way God works seems to be in the heart of it all, and through people”.

This has certainly been true over recent months during the pandemic and there are a lot of people to whom we should give thanks. There will be those on the front line, NHS and care workers, who have been thanked publicly. They have been very much in the public eye. However there have been many people who have not drawn public attention, people who have worked hard and given tirelessly, who I would like to thank, especially local people in our own community.

On the 24th July it was exactly a year since Allison was instituted and inducted as our vicar. She came to us from her training as a curate and nobody could ever have experienced a first-year like this as a vicar. Amidst all the joy of coming to a new job and engaging with people here she has experienced sadness and tragedy and found herself responsible for all the 15 parishes around the hill. On top of all that there has been the pandemic, closing of churches and now all the difficulties associated with reopening them. She has also had to consult about the appointment of another priest in the group and there will only be two full time priests in the Bredon Hill group in the future.

Thank you Allison, all your hard work and care is deeply appreciated.

At the heart of our village in Eckington is the village shop and we are all very grateful to John Sue and Mark for the way in which they serve us and help with deliveries to housebound people. Nothing is too much for them and we would all want to thank them and their staff for all they do.

Also younger people in our village have helped those who needed to stay at home and those shielding throughout this difficult time.

Neighbours and friends have generously supported others with shopping and essential needs.
There have also been all those people who have continued to work emptying our bins and keeping essential services going.

All this has very much reflected what Rowan Williams said that God is seen in the kindness, generosity, love and self-sacrifice that we show one another.

In the gospel we see Jesus feeding the hungry, tired, and sick with the little he had at his disposal. It is in this way that we show God’s love to one another as we reach out in times of need, supporting one another and sharing whatever we have large or small.

+Michael

Intercessions for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity by Revd Alma Organ

HIROSHIMA DAY

August 6th, the Feast of the Transfiguration is also designated as Hiroshima Day. On this day in 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and 3 days later another one dropped on Nagasaki.

Prince of Peace.

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember and give thanks for all the saints and martyrs, known and unknown to us, who have died standing up for peace and justice. From our Anglican communion we bring before you, our brothers and sisters who are suffering because of war and local conflicts. May their yearning for peace become a reality. We give you thanks for our bishops John and Martin as they enter into dialogue with people of all faiths to learn more about them, build up trust and work for peace and concord in all communities. Help us to become peacemakers in all our relationships in our families, and communities.

Prince of Peace.

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the United Nations and all those organisations working for peace and reconciliation across the world. We commend for your wisdom and guidance all world leaders that they may work for the reduction of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We remember, before you those areas of our own country that suffer from conflict and racial tension and oppression. Give courage and strength to all those who work for peace and harmony in these communities.

Prince of Peace.
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the peace that we enjoy in this part of our country. We thank you for our families and friends and all those in our communities who have shown us support and encouragement throughout this pandemic. May we be aware of the needs of those around us and respond accordingly. We remember, before you all those who are in any kind of need, may they know your presence, your support and your love.

Prince of Peace.

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember all those who were injured in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and still carry the scars, in body mind and spirit. Help them to overcome their pain and stress and give them courage to face the future. We bring before you all those in our communities who are sick in body, mind or spirit. May they experience your healing power.

Give comfort to the bereaved, strength to the weary and light to those who are in a dark place.

Prince of peace

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, as we remember the 80,000 people killed at Hiroshima and 40,000 killed at Nagasaki, we also remember all those who have been killed as a result of wars since then, especially any known to us. We commend into you keeping, the souls of those who have died recently from our communities. May they rest in peace.

Prince of peace.

Hear our prayer

Amen

Please pray for the ill and isolated, hospital and medical research staff, all those working on the frontline and those who have died. We pray for all whose anniversary of death falls at this time and for all who have been bereaved.

Those on the frontline: Alison Herbert a nurse who has been working with the DART (Disaster and Relief Team) and the Mercy Ships in Italy
Those who are sick: David Hardy, Simon Collett
Those in residential care: Barbara Milton
Those who have died and their families: Jon Doney, Barbara Howell, John Bennett, Charles Bigland-Gibbons, John Bolton, Arthur Ore, Joan Green, Brian Druce, Pamela Law
Anniversary of a death: Please pray for the family of Deborah Chambers whose first anniversary is on the 14th August. We remember in our prayers her husband Adam, daughters Grace and Faith and her parents Angela and John Lancelot.
Please also pray for Gillian Martin who lost her partner Tony Manser on the 23rd August last year.
Church and Village News

As our churches begin to open and events are planned it would be useful to keep everyone informed. If you have any details that you would like to share within the Bulletin, please email us at eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com

Elmley Castle PCC
The PCC decided that, for the present, ALL services within the Elmley Castle Benefice will be for the foreseeable future at St Mary’s, Elmley Castle, since it has the space and layout to allow all the social distancing to be observed and has the necessary logistics worked out and in place.

Reopening the Bredon Hill Group of Churches for Public Worship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Minister</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Aug</td>
<td>Holy Trinity, Eckington</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Bishop Michael Hooper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St Barbara’s, Ashton Under Hill</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Catherine Lack</td>
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<td>16th Aug</td>
<td>St Mary’s, Elmley Castle</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Canon Roger Spiller</td>
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<td>St Giles’, Bredon</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Doug Chaplin</td>
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<td>23rd Aug</td>
<td>St Faith’s, Overbury</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Holy Trinity, Eckington</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<tr>
<td>30th Aug</td>
<td>St Giles’, Bredon (5th Sunday)</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td>St Mary’s, Elmley Castle</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Holy Trinity, Eckington</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td>6th Sept</td>
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<td>9.00am</td>
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<td>St Mary’s, Elmley Castle</td>
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<td>Canon Roger Spiller</td>
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<td>13th Sept</td>
<td>Holy Trinity, Eckington</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St Barbara’s, Ashton Under Hill</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<td>20th Sept</td>
<td>St Mary’s, Elmley Castle</td>
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<td>St Giles’, Bredon</td>
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<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th Sept</td>
<td>St Faith’s, Overbury</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Reverend Catherine Lack</td>
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<td>Holy Trinity, Eckington</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Reverend Allison Davies</td>
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The Great Comberton Everest Challenge
We need your help and support, and are unashamedly looking to raise funds, hopefully in a fun way. We are organising a Great Comberton village sponsored walk up Bredon Hill, hoping that the aggregate feet (metres) climbed will be equivalent to the height of Everest. For example, Everest is 29,029ft and Bredon
Hill Tower is 800ft above the Great Comberton Church. That will mean 37 individual climbs (or 74 climbs halfway!). Maybe we’ll even get to make more than one ascent! As you already know, the Flower Show Committee has confirmed the cancellation of the Great Comberton Show in August 2020. It was recognised that it is simply not possible to run the Show in its normal format with the usual number of guests in the field and marquees. However, the Committee hopes to organise a simpler event on Saturday 29th August for villagers to enjoy. The Flower Show always shares money raised with village causes. We are launching this walking challenge to raise funds as it’s unlikely that we will be able to raise the normal sums through the Flower Show this year. Please support us by taking part, raising and donating money and telling your friends, family and neighbours about our challenge.

The Causes
Our target is to raise £1,000 which will be split 50/50 between St Michaels Church in Great Comberton and the Pershore Foodbank. How to donate details are provided below. Coronavirus and various associated lockdown measures have seriously affected the income of the Church, whilst much of the expenditure has continued. In addition, St. Michael’s Church needs extensive repairs to its tower. The Church really needs extra funds this year. We also recognise that Covid19 and the measures taken by HM Government to combat the virus have had a lasting effect on the local economy. This has caused, and will continue to cause, great hardship in the local community for the remainder of this year and into next. “The foodbank was there when we really needed it, it was an absolute lifeline.” “We don’t think anyone in our community should have to face going hungry. That’s why we provide three days’ nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to us in crisis. We are part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by The Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK.” Further information on the great service provided can be found by following this link: https://pershore.foodbank.org.uk/

The Challenge – Please support us by joining the Everest Walking Challenge
Hopefully many residents and ex residents of Great Comberton will join in the walking challenge – and family members for that matter too. The challenge will run from Saturday 8th August to Sunday 23rd August. Any walk up Bredon Hill by a participant during this period will count. All you have to do is let Claire Adams (julia.claire@live.co.uk, WhatsApp: 07740 865223) know about the walk you have completed, when you completed it, and your efforts will be recorded. Even better, if you’re willing to share your selfies from the top of your walk we will publish them on our Facebook and JustGiving pages to let everyone know how we are getting on. Although the primary focus is walking up Bredon Hill, villagers wishing to help and participate can walk up any hill or mountain! Indeed, you do not even have to walk to the top of Bredon Hill. You can walk just some of the way up. The only criteria is that the recorded height climbed will be the altitude difference between the start point and the top of your chosen walk (note various apps often record total feet climbed rather than the simple difference between top and bottom). Just let Claire know about your walk and the height difference claimed (we might check). The following are great examples:
1. Great Comberton Church to Bredon Hill Tower = 800ft
2. Great Comberton Church to the bench on way to Woollas Hall = 250ft
3. Elmley Castle pub to Bredon Hill Tower = 720ft
4. Elmley Castle pub to bench via Hill Lane = 350ft
5. Overbury Estate entrance to Bredon Hill Tower = 680ft
If anybody is interested in participating, it would help us if you let Claire know. But don’t worry if you forget, just send her the details after your walk. Also, if anybody is interested and wants some help with routes or heights, or would like to join a socially distanced group walk, again just let Claire know. We will try our best to assist. Don’t forget you can contribute more than one walk! We are fully expecting some of our more adventurous community members to complete a number of walks – we will need them too! There will be a big shout out for the individual community member achieving the most feet climbed (with photo proof of course) Most importantly, if you are doing a walk as part of the challenge, let your friends and family know and encourage them to donate through the JustGiving page. Also, let them know we have a Facebook page and so they will able to see how the village is progressing up Everest.

Donating – Please support us by donating

For everybody wishing to donate it would be great if you could do so by donating through our JustGiving page [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/greatcombertonchurch-pershorefoodbank](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/greatcombertonchurch-pershorefoodbank) For anybody who is unable to donate via JustGiving, do not despair. Helen Airdrie (07976 251223) and Claire Adams (07740 865223) will also be accepting cash and cheque donations (cheques made payable to PCC Elmley Castle, Bricklehampton and the Combertons - please write Everest on the reverse). You can also contact Helen for account details if you wish to make a direct bank transfer. These donations will be added to the running totals. All funds from JustGiving, cash and cheques will be paid to the church and then a payment representing 50% of the sum raised will be donated by the Church to the Pershore Foodbank.

Facebook Page – Please support us by cheering us on

We really want this challenge to be a success. To be a success, we will need to raise the target funds of £1,000 and of course achieve the height of Everest in our accumulated hill walks. We would really appreciate everyone donating any amounts small (or large!) that they can reasonably afford. However, you can also contribute by cheering us on – in person of course, or via Facebook or the JustGiving Page. Please like our Facebook Page, please share our Facebook page and please keep visiting the Facebook and Just Giving Pages to see how we are getting on. Leave us some messages of encouragement. During the 16 day Challenge period (8th Aug to 23rd Aug) we will be providing regular updates on the Facebook and JustGiving pages on the £ we have raised and the total feet climbed. Lots of pictures of the various villagers on their walks will be shared, and we may even run some fun reports on the most interesting walks completed – plus a leader board of most feet climbed!


Please help and support us
Helen Airdrie, Kitty Mirza and Claire Adams

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**COVID-19 Advice on Face Coverings from the Church of England**

Q. Should I wear a face covering in a church building?
We strongly advise that face coverings should be worn by all those attending a place of worship, including ministers, worshippers, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, where there may be other people present; remembering that they are mainly intended to protect other people, not the wearer, from coronavirus COVID-19 and that they are not a replacement for physical distancing and regular hand washing.

For more information go to: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own

News from the Diocese
Prayers and diocesan news can be found at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk

Daily HOPE
A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Supporting Good Mental Health

Prayer Diary
July to August 2020

Spot the differences
Jesus feeds Five Thousand

denarii  andrew  phillip  bread
mountain followed multitude gathered
disciples  loaf  Jesus  basket
fish  loaves  barley

Reverend Allison Davies
Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the Bredon Hill Group of Churches
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Email: eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com