

The Black Mountains Group Benefice

NEWSLETTER

October 2020



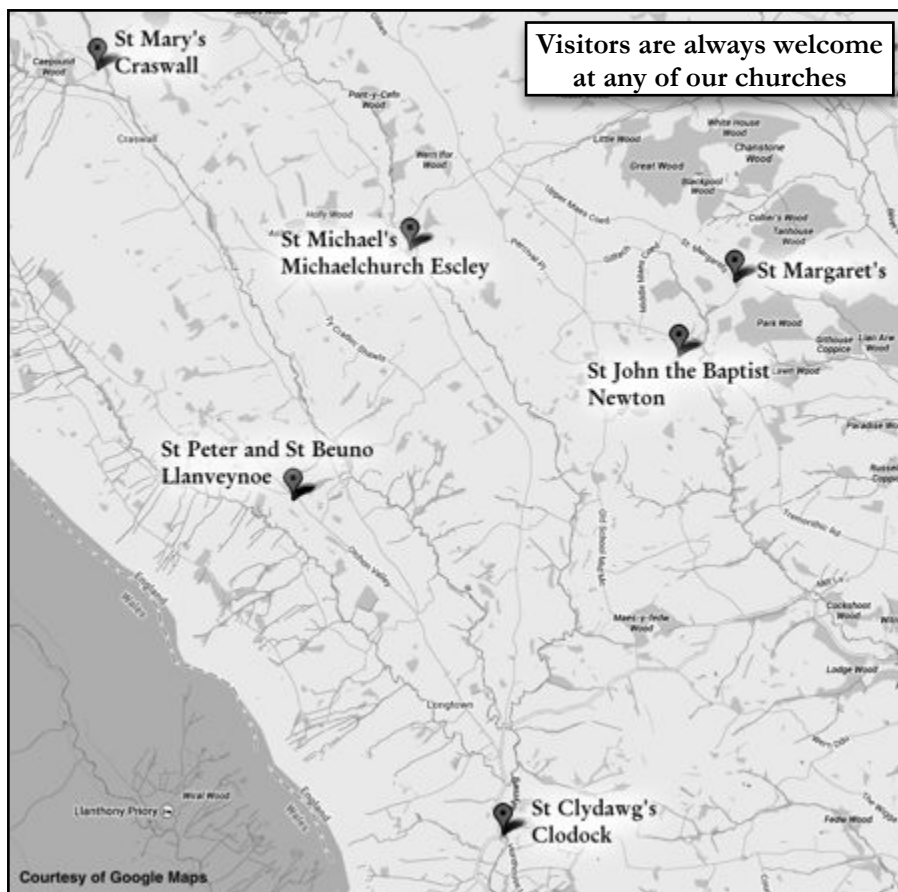
The Parishes of Clodock & Longtown with Craswall, Llanveynoe,
St Margaret's, Michaelchurch Escley & Newton

Vicar and Rural Dean:

The Revd. Prebendary Nicholas Lowton
Forest Mill, Craswall, Herefordshire HR2 0PW
01981 510675 lowton.nicholas@virgin.net

Min
50p
donation

www.bmgparishes.org.uk



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Mr Graham Watkins 01981 510226

Mr Ken Watkins 01981 510213

Llanveynoe

Mr Donald Phillips 01873 860298

Commodore Peter Tribe 01873 860260

St Margaret's

Mr John Pritchard 01981 510628

Mrs Jane Baxter 01981 510388

Michaelchurch Escley

Mrs Olive Howells 01981 510228

Newton

(Vacant)

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From the Vicar

LOOKING IN OR LOOKING OUT

A while back, I was visiting Cyprus and was driving with a friend who lives there along the road that rises above the coast east of Paphos. We stopped at a lay-by from which there was a magnificent view down to Aphrodite's Rock. This is the outcrop just off-shore where the goddess was born – or possibly not. As we stood there, a coach arrived and disgorged its cargo of young tourists who all wanted to take a photo of the rock. Except that they didn't. Instead they each stood with their backs to the view and took a photo of the rock with themselves in it, as if the beautiful site needed the enhancement of having their mugs in it.

Now let me confess. I am not a selfie person, and I find it genuinely difficult to understand the idea that, when taking a photograph, any view no matter how new and wondrous needs to have my depressingly familiar face in it. It may just be an aspect of my old fogeydom.

Anyway, I was reminded of this incident while reading a new and wondrous book by Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi, called *Morality*. I recommend it. It is immensely readable and pleasingly free from polysyllabic philosophical terminology. It essentially traces what he sees as the change in morality from being about 'We' to being about 'I'. It is a compelling argument, and he sees really clear signs in what he – and I – see in the appalling decline in political and public life.

This is not a new trend: it has been very obvious since the 1960s and it has affected the church just as much as it has other institutions. There has even been a whole number of hymns written, all about 'me, me, me': they are conveniently gathered together in a book called *Mission Praise 2*.

But the Christian faith has never been about 'me': it has always been about 'us'. It has been about community, and its earliest worship, of course, involved coming together to share the kiss of peace and to share in communion. It remains a community faith; that is why it felt so painful during all those weeks when we were not able to gather together for worship. But the Christian community is much more than a worshipping community. It is a working community, dedicated to spreading the good news of God's healing love and forgiveness, and sustained in that task by joining together in worship. The Christian faith is all about walking together on the pilgrimage of faith, helping and being helped by each other. It is not a cosy club gathering together behind intimidating church doors every Sunday: it is open and welcoming to everyone.

It is emphatically not about 'me': it is always about 'us'. And when society around us clearly acts, thinks, believes and behaves differently, it is all the more important that we resist the temptation to look inwards, to ignore the needs of others, to be insular in our thinking, to put ourselves at the centre of our thoughts and our lives. Therein lies, I think, my essential problem with selfies: for those addicted to them, it means that wherever they

are, whatever they are looking at, by whoever they are surrounded, they are in the centre. That is not Christ's way. He shows us that the world is huge, varied and beautiful, and its people are varied and beautiful. And we will be proper citizens of his kingdom if we look out and care for his world and his people rather than looking and caring only for ourselves. *Nicholas*

SERVICES

You will see from the back page that there will be a regular pattern of worship for October. This must of necessity be experimental. I would be grateful for your views and, of course, it must be subject to the changing whims of government guidance. If there have to be any changes, I will include them in my weekly letter (do let me know if you not on the receiving end of those) and on the website.

For all indoor services, it goes without saying that face coverings will need to be worn.

I will provide all that is needed for communion services: all I would ask is that there is white cloth on the altar; all this, of course, depends on any sudden changes imposed by the government. *Nicholas*

OCTOBER READINGS

Sunday October 4th

New Testament	Philippians 3: 4 - 14
Gospel	Matthew 21: 33 - end

Sunday October 11th

New Testament	Philippians 4: 1 - 9
Gospel	Matthew 22: 1 - 14

Sunday October 18th

New Testament	2 Timothy 4: 5 - 17
Gospel	Luke 10: 1 - 9

Sunday October 25th

New Testament	Colossians 3: 12 - 17
Gospel	Matthew 24: 30 - 35

For services of Morning Worship, could the reader please read the Gospel reading? If there is by any chance more than one reader, then the second reader could do the New Testament reading.

For services of Holy Communion, could the reader please do the New Testament reading? And thank you for agreeing to read. Nicholas

ALL SOULS DAY

This year, All Souls Day – November 2nd – falls on a Monday. We always mark this day as an opportunity to commend by name those who have died. It seems especially appropriate that we mark this occasion properly this year when we have had a number of funerals where very few people have been able to attend. I propose therefore this year to be a bit creative with the church calendar. Sunday November 1st is All Saints Day, and we will mark that at the 9.30am service that day at Craswall: but for the 11.00am service, we will celebrate All Souls Day with a communion service at Clodock. I will at that service read out all the names included last year plus the names of those whose funerals I have taken this year. If there are any other names you would like to have read out, do please let me know. *Nicholas*

THE BISHOP IS BACK!

So much did the Bishop of Hereford clearly enjoy his visit to Llanveynoe Church at the end of August (and it was really lovely to see so many people there) that he would like to come again. He will be with us at Clodock Church on Sunday November 15th for the 11.00am service. There will be more details in the November Newsletter. *Nicholas*

KEEPING IN TOUCH

I know I keep on repeating this section, but I still get people in the benefice unaware of what is going on. If you don't know what is going on, let me know: if you know someone else blissfully unaware, again, let me know. Please!

There are many ways in which we are trying to keep everyone in touch at the moment but, as with everything, I am sure we could be doing more.

On a deanery level, Anne Lloyd, our Deanery Mission Coordinator, is sending out regular emails about things in the deanery. If you are not on her receiving list, do drop her an email at abbeydoredmc@gmail.com. As not everyone is on email, she is also posting hard copies out. If you would like to be on that receiving list, do give her a ring on 07432 873422.

The Abbeydore Deanery Facebook page is a veritable treasure chest of resources. At the time of writing, there are 220 members of the group, some of whom have joined Facebook simply to be members. It is the easiest thing in the world to join them!

I am emailing out weekly letters to people in the benefice with news and views for them. If you are not on the receiving end and would like to be, drop me a line at lowton.nicholas@virgin.net. If you are not on email and would like copies, do please phone Anne Lloyd up – number above – and she will make sure that happens.

I am trying to phone as many people as possible each week, but finding slots has been problematic. If you would like to be added to my list, give me a ring on 01981 510675. We have within the benefice trained Pastoral Visitors. If you would like regular contact with one of them, please let me know.

A group of us is meeting on line every Wednesday evening for the wonderful and peaceful service of Compline. If you would like to join us, do please drop me an email. *Nicholas*

Deanery Events

In autumn, perhaps more than any other season, we can see change all around us, and perhaps this year we may feel it more keenly than ever.

The people and places within Abbeydore deanery are intent on doing all that is possible to continue to provide opportunities for sharing God's love in our area. But how...?

Perhaps you would consider one of these?

- Attend a service of worship in one of our churches or churchyards. We can send you details by post or email. Just get in touch using the details below.
- Join in with our Church at Home services. A service goes live at 10am each Sunday on the Abbeydore Deanery YouTube channel, and they are there to view at any time.

- Join our Facebook Group. Just search for Abbeydore Deanery. In this group there are lots of regular posts and the chance to comment and chat too.
- Let us know if you'd like to hear from one of our pastoral visitors. We have a wonderful team who are willing to give you a call for a chat.
- Join in with The Big Church Read. The current book is The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer. You can find out more on their website. <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/>
- If you're already doing one (or all) of the above. Could we ask you to share the information with one of your friends and neighbours? Sometimes it's daunting to talk about our faith, but statistics show that many people are now really interested in finding out more. We never know what a word might mean.

This article is being written before the Gathering takes place, so there will be an update on that event in the November issue. If you want to know more in the meantime, please get in touch. *Anne Lloyd*

Thanks

CORNEWALL ARMS - BELATED EASTER RAFFLE

A huge thank you to everyone who supported this recent raffle (from providing prizes to buying tickets). Also an even bigger thank you to The Queen of Clodock for doing her regal duty by selecting the winning tickets. The raffle raised an amazing £318. The Cornwall Arms Charity Pot was also emptied of £132 – this was raised from locals' loose change, donations and money raised from the book exchange.

As a result of all this a cheque for £450 was sent to Midlands Air Ambulance. Thank you. *Isobel*

Forthcoming Events

LONGTOWN THURSDAY CLUB

I had hoped to have more optimistic news for members this month. Sadly, however, in view of the re-introduction of severe restrictions on the numbers able to meet indoors, it is not possible to plan any club meetings for October or November. *Pauline (01873 851782)*

NEWTON ST MARGARETS WOMEN'S GUILD

In light of the latest COVID 19 restrictions we will need to rethink our autumn plans for the Guild.

In the meantime, please take care and we will be in touch WHEN the situation improves.

MICHAELCHURCH FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Sadly, the ARTS REACH show *Victor and Albert* planned for November has needed to be cancelled and there will be no Flicks for the rest of 2020. Lets hope there can be ALAW (Welsh folk group) in January and our Flicks in the Sticks during 2021.

Local Newsround

MICHAELCHURCH ESCLEY PRIMARY & PRE SCHOOL

Given everything that has happened over the past 6 months it is amazing how 'normal' school feels at the start of this new academic year. Of course we have class bubbles and separate playtimes and lots and lots of handwashing/sanitising but for all that, the children are the same as always and they are extremely happy to be back together at school.

At the end of the summer term we said goodbye to our biggest cohort of Year 6 children that we've had for many years. However we have also welcomed many new children to the school recently and our numbers are thriving, both in the Primary School and the Pre-school. In fact, Pre-school is now full which is fantastic news.

We have done a lot of work over the summer on The Spinney, our Forest School area, including clearing the pond and cutting back the highly overgrown willow. The area has also been extended with a new boundary fence. In addition to this we have created a new Reception/Pre-school play area thanks to the very hard work from some amazing volunteers.

It is clearly going to be an Autumn Term like no other, with many of the activities usually associated with this time of year such as class assemblies, carol concerts, Christmas Fayres and of course our wonderful Walking Nativity, most likely on hold. However, learning will proceed as usual and we will be ensuring the children have a great time doing it. Already Oak Class, whose topic this term is 'Rivers', had a great time, and a highly educational one, locating the source of the river Monnow on the flanks of Hay Bluff and there are other watery learning opportunities planned!

The children also have the opportunity of attending an Adventure Club at Longtown Outdoor Centre on Thursday evenings and many of them are taking up this opportunity.

Overall you could say that Autumn 2020 at Michaelchurch Escley Primary School and Pre-school is the same, but different. What is definitely the same, is the positive, happy children, supportive families and wonderful staff which make up our amazing school community.

Louise Crocker, Headteacher

LONGTOWN VILLAGE PRIDE (LVP) AND THE 2020 AGM

LVP is a long established group which welcomes volunteers and has generally met in Broome's Garden on the last Saturday morning of the month to undertake work in Broome's Garden, the Castle environs and elsewhere in the village. This pattern has been disrupted by the pandemic, but individuals have still been carrying out socially distanced work on a range of projects by arrangement. Information about LVP and what we do can be found on Facebook at "Broome's Garden and Longtown Village Pride" or we can send you a leaflet by email. We hope that it won't be too long before the usual pattern can be restored!

Our plans for the 2020 LVP Annual General Meeting, due to be held on Monday 26 October, have had to be changed in the light of Government Covid guidance. Instead of our usual meeting we will carry out the required business virtually.

Agenda, Minutes from the 2019 AGM, President's, Treasurer's and Special Project Reports etc will be available, together with any other relevant material. These papers will be sent out automatically by email to LVP members who attended last year or who have been involved during the year, but are also available to anyone who would like to receive them and contribute to our considerations.

If you would like to receive these papers please contact Liz Kidd on lizkidd2003@yahoo.com by 19 October. If there are issues or questions that you would like to raise once you have read these reports then please submit them to Liz before 26th October and we will respond to these in due course.

Liz Kidd, (Secretary, Longtown Village Pride)

Round and About

VOWCHURCH & DISTRICT GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Whilst Herefordshire has fewer cases than other areas please remember the latest Government guidelines to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

It is critical that everybody observes the following key behaviours:

- **Hands** – Wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds.
- **Face** – Wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **Space** – Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors).

To reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus, try to keep at least 2 metres away from people you do not live with. Social distancing is essential to stop the spread of the virus, as it is more likely to spread when people are close together. An infected person can pass on the virus even if they do not have any symptoms, through talking, breathing, coughing or sneezing.

When with people you do not live with, you should also avoid: physical contact; being close and face-to-face; and shouting or singing close to them. You should also avoid crowded areas with lots of people; and touching things that other people have touched.

Where you cannot stay 2 metres apart you should stay more than 1 metre apart, as well as taking extra steps to stay safe. For example:

- On public transport and in many indoor spaces, you must wear a face covering by law, unless you are exempt.
- Move outdoors, where it is safer and there is more space.
- If indoors, make sure rooms are well ventilated by keeping windows and doors open.

You do not need to socially distance from anyone in your household, meaning the people you live with. You also do not need to socially distance from someone you're in an established relationship with, or anyone in your legally-permitted support bubble if you are in one.

It may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing when providing care to a young child, or

person with a disability or health condition. You should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing these types of care, and take other precautions such as washing hands and opening windows for ventilation.

When seeing friends and family you do not live with you should:

- meet in groups of 6 or less;
- follow social distancing rules;
- limit how many different people you see socially over a short period of time;
- meet people outdoors where practical: meeting people outdoors is safer than meeting people indoors because fresh air provides better ventilation.

The police will have the powers to enforce these legal limits, including to issue fines (fixed penalty notices) of £100, doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of *£3,200

(* Editor's note: This was written prior to 20 September when an increase to a maximum of £10,000 was announced).

GOLDEN VALLEY DAY CENTRE

The committee met at the beginning of September to discuss how we were going to proceed with Day Centre and we have decided that we are going to remain closed for the time being. We are going to review the situation again in November but there is a strong possibility that we will not open until after Christmas. We will keep you informed if there are any changes.

We understand that this will be upsetting for some of you but we felt that it was better to keep everyone as safe as possible and this was the only way to do it.

Our draw was held at the end of August and lucky winners were Mr James Davies from The Stensley and Mrs Pam Savage – congratulations to them both.

For those of you who read about the creeping Clematis over Maurice and Heulwen's car it has now been cut and the car is now free.

I am sorry that our news isn't much at the moment but if any of our members wants to let me know how it's been for them during this time please get in touch.

In the meantime keep staying safe and well. *Sarah Murrin*

Notices and Advertisements

Face Masks

Brighten up the current pandemic and wear pretty, bright and comfortable face masks.

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Family packs available £7 for 20 or £3 each.

Please Contact **Caroline Gwillim**

01873 860 202 / 07929 545 804

Llanwonog Farm, Longtown Hereford, HR2 0LP

POSTCARDS FROM LIFE

For three weeks from Monday 26th October, around 200 mini-masterpieces go under the hammer during Postcards from Life.

This year's online-only event gives you the chance to hang on your wall a small work that portrays a big heart.

The lots have been created by some of the most talented artists around and can all be viewed on the St Michael's Hospice website (www.st-michaels-hospice.org.uk) where you'll also find a link to the Brightwells page to bid.

Event co-ordinator Gaynor Warren said: 'The quality of entries this year is outstanding. I think it's our best collection yet. So, get ready to browse and bid for work which will brighten any room, safe in the knowledge that your support will help families in our community living with a terminal illness.'

LIGHT UP A LIFE

Light up a Life is an invitation to everyone in our community to shine a light in memory of loved ones.

This year we will be unable to continue the tradition of organising our much-loved Light up a Life events throughout the community.

Instead, we're already busy filming a special service set in Hereford Cathedral which will be live-screened from St Michael's Hospice on Sunday 20th December and we hope as many people as possible will be able to join us online for the event.

We are also inviting people to play a part by filming themselves lighting a candle in memory of a loved one and sending the video to our Communications Team who will then create a montage of clips to form part of the online service.

There will also be an opportunity for people to remember their loved ones on a special website and on an installation which we hope to install in a public place in the centre of Hereford.

To find out more call the Hospice Communications Team on 01432 852 631 or visit st-michaels-hospice.org.uk



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*Report to the police if the crime is still happening, the suspect is in the local area or if you are vulnerable and unable to contact Action Fraud.

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Sunday (May - Oct):	10.00 am - 2.00 pm
(Nov - April):	10.00 am - 12 noon
Bank Holiday Mondays	10.00 am - 2.00 pm

We have an **eclectic variety** of stock, coarse sea salt to Christmas cards (yes I said it) green figs to gloves, via torches and tagliatelle, just ask us.

Woweee, schools are back and we are all still under a cloud of uncertainty and as a dear friend constantly told me 20 years ago, night will follow day.

This year was always going to be tricky for us financially after losing the Royal Mail sorting income, so a very huge thank you for your continued loyal support, which is making such a difference to us.

I just love autumn, back into jumpers the comfort of a hot drink. Thick stew and soups with slabs of bread and lashings of butter after doing work outside in chillier weather.

Cosy fires, flickering candle light and learning something new.

As we all adapt, you can do your bit to help and protect yourself and others.

It is all as simple as **THREE, TWO, ONE**

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Again thank you marvellous bunch, so far this year you have reused the equivalent of **1601** 500ml bottles. Together can we beat the 2019 total of 1912?

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Continued...

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Royal Mail have put the prices up for some overseas countries, a leaflet is available at the post office

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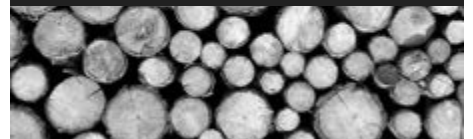
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Sunday October 18th, Luke the Evangelist

9.30am	Llanveynoe	Morning Worship
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Sunday October 25th, Last Sunday after Trinity

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As we approach winter and the economic uncertainty for people and the currently rising Covid infection rates, we may reconsider this decision.

We hold the funds from monetary donations and are currently working on putting a scheme in place for their use. Details will be released within the coming weeks.

**If you require help of any sort, or know someone who does,
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