

The Bridge

The magazine for All Saints' Church, Marlow

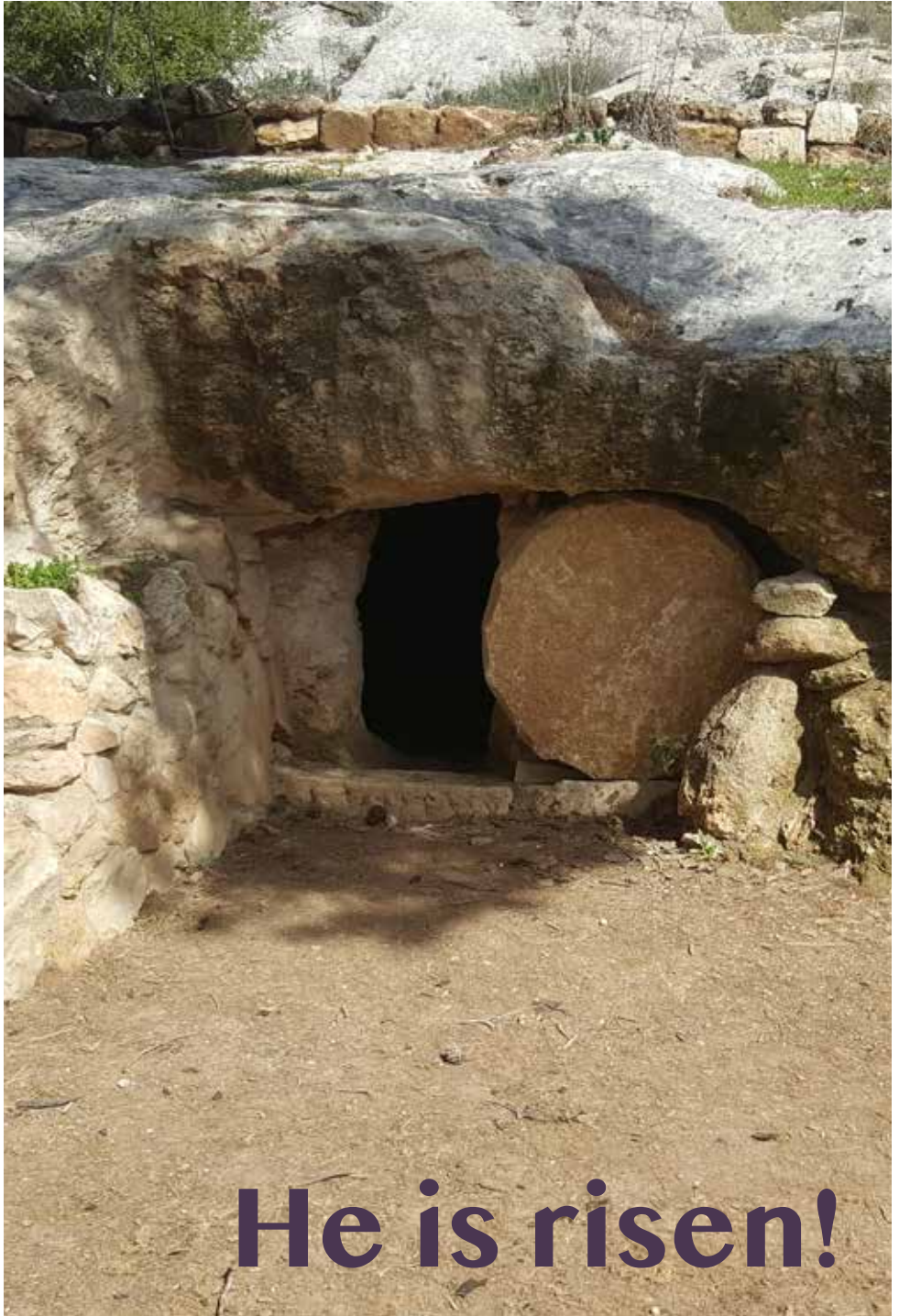
Easter 2021 - Free Copy



All Saints
Marlow



four churches,
one vision



He is risen!

Welcome to the Easter edition of All Saints Marlow's 'The Bridge' Magazine.



2 Throughout this year of trials and sorrows, what do you count as your greatest losses? Rev Dave Bull uses his own experience of loss this last year, as well as those of Jesus and his disciples in the build up to the very first Easter to try and offer an understanding of loss.

5 Though the pandemic has been undeniably awful; there have been some silver linings, like the innumerable acts of kindness performed by normal people every day. Gill Taylor talks about the contagiousness of kindness and what we can do for others in times of need.



8 How does it feel to be the new person? As Rev Sarah Jones prepares to start her role as the new Associate Vicar at All Saints Marlow, she writes about how important it is to be welcoming and inclusive. Jesus teaches us to welcome everyone, no matter who they are.

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Through loss, God brings new life

by **Dave Bull**

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 NLT

Throughout this last year of ‘trials and sorrows’, and especially since my father’s death in January, I have been meditating on the experience of loss. It has been a year of many and varied losses.

I wonder what you count as the greatest losses in your life over the past year?

Perhaps you have lost your job, or a longed-for holiday.

Perhaps you are mourning the loss of schooling, basic liberties, times

with friends and loved ones, mental health, opportunities, confidence, hope or your dreams for the future.

Perhaps, like over 126,000 families in the UK you have lost a loved one to Covid-19 or, like my own family, have lost someone you loved and whom you were not able to see very often – or at all – in the last months of life.

What does our Christian faith have to say about loss? In a world without God, loss has no ultimate meaning.

It is simply a brute fact. In a world with God, however, that is to say a world that bears the mark of a loving design, we can dare to ask (and even expect) to find meaning in painful experiences.



My own experiences of loss this year have led me to see that, in the loving hands of God, loss can be a means of growth and life.

Losing a parent has been for me an unwelcome invitation to grow. For the first time in my life I have no earthly father at the end of the telephone to offer advice, encouragement or correction.

When my car battery fails (as it recently did), I can no longer call my dad (who used to design cars) and ask him to fix it for me. I must learn to do it for myself – and this, though painful, is growth.

This path is one I have travelled before. It was much easier to live in my parents' home than to rent my own flat. But, with some minor hitches like once paying my rent twice in one month, I learned to do it and decades later I can provide a home for my own children.

Once upon a time it was easier to rely on others to manage my money, to do my washing and to prepare my food, but growth into adulthood meant learning how to do these things. So I did.

In the realm of faith, many of us resist this kind of growth. We rely on others to teach us the Bible, rather than learning to read it ourselves.

We trust that others will pray, because we don't really know

how to do it ourselves. We expect others to care for those who are in desperate need, even though we could get involved, because we don't have the experience. We leave it to someone else to exercise great faith, because our faith feels too small.

All of these are opportunities to grow. If we don't take them then, one day, the person we relied upon to do it for us will be taken away from us. Confronted with this loss, we have a choice to make: will we embrace growth or will we rebel and remain immature?

As I write these words it is Holy Week. We see the disciples facing exactly this choice.

They have come to love and rely on Jesus, who has taught them many things but also warned them that one day they will not have him with them. They tried their best to learn and to grow but were not ready for the moment of loss.

We are no different. In the confusion of their shock and grief we see several reactions. I wonder which best describes you?

Judas seeks to control what is going on. His loss is a loss of being in control. He takes things into his own hands and provokes a confrontation between Jesus and the Romans. We can only guess at his motives. But he fails and his

hope collapses with tragic results.

Most of the disciples lose their nerve at the disintegration of the future they had envisaged.

Their loss is a loss of courage. They run away at his arrest and their faith falters. Later they re-engage with Jesus and discover a courage that eluded them in the crisis.

Peter sticks with Jesus for a while but ultimately the reality of what he can see with his eyes overpowers his trust in the word Jesus had spoken.

His loss is a loss of faith. He turns away, denying his faith.

The women who followed Jesus were distraught at his arrest, but follow him through the pain that pierces their souls. Through many tears they continue to stick with him to the cross and even to the tomb. They lose hope, but are best placed to find it when hope reappears.

Jesus himself is left alone, in tortured pain and seemingly abandoned by God forever. He loses the comfort of his Father's presence, which he has known for all eternity. He surrenders himself to the loss, trusting that God is in control despite the agony of his death.

With the exception of Judas, all these characters are reunited through the resurrection. The loss

of Jesus's life on the cross results in the finding of all who seemed lost.

The good shepherd regathers his lost sheep who had wandered off, just as Jesus foretold in the parable in Luke 15. All that was lost: courage, faith, hope and the powerful presence of God are restored in the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit that follows it. Though all seemed lost, God brings new life.

So as we look back on a year of unprecedented loss, how will we respond?

Dear Lord, preserve us from making the error of Judas and trying to assert our own control on events.

Encourage us that, whatever we have lost and however we fail you, you will find us and bring us home.

Thank you that, when you lost your life, you overcame the world and defeated the power of loss in our lives.

Open our eyes to see that the future you have prepared for us is immeasurably greater than anything we have lost.

May God bring new life to you this Easter, so that you can share it far and wide.

Christ is Risen – Alleluia!

Contagious kindness

by Gill Taylor

Though the pandemic has been undeniably awful in lots of ways, there have been some silver linings, and one of these has been the innumerable acts of kindness performed by normal people every day.

I wonder what you've seen or done yourself through this season that shares God's love and kindness in the world.

Have you collected shopping or prescriptions for someone who was self-isolating? Maybe checked in with a neighbour who might feel lonely? Shared encouragement with someone exhausted after their NHS shift or their home-schooling marathon?

These things can seem small, but they mean a lot. Often one act of kindness inspires another; kindness truly is contagious.

It can be easy to see only the bigger things; such as the amazing

effort of the Marlow Meals initiative, or the herculean efforts behind the roll out of the Covid vaccination programme; and to think that our small, personal efforts don't make much difference.

This is to miss the point that all of these seemingly big things are done by real people too, doing their bit, choosing to be kind and to serve others. As Rend Collective would say:

“We are your Church, we are the hope on earth!”

The biggest and best things that the Church does are simply individuals working together as part of the Body of Christ – the Church.

Working physically together has a bunch of logistical challenges at the moment, so I want to spend the rest of this article thinking about some of the things we can do individually, at whatever time suits us, to show God's kindness to the world:



Get in touch

Why not call / send a card or message to someone. You could do this for a different person every day or every week, just to let them know you're thinking of them. If you like you could send them a Bible verse too.

Send treats

Over the years I've had fun sending anonymous gifts to people, either in the post or by leaving them on the doorstep. You could make cupcakes / sweets / other edibles, or send flowers. Remember, it's the thought rather than the price that counts, and you'll never have a better excuse to ring the doorbell and run away!

Pray

Sometimes we feel helpless when others are struggling, but the truth is that we can bring people to God in prayer any time we like. This is an amazing privilege! Tips from the Prayer Course for praying regularly for something are:

- 1) Keep it simple
- 2) Keep it real
- 3) Keep it up

Pay it forward

Pay for a coffee for someone else behind you in the queue. Some cafes allow you to pay for a 'suspended' coffee that they can then give away to someone who otherwise couldn't afford one. This works for other things too.

Encourage

Find something good to encourage; it could be an email someone's written, a well cooked meal, a good music practice, a thoughtful gesture – the list is endless. Get into the habit of noticing when people have done something well, and encouraging them about it. (NB – this one is particularly good if you are more usually inclined to noticing the problems or flaws).

Be generous

If you can afford to, consider gifting money. I've been on both ends of this, and it is fun to do and can be a





real blessing. Often God will prompt you to give money to someone at just the right time. Of course, there are loads of ways to be generous; an easy one is to buy some extra items in your grocery shop for the foodbank.

Watch your words

Be careful with how you share opinions and feedback, especially when not in person. Our words are powerful and have the power to hurt or heal (see James 3).

Say thank you

Thank your postie, rubbish collector, doctor, teacher, vicar, mum, delivery driver... this one works well with 'send treats' (see above!) Often we forget to thank people that serve us faithfully in all sorts of ways, try not to let this happen and remember to say Thank You!

Love the planet

Consider what you could do to show kindness to the planet. Pick up litter; recycle what you can; reuse where possible; turn off your

engine when you're not moving; reduce your meat consumption; make the most of the natural light; consider making a bird feeder / hedgehog house / bug hotel.

Make time

Bless others by making time for them. As we start to come out of Lockdown, a lot of people will only just be beginning to process the trauma of the last year. Ask people if they are doing OK, and make time to hear the real answer. Make sure they know that when they are ready to talk – you are ready to listen.

This is by no means an exhaustive list: you'll have some great ideas too, and I'd love to hear them.

It's also not a tick list and not meant to make anyone feel guilty; you don't have to do them all, and certainly not all at once!

Maybe start the day by asking God – what can I do today to bless someone and show your kindness? Then see what comes to mind. Let me know how you get on.

God's unconditional welcome

by Rev Sarah Jones

As I write, children across the country are returning to school, after almost three months of being at home.

First day back nerves would have dominated many a household, along with lost shoes, water bottles and anxious glances at the clock.

Being part of a physically gathered community brings joys and pressures. Will I fit in? What if I'm not picked for the team? What if I am picked upon?

Childhood memories of being excluded at school, can last a lifetime. But so can memories of that person who first spoke your name and included you in their group; the smile from someone who first made you feel welcome.

In the Old Testament book of Ruth, there is a scene in chapter 2, where

Ruth, the outsider, is working hard in the fields, behind the harvesters, gathering leftover barley stalks.

As the other workers stop for their mid-day meal, Ruth rests too. But she sits apart from them. She is looked down upon and has nothing to eat.

And then there comes a beautiful moment, when Boaz, the field owner, changes all that. He invites her, "Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar."

She goes and sits with the others, included, welcomed because Boaz has noticed and changed the group dynamic.

Again and again in the gospels we see Jesus do likewise. He notices and loves the forgotten, the overlooked, the excluded, the



despised; from the woman at the well, to the leper, to the blind man told all his life to keep quiet.

It is no surprise, for Jesus' birth was first witnessed by outsiders, shepherds, who lived apart from the community on the hills.

At his death too, he hung on a cross outside the city, on Jerusalem's rubbish heap, next to a condemned criminal.

The Son of God, no less, rejected and despised, even as he came to save us all.

At the heart of Easter, is this glorious message of God's love for all people, each one precious, each one welcomed to participate in the very life of God himself, through the Lord Jesus. I wonder if you know that welcome for yourself? And if so, have you accepted it?

Later in the Epistles, Paul expends great emotion and energy in

reminding the church that the welcome of outsiders is at the heart of the gospel. In Galatians, in particular he calls out the believers for their failure to eat with newcomers who were Gentiles.

The church there had somehow created a mangled gospel of distinction and distance.

As Christians we are a people of great diversity and yet we follow one Lord, share one faith, one baptism and are filled by one Spirit.

This unity in diversity is radically counter-cultural and its impact extends far beyond the church community. Theologian and Bishop, Graham Tomlin writes,

“A church that especially values the weak and the forgotten is a place of resistance to a celebrity-obsessed world, whose currency is influence, fame and power. The result of that way of life is a society in which people feel the need to





prove themselves more beautiful, clever or influential than everyone else. The community of Christ, with a crucified messiah at its heart, is one that offers a radically different way - not of competition but of compassion.” (from ‘Why being yourself is a bad idea’ p. 165).

As we join All Saints as a family in a few weeks time, I know already that we will receive a warm welcome from you.

All Saints is a loving community and welcoming new people is one of All Saints’ values: “We believe that God welcomes us unconditionally into his family, so we welcome new people as if they are family members returning home”.

It is therefore a joy that one of my responsibilities will be to oversee welcome alongside the existing team.

We are called to be a church that looks and sounds like Jesus. Led and strengthened by the Spirit, may we each live out the gospel in Marlow and beyond, to see God’s kingdom come, here on earth as in heaven.

Rev Sarah Jones will be joining us at the end of April as our new Associate Rector.

She is currently Interim Minister at St John’s Church in Woodley.

Sarah will have particular responsibility for welcome, discipleship and pastoral care at All Saints.

Sarah is married to Nick and they have two teenage children, Izzi and Fergus. Before coming to Reading for Sarah’s curacy at Greyfriars Church, the family lived in Lindfield in Sussex, worshipping at another All Saints.

They also lived abroad in Bermuda for Nick’s work when the children were little.

Sarah worked previously as a political lobbyist in Westminster, both in-house and for agencies.

She loves (muddy) walks, cups of tea, and a good detective novel.

Small Groups

Bringing faith to our everyday lives

Our small groups are the perfect way to get to know each other better.

The knitting group has been keeping their hands busy knitting a large blanket and lap blanket to keep warm in the chilly months, along with a selection of hats and some smaller items to be sent to Knit For Peace.

Our latest set of groups will be published on our website soon after Easter so please do keep a look out for details.



Images courtesy of Julia Stacey



Chiltern Arts Festival

Following the third national lockdown in January, Chiltern Arts quickly made the decision to reschedule the planned Festival, and has announced the new dates as Friday 21 to Thursday 27 May.

The Festival theme this year is 'musical resonance' – exploring how music can mean so many different things to individual listeners.

Internationally-acclaimed harpsichord player Mahan Esfahani treats us to one of Bach's most loved works, the Goldberg Variations, at All Saints Marlow on Monday 24 May at 7.30pm

Tickets, drinks and programmes are available to pre-purchase at <https://chilternarts.com/whats-on/> and with socially-distanced capacities taken into account it's best to book early to avoid disappointment!

Join Chiltern Arts in May for something we will never again take for granted: the luxury of experiencing a week of live in-person concerts – the vibrations of the room, those real human moments and the sheer joy of sharing the experience with others... albeit whilst masked from a safe social distance!





Do you shop online? If so, it has never been easier to support a charity of your choice!

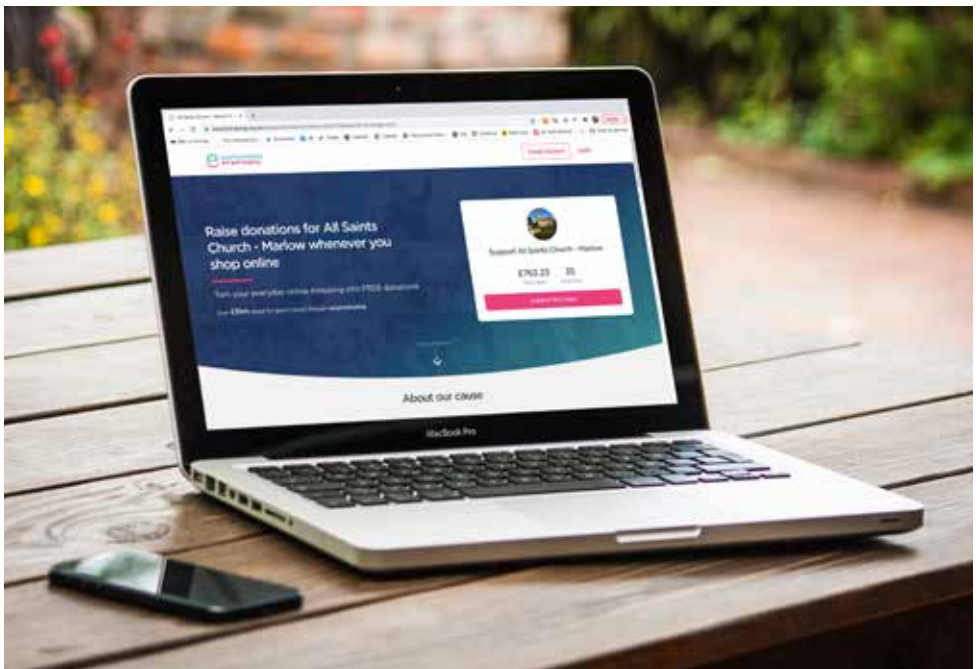
Easyfundraising is a simple way to do this. Just register with them online, add their helpful reminder and whenever you go to one of the 4,000 plus participating retailers, they will make a contribution to your chosen charity.

How does it work? Once you have registered, each time you go to a participating site you will be invited go in via the Easyfundraising link.

You then shop as normal and the retailer will make a donation to Easyfundraising for your chosen charity at no extra cost to you!

All Saints' Marlow is registered with the scheme and our 30 loyal supporters have raised over £750 in the last two years.

We would love you to choose All Saints as your chosen charity and if you use the link **4u-team.org/easy** then Easyfundraising will give a starting donation of £5 to the church.



Community news from Marlow's Church of England schools



HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH OF ENGLAND (A) SCHOOL



Holy Trinity

by Julie Field, Acting Headteacher

Well it definitely wasn't the start to 2021 that we envisaged.

On 4 January our staff team came together to ensure we had everything in place to welcome our children back safely.

At 8pm that same evening however, following the announcement of our third lockdown, we began planning for implementing remote learning and opening the school for our vulnerable and critical worker children.

Over the following weeks we provided online learning for all our pupils and were able to offer places in school to nearly 100 pupils a week. We provided grocery boxes to a large number of our families and, through the enormous generosity of the local community, were able to ensure that every pupil had access to a device and Wi-Fi.

Although this lockdown has been significantly harder for our families, it was amazing to see how the Holy Trinity family was able to come together in such testing times.

We are incredibly grateful to all our parents for their perseverance and



support and enormously proud of all of our children for their resilience, bravery and hope.

Thankfully on 8 March we were finally able to welcome all our children back into school and it has been fabulous to be able to once again walk along the corridors and see classrooms full of eager children and to be able to watch them all back on the playground, able once again to play with their friends.

Although still in lockdown, we have been able to hold some events including a Year 3 Stone Age WOW day where the children had the opportunity to make their own butter to spread on the bread that they made and cooked over our fire pit.



They also enjoyed carving spear heads and basket weaving.

On 19 March we also celebrated Red Nose Day and raising money for Comic Relief.

Amazingly our fabulous PTA have managed to continue to find inventive, Covid-friendly ways to both support the children and raise money for the school and we are looking forward to being able to use the money raised on some exciting new additions to the school.

At this unpredictable time, I and all the staff at Holy Trinity would like to thank everyone in our community for their ongoing support. It has been an interesting half term of remote learning.



Little Marlow C of E School

by Katie Healy, Head of School



Oak class have explored stories with animal characters and learning about life on the farm.

Aspen class have been learning about real life superheroes. They have been exploring this topic through pop art, and newspaper reports.

Elder class enjoyed learning about castles through their "Towers, tunnels and turrets" topic. They looked at the structures of buildings and recreated their own models.



To celebrate World Book day we hosted a Little Marlow 'masked reader' event.

A new video was released every hour and the children had great fun guessing who was behind each mask.

Our children have been so excited to return to school together.

We created a wishing tree to help all pupils reflect on their time at home and capture the excitement of the return.



Guess who is behind the mask



Marlow C of E Infant School

by Sharon Reynolds, Headteacher

As the new year dawned we were set, yet again, a whole heap of new challenges but in true Marlow Infants fashion, we faced them with positivity and as a team.

I am full of admiration for our staff. They have learned new skills, put the children's wellbeing and learning first and been creative beyond belief. Every member of the team has shown incredible resilience and flexibility.

The teaching assistants led the classes for the groups of key worker and vulnerable children, working beyond their job descriptions because they wanted to do what was needed for the children and the school.

The teachers changed the way they worked, almost overnight

– planning and preparing learning for children at home and in school.

The office team continued to be flexible in their working practices, making sure we all had what we needed in school and keeping the school community informed about what was going on.

Reflecting back on the term, and feeling a lot better now that the school is full of children again, I feel that this experience has brought us closer together as staff but also as a school community.

It was always my ambition to consider the needs of the families as well as the children's learning while lockdown has been in place. Making sure we kept in contact and trying to allow our remote learning to evolve so that there was something different each week.

Considering that no family is experiencing lockdown in the same way, we needed to plan the learning to meet the needs of families because, given the age of the children, we were very reliant on the support of the parents and carers to help deliver the learning.

Our school's Christian vision focuses on treating everyone with dignity and respect because



everyone is unique and precious. 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our own likeness' (Genesis 1:26). This has driven the way we have approached the last 12 months in particular.

Making time to consider the needs of each child and their family has, we hope, helped them to feel more able to face the tumultuous times we have been living through.

As we look forward to the summer and being released a little more from the confines of Lockdown, I would like to share with you some of what has been going on in school (and at home) over the last 3 months.

Remote learning

Throughout the spring term our school was open for a small number of key worker and vulnerable children but the majority of our learning was done remotely.

We utilised our school website, Google Classroom and an app called Tapestry to provide flexible learning for our families enabling them to fit their child's learning around working from home and other family commitments.

From the outset, we committed to setting learning following the planned and sequenced curriculum which would have been followed had the children been in school.

Each day a main teaching element was posted for each area of learning with a follow up activity to be handed in.

English, Maths and Phonics were posted daily with one of the other subjects from the wider curriculum each day eg Science, RE or Art.

We also posted a story time video every day from a different member of the school staff.

We had regular online 'Time to Talk' sessions allowing small groups of children to meet and chat with their class teacher and friends. These took the form of Show and Tell, story times and scavenger hunts.

Many of our teachers discovered hidden talents as they prepared videos for the children to watch from home utilising green screen technology and video editing techniques.

As well as the regular remote learning we have joined together for some special days as a school community, even though we were apart.

Number Day

This year we decided to support the wonderful work of the NSPCC by joining their Number Day campaign on 5 February.

We invited the children to 'Dress as a Digit' during the day and there were lots of number related

activities posted through our Remote Learning for them to take part in.

Mrs Howarth used the book 365 Penguins by Jean-Luc Fromental as an inspiration for the activities and started the day with a short video to explain the ideas and introduce the book.

Some of the activities included scavenger hunts and bowling and our families really got behind the day donating online to raise just over £300 for the NSPCC.



Non-Screen Day and RSPB Bird Count

On 29 February we had a 'non-screen' day when we encouraged everyone to switch off their screens and do activities outside.

The date was chosen to tie in with the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch and so we provided information on lots of bird related activities for the children to try. These included spending an hour taking part in the Garden Birdwatch, making bird

feeders, and creating pictures from found materials.

World Book Day

Even though most of our children were not in school on 4 March we still celebrated our love of books on World Book Day. We invited children to dress up as their favourite book character and join their teachers and classmates for a virtual meeting to tell everyone about their character.

Staff and children who were in school also dressed up and Mrs Burkitt recorded a special story for families to listen to at home.

Easter Garden

In our first week back to school the children in Reception began thinking about Easter and how Christians use the symbol of the cross to celebrate at this time. The children in Reception used primroses to plant a special Easter Garden in the shape of a cross.

Some of the questions they have been talking about are:

- What happened on Good Friday?
- Why do hot cross buns have a cross on top?
- What does the cross remind Christians of?
- Why might Christians put a cross in their Easter garden?
- What do they want to remember?

Quiz time

by Liz Ferris

Here are some genuine 11+ questions from the 1950s.

Without using Google or a calculator, how would you get on?

English

- 1) He is as good as her.
- 2) One of the thieves were court.
- 3) The girl sed she done it herself.
- 4) Give me them oringes.
- 5) The opra singer sings quite nice.
- 6) He didnt except the hansome present.
- 7) She would of given him a biskit.
- 8) A more kinder man never lived.
- 9) Its no good saying jam is different to mamalade.
- 10) He past the offis on his way to the stashun.

Arithmetic

- 1) Divide 460,731 by 59.
- 2) Multiply 687 by 208.
- 3) In a box of 6 dozen eggs, 23 were broken. How many whole eggs are left?
- 4) Find the sum of all the numbers between 5 and 25 that are divisible by 3.
- 5) If 24 November is a Saturday, what day is 10 December?
- 6) On a 24hour clock, how does 13 minutes to 10pm appear?
- 7) What 2 numbers come next?
63 58 53 48 43 38
- 8) And here? 3 9 27 81 243
- 9) What time is it 87 minutes after 10.42am?
- 10) How long would it take to go 100 miles at 15 miles an hour?



English 1) He is as good as she is. 2) One of the thieves was caught. 3) The girl said she had done it herself. 4) Give me those oranges. 5) The opera singer sings quite nicely. 6) He didn't accept (or expect) the handsome present. 7) She would have given him a biscuit. 8) A kinder man never lived. 9) It's no good saying jam is different from marmalade. 10) He passed the office on his way to the station.

Arithmetic 1) 7,809 2) 142,896 3) 49 4) 105 5) Monday 6) 21.47 7) 33 and 28 8) 729 and 2,187 9) 12.09 10) 6h 40m

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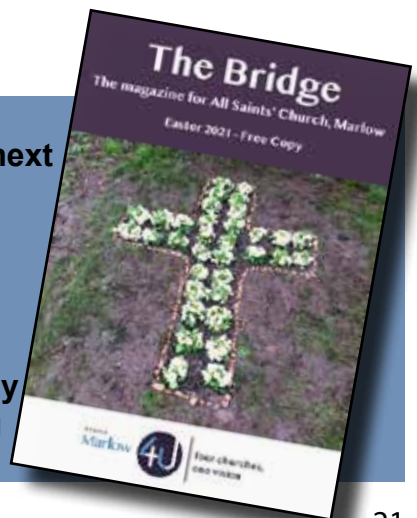


<https://www.instagram.com/allsaintsmarlow/>

Would you like to contribute to the next edition of The Bridge?

Is there an area of the church you would like to hear more about?

If so, please contact Andrew Scott by emailing andrew.scott@4u-team.org





**Find out all that's going on at
All Saints Marlow by visiting:
www.4u-team.org/digital church**

