

# The Grapevine

COVERING THE CHURCHES OF  
GREAT & LITTLE CHESTERFORD, LITTLEBURY WITH  
LITTLEBURY GREEN, & WENDENS AMBO

Welcome to our services today  
**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

## Collect

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

## First Reading Acts 17.22-31

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him - though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

## Gospel John 14.15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

### Those who are unwell:

Margaret Reed (Gt Chesterford)

### Those who need our support:

Betty Dowsett (Littlebury Green)

Lucy Maskell (Great Chesterford)

Kylie Moore-Gilbert (in prison in Iran)

### Friends and families of those who have died:

Colin Curtis (Wendens Ambo)

Those whose anniversaries are this week

### Other topics for your prayers:

- Those offering support to their friends and neighbours
- Those with the responsibility for determining the level of lockdown in the coming weeks
- Those ill with Covid19 in hospitals and at home with thanksgiving for those treating them
- Our churches as we explore new ways to worship
- The effect of Covid 19 on refugee camps, other crowded communities, and nations where the

## VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday evening our prime minister, Boris Johnson, outlined the beginning of a slow release for our country from lockdown. He described it as a conditional plan that gave us a roadmap to return to some sense of normality. It all seemed a bit vague and confusing to some of us and rather than 'stay at home' we are now being told to 'stay alert'. Some of the conditions rely on us, the public, to use common sense and to be vigilant in ensuring that COVID-19 is kept under control. We are being told that we can exercise more, go on country walks and return to work if we cannot work at home. We can be outside more but we must still ensure that social distancing is thoroughly maintained. The idea of staying alert is not new to humanity. It reminds me of the instructions given to sentinels. In ancient times, sentinels were often stationed on the walls of cities, where, from points of vantage, they could overlook important points to be guarded, and give warning of the approach of an enemy. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within. At stated intervals they were required to call to one another, to make sure that all were awake, and that no harm had befallen any. The cry of good cheer or of warning was borne from one to another, each repeating the call till it echoed round the city. Above all they had to stay alert.

Jesus told us that we should stay alert because he would return without warning and we would not know the time or place. There is some comfort in this for me at this present time because Jesus knew that life can be uncertain and unpredictable.

We must be ready for the good and bad aspects of life that will inevitably come but our faith means that God is with us. Christians are called to be people of hope and to be distinctive in the world. So we should stay alert but we should also stay hopeful.

Our hope is in Christ and our positivity can infect the world in way that opposes COVID-19 and all evil. So let us together stay alert but above let us stay hopeful, now and for the future.

With love,

## PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Lord, speak to us when life is uncertain and seems bereft of meaning and purpose. May your Holy Spirit direct our steps, give light to our path and lead us in your eternal way.

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

**TODAY - iCHURCH on Zoom** at 9.30 am led by Tim Hardingham and Alex Jeewan

**WEDNESDAY 9.30 am ZOOM HOLY COMMUNION**

with Alex Jeewan and Caroline Currer

For an invitation to Zoom services please contact Alex or Gillian (website.camvillages@gmail.com)

### CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (with Jesus)

John Risby's Brief Bible Study outlines continue every Wednesday: Looking at some of the people who met with Jesus - Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the paralytic, the rich young ruler, the thief on the cross and Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

Outlines will be sent by email each Wednesday, open to all, please book in at [john.risby179@btinternet.com](mailto:john.risby179@btinternet.com)

### SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

There is support available in all our 5 communities during the lockdown. Contact details have been circulated. Don't hesitate to get in touch with them or to encourage your neighbours to - whatever the need.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

With all that's going on via our churches' website

[www.camvillages.org.uk](http://www.camvillages.org.uk)

especially the variety of services available for us on Sundays; don't forget at 11.30 am on Sundays there's also

### Holy Grounds

the Cam Villages Churches virtual after service coffee and chat. If you can, watch the service online and then join us with your mug of coffee on Zoom at 11.30 am - We'll be able to see what the children have been up to, discuss the sermon and generally catch up. For an invite or if you need assistance to get onto Zoom please email Gillian on [Website.camvillages@gmail.com](mailto:Website.camvillages@gmail.com) and she will get back to you and talk you through.

## NEWS

**PARISH OFFICE** The Parish Office is now closed to visitors but we are contactable by telephone and email as usual.

**ALL CHURCHES IN THE TEAM REMAIN CLOSED** until further notice in accordance with national guidelines but from this week the clergy are allowed to stream services from the churches.

**THE REVEREND JOHN SAXON** has been appointed Team Vicar with responsibility for Debden and Wimbish. His licensing will take place via Zoom on **Tuesday 2nd June** at 5.30pm.

### WEEKEND AWAY

It won't be a surprise to hear that this year's Weekend Away has been postponed. The new date is **16th-18th July 2021**. If you had booked for this year you should have heard from Sarah Nicholas. There are still places available; go to <http://stmaryssaffronwalden.org/weekendaway2021> for details and how to book.

## REFLECTIONS

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments', says Jesus. What makes us do what we are told? One reason may be fear of consequences if we do not. 'If you don't stop snatching the remote control, you will have no TV for a week'. Sanctions change, but they are still powerful - up to a point. Even in adulthood, we may keep to a speed limit for fear of being fined. Such fear used to be a part of religious indoctrination: fear of ex-communication or of hell.

Perhaps a better reason is respect for a teacher or leader, to the extent that we want to do things like they do. Many of us are still baking a cake or making a pudding the way our mother did, because it was so delicious, or doing things the way we were taught in school. In terms of faith, this is a bit like following Jesus or being a Christian because it makes sense to us, and is a good way to live.

Yet the most powerful and lasting motivation is love of a person, or a cause - perhaps a country. In the second war, people gave their lives for a better future or for love of their country. In our private lives, we do things out of love for one another - even things we might not otherwise do. Deep love of God is the most powerful motivation for doing the things he asks of us, even if they are costly or don't seem at face value to make sense.

It is this sort of deep commitment that Paul is urging on the Athenians in our reading from Acts. Theirs was a sophisticated society. They liked to keep their options open, even in matters of religion. It was a society perhaps a little like ours, where strong alignment with a particular religious view can be viewed with suspicion.

Yet some benefits only come from lasting commitment, whether in a marriage, or a long-term friendship. In terms of faith, Jesus tells us that those who love him will be loved by His Father, and will receive his Spirit. Whilst we are all God's children and loved by Him, this Spirit lives fully in those who are truly committed.

### Going deeper

In this gospel passage we are led to think about the three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit. The language of abiding in God echoes the preceding passage (John 14: 2), which we heard last week. It also picks up the word 'abide' from an earlier passage where Jesus describes himself as the bread of life and looks forward to the Eucharist (John 6:56). The promise in all these passages is that there is no separation between Jesus, God his Father and those who are believers. It is the Holy Spirit of God that facilitates this relationship.

### I wonder...

how you find your life has changed through on-going faith commitment.

## OUR CHURCHES' DIARY

TODAY	17th May	EASTER 6
<b>SERVICES ONLINE at <a href="http://www.camvillages.org.uk">www.camvillages.org.uk</a></b> <b>This week on YouTube</b> <b>9.30 am Zoom iChurch</b> <b>11.30 am HOLY GROUNDS on Zoom (see page 3)</b>		
<b>THIS WEEK</b>		
<b>Monday 18th May</b> 12 noon Funeral for Colin Curtis Wendens Ambo <b>Monday - Friday 5.00 pm</b> Evening Prayer on Zoom <b>Wednesday 6th May</b> 9.30 am Holy Communion Alex Jeewan & Caroline Currer Close Encounters with Jesus John Risby via email		
<b>NEXT SUNDAY 17th May EASTER 6</b>		
<b>SERVICES ONLINE at <a href="http://www.camvillages.org.uk">www.camvillages.org.uk</a></b> <b>11.30 am HOLY GROUNDS on Zoom</b>		

## CAM VILLAGES MINISTRY TEAM

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