

# THE EDGE

Welcome to the July edition of The Edge, the Newsletter for the Benefice of Easington with Skeffling, Keyingham, Ottringham, Patrington, Welwick and Winestead parishes.

If you have anything that you would like to share with us all through the newsletter, then please get in touch with me, Andrew Pate, or let Alisdair or one of the wardens know about it.

## *Living Christ's Story*

The parish consultation is now well under way, with responses required by 3<sup>rd</sup> September. One of the questions (No.6) is about re-shaping ministry, and gives parishes the opportunity to say how many of the 10 options listed might be relevant to them. Some people have found the terms in the list confusing. The Living Christ's Story website gives full definitions, but here are the bare bones:-

Larger Collaborative Units – groups of parishes sharing in ministry and resources

Simplifying Parish Structures – joining two or more PCCs together formally or informally

Hub Churches – focussing ministry resources on one or more parishes in the Deanery

Festival Church – a church which only has services at the main Festival times, and for weddings, funerals and christenings

Closure of Church Buildings – this can only be done if the parish requests closure

Focal Ministry – identifying lay people who would be the focus for ministry in a church, so taking it off the incumbent

Shared Deanery Roles – sharing jobs like parish administration across the Deanery or part of it to lighten the load or to share particular skills

Online Ministry – using online resources to replace current services or to provide the same service or sermon in several places

Reaching Younger Adults – focussing in, perhaps across the Deanery, on the particular needs of younger adults

Mustard Seed Values and Learnings – finding ways of doing mission in places where life is tough – spotting people with the potential to step up and grow, and developing worshipping communities as places of hospitality and support



## REFLECTION

Once upon a time I sat in a remote alpine meadow, alone and surrounded by snow covered peaks - apart from where the valley below opened out to a distant horizon.

It was very peaceful, only the sound of the breeze in the grasses and, a hundred yards away, water rushing down the hillside to fill 'Blue Lake'.

I was reading something from the Bible - I can't remember what - and taking time out to pray.

As I sat and reflected a sound rang out around the mountains - just for a moment. It sounded like a choir hitting a single note - perfectly.

In the years since I've pondered what I heard. None of the people who were with me - some had been climbing in the peaks, others were back in the hut - none of them admitted to doing anything, or hearing it.

To be honest it would have had to have been a much bigger and more practised 'choir' than the rabble I was tramping with to produce anything like the sound that I heard.

Was it Heaven breaking through? Who knows, but that experience has remained with me as a reminder of the possibility/probability/certainty that there is a lot more going on than we know or understand.

We are now in those long, green weeks of 'Sundays after Trinity'; in the long weeks of waiting to see whether we really are breaking through the stranglehold of COVID-19; and maybe also aware that surprising and exceptional occasions in life are exactly that because they are, well, surprising and exceptional!

Such occasions may be heartbreaking or inspirational (they can be both), but they often have the potential to lay down a marker and put a different perspective on our everyday mundane routines.

The Cross of Christ and the Resurrection that followed are such occasions - not just in the life of one of us, but for all of us, whether we know it or not.

If we do know it, it's something to ponder about and allow its truth and meaning to seep - even to flood - into the reality of our everyday lives.

'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" - Matthew 28.18-20.

God's peace be with you.

Alisdair.



## **SERVICES IN JULY**

If you would like to attend a service of public worship, then there will be some available during the month in some churches, but everyone is welcome everywhere! If you need transport to get to a service, then please shout.

### **St.Nicholas, Keyingham**

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

### **St.Wilfrid, Ottringham**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

### **St.Germain, Winestead**

No services in July

### **St.Patrick, Patrington**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Morning Prayer

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Morning Prayer

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> – 10.30 – Holy Communion

### **St.Mary, Welwick**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – 11.00 – Holy Communion

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> – 11.00 – Holy Communion

### **All Saints, Easington**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – 9.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> – 9.30 – Holy Communion



### **Still Minding the Gap!**

You will remember (I hope) that in May Archdeacon Andy wrote a reflection on "Minding the Gap". That produced some reaction which was included with the June copy of The Edge. And there was some reaction to the reaction:-

#### **Comments on some of the questions raised in response to Archdeacon Andy's article.**

1. Why should the onus be on us to adapt to non- churchgoers?
2. Isn't the church like a club? You pay your subs, buy your equipment and learn the rules?
3. We are a special case- we have a remarkable building- why would we want to relate to neighbouring parishes who have been arbitrarily joined to us, just to share a vicar?

1. A hundred years ago, children filed into school and sat on hard wooden benches facing the front. They were all taught the same thing at the same time, whether they understood it or not. They went across the yard, in the snow, to the toilet. To a teacher this is what worship feels like in many churches, except that there is often no toilet. Yet teaching is an important part of worship.

Several years ago, a speaker at the Methodist Conference spoke about Beamish. In a village museum at Beamish, you can ride on a tram, see open cast mining as it was a hundred years ago, look at shops and houses from the past. But when you enter the Methodist Chapel, it is all too familiar and a loop is playing - "What a Friend we have in Jesus". Nothing, absolutely nothing, has changed. Should the Methodists be comforted by this, or should alarm bells be ringing?

Is change a necessary part of life? The changes took place in schools because the teaching was ineffective and inappropriate. It was not considered a good thing for a percentage of the population to be disengaged from the process at a young age. It was a waste of a pool of talent. So these days the learning is tailored to individual needs and the environment is more conducive to engagement. So, it would be reasonable to assume that similar changes needed to take place in churches in order to keep up with changed social attitudes and expectations.

2. The church is not a club. But you could be forgiven for thinking this if you looked at the temple in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. There were very special areas where access was restricted; a special area where only men, who were also Jews, could go, then an area for Gentiles and women. Sacrifices were detailed in line with the expectations of the hierarchy, who made all the rules.

But contrast this with the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus's robe. She was permanently ritually unclean because of illness, not allowed in the temple at all. But coming to follow Jesus is different - there are no such rules. The veil of the temple has been torn apart through the sacrifice of Jesus and everyone is allowed access to healing without restriction. So, even if you can't afford the equipment or the subs, even if you can't get your head around the rules and regulations, Jesus is ready and waiting for you. With love undreamt of, unbounded, and the power to heal.

3. We should not expect a building to be the main attraction to draw people to Christ, or assume that it should be. However noteworthy or elegant, it is basically a pile of stones. As Ezekiel was challenged in the valley of dry bones - " Can these bones live?" - I would be tempted to ask " Can these stones live?" We are asked in the bible to become like living stones, built up in Christ as the cornerstone of our faith. I would acknowledge that when confronted with the work of men, some people might be prompted to wonder at what motivated that work, but it needs to go far deeper and prompt a personal response to the gospel.

In the book of Acts and the letters to the churches, the missionary journeys of St Paul, and his subsequent care of the Christian communities he built up, is carefully described. There is nothing isolationist, parochial or inward looking about any of these writings. There is, on the other hand, an indication that church communities were prepared to support not just their neighbours but also people in far flung places, and encourage them.

In conclusion, we live in a society that disparages Christian belief. It is difficult, but it is not our fault.

Some people will turn down, outright, any attempts we make to spread the word. It is difficult, but it's not our fault.

But if we don't even try to understand the culture we live in, and meet it halfway, what does it say about the strength of our faith?

*Lois Rutter*



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