

# *This Week at St Mary's*

5<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020

## A HOUSE BUILT ON THE ROCK

We're now halfway through 2020, 3½ months since the lockdown, and even though it's easing, the rest of the year is going to remain dominated by one thing. Talking with someone, we agreed words like plague and pestilence describe better than Covid 19 does. I am reading Old Testament cleansing rituals with new interest.

Our household has now reduced to three, having been five. It was quite cosy, especially with all working from home. In common with many, lots of household and garden jobs have been done (although the pond still leaks!) One of our daughters painted some pictures and I have been making things from wood. I'd be intrigued to see 'before and after' photos.

Bike rides took us deep into the Nottinghamshire (even Lincoln and Leicestershire) countryside, enjoying the exceptional beauty in this most wonderful spring and early summer. The few hills offer a challenge but more so, the exhilaration of downward speed.

Since able to return, being in St Mary's has helped me strengthen inner security at a time of risk and uncertainty. I love praying in the church, especially in the Chapel. Building the house of our lives on the rock which is Jesus Christ is very practical and opening ourselves in our vulnerability and with our fears in prayer is an essential part. Now for many now is a time of rain and floods.

With St Mary's re-opening for worship come more ways for us to know the grace of God. As I said last week, I'm sure our being together and receiving communion will prove rich. Christ reveals Himself in many ways - the sacraments are especially so invested.

*Tom Gillman*

**PRAYING TOGETHER** 6.30pm every Thursday join via skype for Evening Prayer. Contact Tom to be included on group list (it's fine to join in when you can.)

## THE YEAR OF THE WHALE (1965) - George Mackay Brown selected by John Firth

For an Orcadian like myself, George Mackay Brown (1921-1996) was a Stromness man of Stromness men. Rejected when called-up for the Army, by the tuberculosis that would plague him for the rest of his life, in 1944 he started writing for the *Orkney Herald* and developed into a prolific, continuously-developing master of prose and poetry in the Orcadian *genre*.

Time is a frequent theme That we must make best use of what time we have left. That we can take comfort that we have survived - here from starvation in the subsistence economy most of our forebears knew in Orkney. Famine miraculously relieved by the ill fortune of a school of whales that meant survival until harvest - though in the hungry 1830s that next harvest might never come.

From grief for what is lost, through relief we are still alive, to joy for what we have been given and gratefulness for such further time as God affords, to prayer that He will help us use well the last of our time - that He has provided.

“The old go, one by one, like guttered flames.  
This past winter  
Tammag the bee-man has taken his cold blank mask  
To the honeycomb under the hill,  
Corston who ploughed out the moor  
Unyoked and gone; and I ask,  
Is Heddle lame, that in youth could dance and saunter  
A way to the chastest bed?  
The kirkyard is full of their names  
Chiselled in stone. Only myself and Yule  
In the ale-house now, speak of the great whale year.

“Off Scabra Head the lookout sighted a school  
At the first light.  
A meagre year it was, limpets and crows  
And brief mottled grain.  
Everything that could float  
Circled the school. Ploughs  
Wounded those wallowing lumps of thunder and night.  
The women crouched and prayed.  
Then whale by whale  
Blundering on the rock with its red stain  
Crammed our winter cupboards with oil and meat.”

**THE MEADOWS FOODBANK** - Buy each week an extra (non perishable) item as an act of self giving love, for someone you don't know. Particularly needed now: jam; rice pudding; tinned tomatoes, potatoes, sweetcorn, kidney beans; mashed potatoes; sugar. Let Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com know when a few to collect.

## **KEY POINTS FOR WORSHIP IN ST MARY'S BUILDING**

We have drawn up our risk assessment, closely following the 'salient points' of the recent guidelines. Everything now is to ensure that it is 'safe' to worship in a church building.

- No numerical 'cap', but social distancing and requirements for hygiene to be met. St Mary's is **limiting numbers to 50**.
- **2 metre 'rule' applies**, except where closer contact cannot be avoided.
- Wearing of **face-coverings** is voluntary.
- **Those at extra risk and the 'clinically extremely vulnerable'** are advised not to attend.
- **Names of attendees** to be recorded and kept for 21 days to assist 'track and trace' if required.
- **Singing, chanting and playing of brass or woodwind instruments** not recommended.
- **Communion** can be held with specific guidance followed, incl continued suspension of the Chalice.
- **Refreshments** only at tables if a café is included in the church building - therefore, no coffee/tea for us for now.

Both west and south doors will be open. Please wash hands on arrival - in the toilets. Sanitiser will also be out. Accessing chairs via side aisles, not down the centre. Nearly 90 chairs are out in rows, it's 2 meters apart - unless a household or bubble. Hymns, choral pieces and organ will be pre-recorded.

There will be paper service sheets, if you use one please ensure you take it away with you on departure. The Order of Service will continue to be put up online. There will be no collection.

Communion will be bread only. All wafers will remain in the closed ciborium until distribution. To receive, come forward via the side aisle. A wafer will be 'dropped' into your hand. Return to seat via central aisle. Not wanting to be unfriendly, staying on after is not encouraged...

**GIVING MONEY** - Best done **online** but **cheque** also welcome. Preferable from the church's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest 560061 00834602) For **One-off donations**, use either the **QR code** or **Donate button** on the website. *Please continue (better still, increase) your financial support of St Mary's in this difficult economic climate.*

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

*St Mary's open for private prayer and reflection*

*11.00-3.00 each weekday*

**11.00am SUNDAY SERVICE at St Mary's - also  
livestreamed**

*(See website and follow the link, including for Order of Service)*

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**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks  
John Bowers  
Rosemary Clark  
John Conway  
Harry Palmer  
Mike Ridley

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