



St Andrew's  
Alresford

St Mary Magdalen  
Frating with Thorrington

St Anne & St Laurence  
Elmstead

Website: [tenpennyvillages.uk](http://tenpennyvillages.uk)

## Sunday 29th March 2020



We will be posting a weekly video reflection alongside this noticesheet. You can find it at

<http://tenpennyvillages.uk/videos.html>



**Live streaming** - Chelmsford Cathedral is live streaming morning and evening prayer.

You can see it on the Chelmsford Diocese facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/chelmsfordcathedral/>

Or on the Chelmsford Cathedral YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCygvBaZCltwgWi1hNexg19Q>

## A Message from Rev. Andrew Fordyce

Bless you as you read this. I would like to commend to you the set of Holy Week resources that Pauline is drawing together. Hopefully by the beginning of next week we will have managed to get a DIY kit together for you to do Holy Week at home - big thankyou's to all the contributors and especially to Pauline for corralling us.

I want to reassure you that we want to support you as a church, do look out for one another and any problems - please pick up the phone or email.

Do remember the 7pm lighting of the candle on the window sill.

Every blessing as we journey together. A verse I memorised as a kid, from my Guildford Crusader days. "in an fix - Philippians 4:6"

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Thanks

Andrew

## A Reflection from Valerie Harper

### "If only" John 11:17-27

The inevitable news has come in, the first of my circle of friends has died of the Covid-19 virus, and we have said "if only". We may all face losing someone we know as the pandemic develops. For Lazarus' two sisters the matter was closer, their brother had died

Martha, that dear, practical friend, good at cooking, an attentive hostess has faced the reality of her brother's death. The funeral is over, all the rituals completed and the mourners have remained to provide comfort.

Then she gets the news, Jesus is coming. There is no hesitation she hurries to meet him. He, a dear friend, a frequent and very welcome guest, is here at last.

What we have in this bible passage is a delightful encounter between Jesus and a close friend. It is a special moment, when Martha pours out her heart, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died."

She knew Jesus was able to bring healing to her brother, but it is too late, if only he had been here four days ago, it could have been different, and yet she carries on “But I know even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Her trust is amazing, but she is not prepared for what Jesus is going to do.

As the conversation continues she models for us a directness with which we can approach Jesus, and as they discuss resurrection Jesus shares with her something that will soon become very special. He tells her that he is **the** resurrection and also the life. In this he is actually sharing with Martha what will happen after he has been crucified. He is preparing her for his death, and resurrection.

When he goes on to bring Lazarus back to life that healing is a physical resurrection, and his life is prolonged , but he will die again.

On Easter morning when Jesus came out of his tomb he had defeated the power of death and he would never die again. He is the life, in whom we live, he shows us that life after death is real, and different.

Like Martha, we can declare to him “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God”, and we can live with an even closer relationship with him than she had at that time.

As we face the chaos that the Covid-19 has brought to the world, all around us seems to be changing rapidly. We will all know people who have been in intensive care, and of people who died. In the midst of this, Jesus can be trusted for the peace and strength we need. We may be worrying about people who are dear to us, or coping with the infection ourselves, but Jesus has not changed and as he came to Martha (and her sister Mary) at her time of need, so, having come through his resurrection and subsequent ascension into heaven, he is able to be present with each of us every day. We can ask him to have mercy on our loved ones, but more importantly we can know that having been through death he knows what it is like, and wants to be there with us when it is our turn to die.

Jesus came to earth as a baby, grew into a man and having died on the cross, experienced the resurrection we will one day face. However, this is not “pie in the sky when we die”, as he wants to enable us to live fully the life we have been given now, he desires wholeness and completeness for us and come with the power to enable us to live life more fully, whatever our circumstances. Jesus is as much alive and wit us today as he was with Martha when he came to bring her brother back to life. He understood Martha and her needs and he understands ours.

May Jesus bring you the peace and comfort you need at this worrying time.

Valerie Harper

## A Reflection from Charley Day

'...once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, in fact, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm you won't be the same person who walked in.' (Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore)

I've been reading a lot more than I would normally these past couple of weeks. I absolutely love reading. I've always loved books, the smell of a bookshop, getting lost in the pages, holding an actual book (Kindle's are great and all, but for me they can't beat the real thing!) My mum used to read with me, and one of my earliest memories is spending afternoons on the sofa getting lost in a story with my mum. That love of literature and words has only got stronger as time has gone on.

I've been reading a book by a writer called Fil Anderson, called 'Running on Empty'. Fil was a youth worker in the US, and then became a director of training for a ministry called 'Young Life'. He completely burnt out, both physically and spiritually, feeling incredibly distant from God and under pressure to do even more. He had grown up with the idea that you couldn't simply 'live with God', but that you had to work at keeping God happy with you. Fil had to go on a difficult and painful journey of 'achieving to being'. It raised in my mind questions about what makes us feel 'uncomfortable'; on an individual level this might be quite different from one another, but I'm sure there are many similarities. For example, humans in general are quite bothered when they don't feel they've met other peoples' expectations, and also when their resources start running low (toilet rolls, pasta, hand sanitiser, for example!) In a community crisis this can be hugely apparent, as we are seeing at the moment. But 'change' has always been something which generally makes individuals, communities, churches and the whole world feel 'uncomfortable'. We are currently being faced with so much change, on a level that we have never and are unlikely to ever experience again in our lifetimes.

Change is unsettling; it is often the unknown that makes it the most daunting. We find ourselves facing the future without knowing when or how this situation will change. One thing that can be hard to hold onto, but it is so important that we do, is that God's love for us all does not change. God is constant. It can be so hard seeing so much devastation and fear all around us, and wondering where God is in all the chaos. I have seen so many amazing acts of care and kindness in all this, both in person and in the media, and yet the question a lot of people will ask is, 'where is God in all this?' My personal reflection is that God isn't outside of the chaos, but in amongst it. God doesn't leave when bad things happen, whilst we may feel like he's distant; God is close.

The quote at the top of this reflection is used by Fil Anderson in the book I've been reading. I've included it because, for me, it brought to mind Mark's account of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4: 35-41). The disciples he was with were used to fishing, some were experienced fishermen, and yet when this storm came they were terrified and felt completely out of control. During this time of the world tackling the COVID-19 virus, we all feel completely out of control. One thing that this is highlighting to me is that we never have, and never will be in control. It's trying to recognise that, going against all our human instincts of not liking change and being out of control, we have to let go and trust that God will calm the storm. Through all of this, I pray that the things we learn we will not forget, but will use for good, now and in the future.

Isolation is not a pleasant experience for anyone, but there are many in our communities that are feeling incredibly lonely right now. Please know that you are not alone. Please know that you are so loved. Please know that as a church we are so happy to speak to you on the phone, to email, to try our best to help however we can. You are loved, what you are doing is enough (stay home and stay safe!) and keep praying for peace and protection for all during this difficult time, especially those who

are afraid and lonely, for those battling this illness, and for those dealing with all that's going on directly around the world. We must pray for our government and our NHS, our key workers and those risking so much for our safety.

Stay home, stay safe, and of course, wash your hands!

God bless,  
Charley

## Many Church of England churches are offering live streamed services on a Sunday morning.

Please go to this webpage for details:

[https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live\\_stream](https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream)

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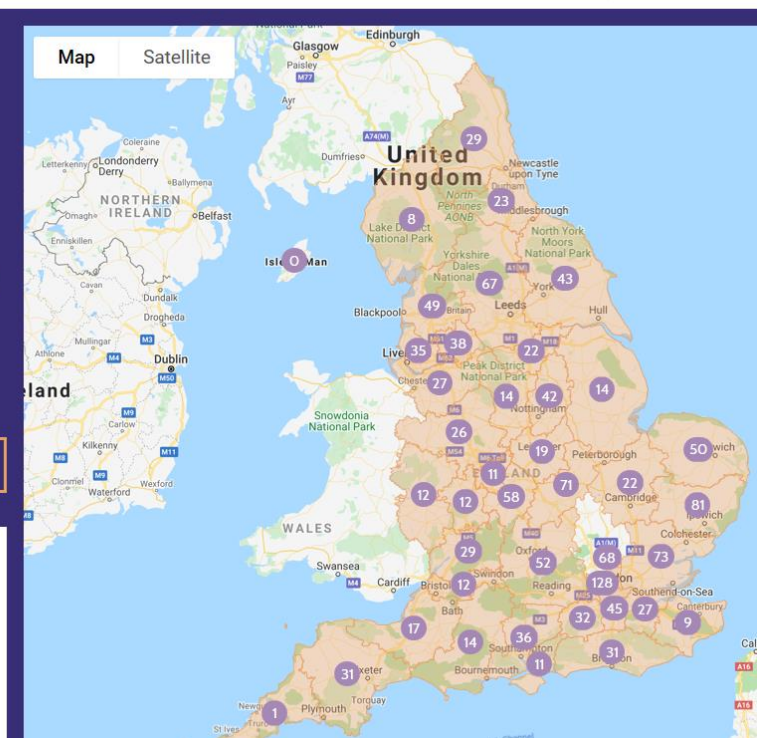
### Live streamed events

Churches across the country are live streaming events such as services, Bible studies and prayer meetings. Join a service or event wherever you are from one of our 16,500 churches.

Enter your location



Keep in touch with a local church during this period of social distancing by following a list streamed service or event. The Church of England is here for you during this time.



**Our vision: TO DRAW CLOSER TO GOD AND EACH OTHER SO THAT WE MAY MORE ABLY BRING HIS LOVE TO THE WORLD**

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Items for the next Notice Sheet to **Nick Berry** by **6.00 p.m. on Thursday**  
at the latest please to [noticesheet@tenpennyvillages.uk](mailto:noticesheet@tenpennyvillages.uk)