

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #20

29th July 2020

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers during my annual leave. It was good to catch up on a few jobs, lose myself in some fiction and enjoy a few days away with Martyn in West Berkshire. Thank you to Alison Wedgbury and Cheryl Lowe for leading the online services during my absence, and to Graham Appleby for editing and creating the service online.

In his book, *The Vision and The Vow*, Pete Greig tells of how a distinguished art critic was studying an exquisite painting by the Italian Renaissance master Filippino Lippi. He stood in London's National Gallery gazing at the fifteenth-century depiction of Mary holding the infant Jesus on her lap, with saints Dominic and Jerome kneeling nearby. But the painting troubled him. There could be no doubting Lippi's skill, his use of colour or composition. But the proportions of the picture seemed slightly wrong. The hills in the background seemed exaggerated, as if they might topple out of the frame at any minute onto the gallery's polished floor. The two kneeling saints looked awkward and uncomfortable.



Art critic Robert Cumming was not the first to criticise Lippi's work for its poor perspective, but he may well be the last to do so, because at that moment he had a revelation. It suddenly occurred to him that the problem might be his. The painting had never been intended to come anywhere near a gallery. Lippi's painting had been commissioned to hang in a place of prayer.

The dignified critic dropped to his knees in the public gallery before the painting. He suddenly saw what generations of art critics had missed. From his new vantage point, Robert Cumming found himself gazing up at a perfectly proportioned piece. The foreground had moved naturally to the background, while the saints seemed settled – their awkwardness, like the painting itself, having turned to grace. Mary now looked intently and kindly directly at him as he knelt at her feet between Saints Dominic and Jerome.

It was not the perspective of the painting that had been wrong all these years, it was the perspective of the people looking at it. Robert Cumming, on bended knee, found a beauty that Robert Cumming the proud art critic could not. The painting only came alive to those on their knees in prayer. The right perspective is the position of worship.

This Sunday, public worship returns to the church building in Cottenham with a service of BCP Holy Communion at 8.30am. All are welcome. Please be reassured that we will be following all of the government and Church of England guidance to keep everyone safe, which includes social distancing, hand sanitising and the wearing of face coverings strongly

encouraged for all. Please bring your own, but we have some available if you're yet to acquire one.

Services and events happening online this week are:

Sun 2nd August – 8.30am Service of BCP Holy Communion at All Saints' Church, Cottenham.

Online service available on Facebook and YouTube from early on Sunday morning. Watch at whatever time is convenient to you. If you'd like a DVD of the service, please let Graham Appleby know (07803 932453).

Sun 2nd August at 11am – coffee and chat after the online service using Zoom. Do join us and catch up with one another.

Sun 2nd August at 6pm – Evening Prayer using Zoom led this week by Alison Wedgbury. If you want to join, please let Cheryl Lowe (cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk) know, and she'll send you a link to the service. Over the summer we are going to be focusing on the Apostle's Creed.

For your prayers, please could you remember the following:

- Those known to you who have recently lost loved ones
- Those who are unwell and their families caring for them, in particular Joan Marsh (Mike's mum), Sheila Howarth, Pat Easterling and Pam Lumsden
- For rest and change from work of all kinds this summer for those with care responsibilities
- For those with limited contact with family members
- Improved international relations between the UK, China and Russia
- For a successful outcome of the Covid-19 Vaccine trials
- All those working in the NHS and care homes.

If you are using the 'Prayer and Worship from Home' resource, these are the Lectionary (set) readings for the week ahead:

Sat 1 st Aug	1 Samuel 13: 19 to 14: 15; Luke 23: 1-12
Sun 2 nd Aug	Romans 9: 1-5; Matthew 14: 13-21
Mon 3 rd Aug	1 Samuel 14: 24-46; Luke 23: 13-25
Tues 4 th Aug	1 Samuel 15: 1-23; Luke 23: 26-43
Wed 5 th Aug	1 Samuel 16; Luke 23: 44-56a
Thurs 6 th Aug	1 Samuel 17: 1-30; Luke 23: 56b to 24: 12
Fri 7 th Aug	1 Samuel 17: 31-54; Luke 24: 13-35

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes, Lynda.

Rector of All Saints Cottenham with Rampton

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