

**All Saints' Church
Cottenham with Rampton**

**Pastoral Letter #72
Mon 9th May 2022**



Dear Church Family,

I do hope that this letter finds you well.

With the warmer weather, it's natural that our thoughts turn to holidays – the memory of those we've enjoyed in the past and the hope of good ones to come. This year, we're planning to visit Cyprus in September, Martyn's home for many years as a boy due to his father being stationed there with the RAF, and then a holiday with the whole family to Spain during the October half-term. We like to plan ahead!

Having just celebrated Easter and with the sun shining, a holiday we enjoyed to Turkey came into my mind a few days ago. I'd always wanted to visit Ephesus to walk in the footsteps of St Paul, so we holidayed in the Izmir province for a week. While we were there, like many tourists we visited a Hamman (bath house) where we took a Turkish bath. This was quite an experience! It began with a very hot sauna to open our pores, and then we were both invited to lay on a large marble stone in the bath house (in our swimming costumes) where two attendants washed and scrubbed us thoroughly. We were lathered in soap (swung in a large sock to create lots of bubbles), scrubbed down with an exfoliant paste, and then washed and rinsed with first warm water, then cold, finishing with warm again.

Then came a face mask of what looked like green mud. Whilst it set, we rested by the pool with a cup of green tea. As the mask hardened, it became harder and harder to drink! After ten minutes, the face mask was washed off and a massage began. We both opted for the light touch, having heard stories of how deep the pressure could get. By the end of the process, we felt thoroughly relaxed and refreshed, and our skin was so soft and clean. Every impurity had been washed away.

Having just celebrated Easter, my experience of that Turkish bath reminded me of the promise that, through the death of Jesus, everything that seeks to stain our lives is washed away. Our sins are washed away, leaving us 'white as snow'. The concept of having our sins washed away is first introduced in the Old Testament. When God gave instructions for consecrating the Levites, he said, 'Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves.' God often used physical illustrations to help us understand spiritual truths. We understand that washing with water makes us physically clean, so the Bible takes that concept and applies it to our spiritual state.

Through Jesus' defeat of death on the cross, our sins are washed away the moment we place our faith and trust in him. The joy of the Christian life is that, even though we are not perfect, we can live every moment with the confidence that our sins no longer have any hold on us. They are gone, washed away in the same way that every last bit of dirt or impurity was washed away during that Turkish bath. If you ever find yourself in Turkey, I thoroughly recommend one!

Coming up in the next few weeks will be our Ascension Service on Thursday 26th May at 7.30pm, though Ascension will also be the theme the following Sunday. We will also be hosting a Churches Together service over the Platinum Jubilee weekend to celebrate the reign of our Queen. This is on Sunday 5th June at 10.30am. For the service, I'm making a short film of people's recollections of the Queen's Coronation in June 1953. If you are old enough to remember it and would like your memories to be included, do please let me know as soon as possible.

It's wonderful that almost everyone has returned to church following the various lockdowns and that we've been blessed with lots of new folk, in particular young families, over the last couple of months. If you're unable to get to church, do remember that if you have access to the Internet, there is always a Zoom service on Sundays at 6pm. Just email Cheryl Lowe (cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk) for the link. Furthermore, if you'd like to receive communion at home, please let us know.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Revd Lynda Davies

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