

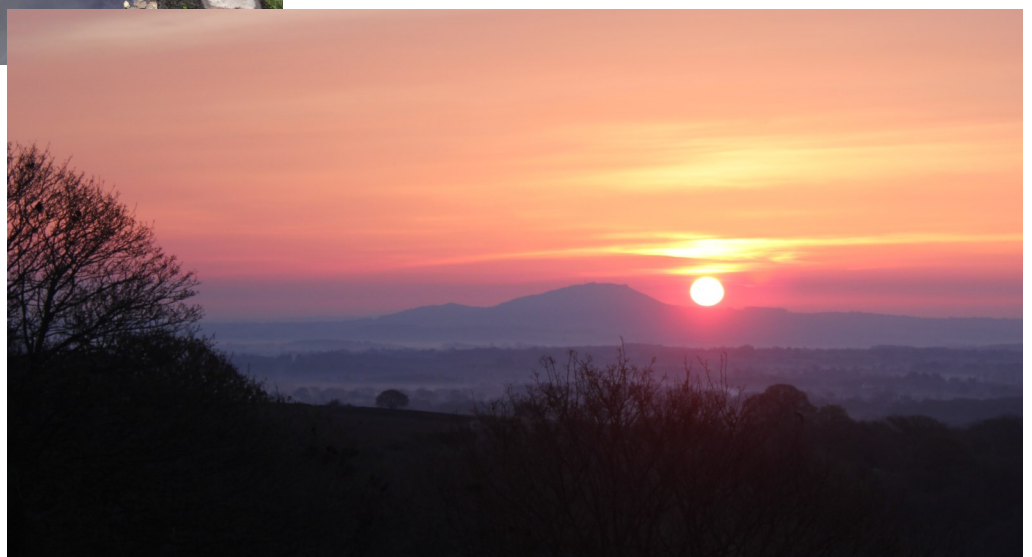
LONGDEN and ANNSCROFT with PULVERBATCH-
Benefice of Great Hanwood, Longden and Annscroft
with Pulverbatch
May 2020

Instead of a magazine in this month of May there will be a daily news sheet for 7 days designed to help in these strange times, and also, most importantly to bring you reasons to smile, and here are some examples of what is to come. Please share anything you wish with your friends and neighbours, perhaps over the fence when both drinking a cup of tea. Please send any material, more thoughts, prayers, or items for fun to Sandra or Pat as usual.



Is it deep enough for a swim?

The dawn on
Easter day—a
sign of better
times ahead.



From the Rectory

It is now 5 weeks since the Government imposed the lockdown and understandably the end is not in sight. During this time we have enjoyed meeting people in online zoom services and chatting over the phone, and like many have made more contact with family and friends. Emma and I have done lots of local walks and feel blessed in living in such a beautiful place with a wonderful supportive village shop and loving community.

These are strange times and it is worth noting that people may react differently. Some will respond energetically and heroically, completing job after job around the home or throwing themselves into supporting the vulnerable. Others will find it an immobilising experience, becoming lethargic with no energy or enthusiasm for anything. Even simple daily tasks become overwhelming.

We are in a period of trauma - life is different. We can no longer assume that the world is generally safe and reliable, instead there is uncertainty and fear, and at the time when we need extra comfort and reassurance, we are cut off from each other and forced to 'stay at home'. This is a stressful situation and our bodies will tell us so and we may experience various stress symptoms (stomach ache, tiredness, low energy, muscle tension). In addition to this our body will react by triggering the nervous system to respond with fight or flight - fix-it energy or collapse.

Doctors advise a number of things to counter this.

1. Name what is happening, speak about it to others - being heard releases the tension.
2. Do not feel guilt or shame at your reaction, it is your body's natural response to the situation.
3. Pay attention to your breathing - consciously slow it down, lengthening the inhale and exhale. This calms the nervous system and helps us to be in the present.

Do something each day to relax and feed your mind (crosswords, mental agility tests) and your body (daily exercise, time outside).

I would add, spend time with God, being still in his presence. Reading verses of scripture and repeating them over and over, allowing them to enter our consciousness, can be especially helpful.

Try this for example with psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

Or Psalm 46:

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the
earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the
heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its
tumult.

It finishes with the command in verse 10:
'Be still, and know that I am God.'

Two other things to note.

Introverts like their own space and are happy with their own company. Extroverts need regular contact with friends and family and will find the lockdown more challenging.

Loneliness can bring about physiological changes within the body, which compound the sense of being alone and can make a person more prone to virus infections and inflammations in the body. A downward spiral can follow but this is reversed if people do one simple act of kindness a week, for example giving online to a worthy cause or doing a simple practical task for a neighbour or friend. This is credible evidence of the biblical verse that it is in giving that we receive.

Remember this is not free time. We are in a period of trauma.

I finish with Jesus's commands to us:

'Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself.' Luke 10.27

Many blessings,

Rev Graham Phillips

And to make you smile;

Higher power

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One child blurted out, "Aces!"

The Lord is my Shepherd

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd...." He knew that much, but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So he concluded bravely: "... and that's all I need to know."

Don't break'em

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk.

The lady paused for a moment. "Only the Ten Commandments," she said politely.

Environmentally friendly transport

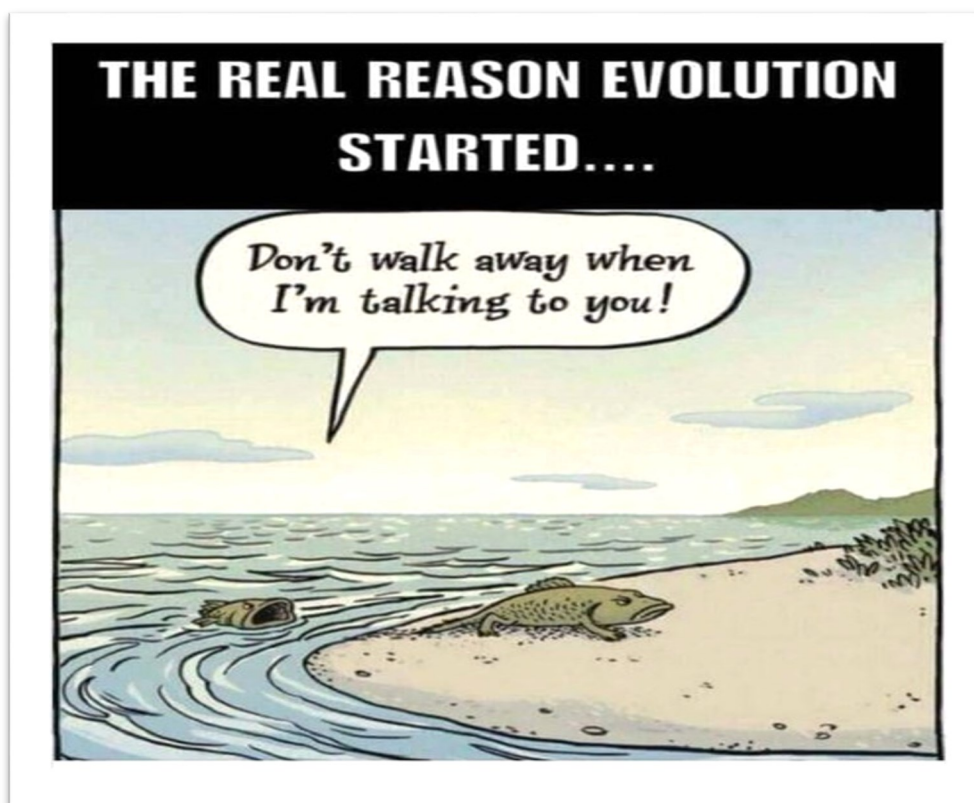
While driving in the countryside, a family caught up to an old farmer and his horse-drawn cart. The farmer obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign: 'Ecologically efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust.'

What God looks like

An infants teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. One little girl was working away furiously, and so she asked her what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."



And finally—for today A true tale to lift your spirits

Longden Common Clap

We have lived in the Common Lane for 54 years, and have always thought it was a special place, but over these last few weeks of isolation this has been emphasised even more, especially by the people in the community.

A Longden Common App. has been set up by Martyn, where we can ask for help in any form and someone will contact you no matter what you request, one gentleman walks over to the doctors surgery at Pontesbury for our medication. On a Tuesday evening Louise and Nigel have started a Quiz on the app. and lots of us young and old join in, it is great fun. We put pictures on the app. of flower's, pets, even a video of the sheep in the field, it's endless.

The Red Lion Pub do take-aways, Wednesday to Saturday every week, we usually have fish and chips which are excellent and of course our village shop has been wonderful delivering to us.

Thursday evening 8pm, we are all out in the lane clapping and waving to one another. This community has been drawn together like so many others, out of these tough times we have seen so much friendship and love.

Stay safe and well

Love never fails

A Prayer from Christian Aid

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.

Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.

Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far.

Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before.

As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

Please remember—if you are feeling lonely and worried there are lots of people ready to help, to be a friend on the end of a phone. If you have a local news sheet there will be numbers to ring –if not please contact Rev Graham Phillips who will be happy to put you in contact with someone to help. If you would like to be included in the daily readings and prayers e-mail or join in the zoom services on Sundays also please contact Graham . Please ring 861003.