

Look out next month as we are changing the name of Café Connect to reflect more of what we are about! Keep reading and sending your articles to Revd Mandy at aj.marriott123@gmail.com

Dear friends, Revd Mandy here.

This is a busy time in our family for birthdays and anniversaries. I remember when my nephew Stephen was born, on the 13th March 1996. However, that day turned out to be a very bitter/sweet occasion...

Our family rejoiced as we learnt that Stephen had come into the world, a healthy little boy. Mum and baby doing well.

But then events outside our family began to press home as we saw on our television screens the horrific news that sixteen children and their teacher had been brutally murdered in a school in Dunblane.

Many of you will perhaps remember the absolute shock and horror of this tragedy.

For us as a family it felt very strange to want to celebrate a new life and yet also to mourn the loss of so much life.

On the one hand joy, and on the other hand sorrow, wanting to laugh and yet to cry, experiencing light and dark together, inseparable as they were that day.

Most of us, I think, understand that life presents that mixture of light and dark, of joy and sorrow, of life and death, and somehow they become inseparable and part of each other.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the Easter story.

Jesus, on the day we now call Good Friday was crucified. The Son of God was nailed to a wooden cross and left to die.

We are told that at that point 'darkness covered the whole earth.'

On the cross Jesus entered into our suffering. He gave up the right to be God and experienced humanity.

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*That Friday afternoon, he was where you will always find him,
alongside the outcasts, with the suffering and the dying;
and even in this extremity he was ready to offer them
compassion and comfort and hope.
He himself was almost overwhelmed by suffering,
and so he can share all our pain,
understand all our hurt,
is alongside us in any need.*

But Good Friday and the death of Jesus is not the end of the story. Easter is waiting, the Day of Resurrection, the day of new life, of hope, and new beginnings.

*Jesus did not conquer death:
he was dead, really dead
and God raised him to a new life.
This is an entirely new thing which God has done;
the beginning of a new creation.
It is not limited to Jesus
or what happens when you die;
More than his promise of life beyond death;
He offers life of eternal quality, here and now.
This is what God is doing all the time.
He is loving people to life,
not only at the end of days, but every day.*

*Easter means he offers you a new beginning,
a new world for you,
and a new you for the world,
new peace, new light and new perspectives,
a new lease of life,
today. (words in italics by Ken Taylor)*

Cont....

There would be no Easter without Good Friday. They are inseparable, dark and light, death and life.

So, remember that God not only stands alongside us in our suffering, but takes us beyond the darkness to a new life.

God Bless

Mandy

Can you contribute ?

"We plan to continue sharing news and ideas every month and would love YOU to contribute too.

If you would like to share your thoughts, ideas and pictures, then please send them to me via email aj.marriott123@gmail.com or post them through my door 3 Main Road Duston NN5 6JB. Thank you.



During lockdown the decision was taken to suspend our services in church. However, you can find out our latest news by clicking on <http://dustonanduptonparish.org.uk>

If you go to 'Latest news' it will take you to our Facebook page.

Please note that this newsletter now replaces the Church Contact magazine.

We cannot always deliver in the way we used to but copies are available from Revd Mandy on request.

We look forward to opening our Church doors again on Easter Day and there will be details about our services in the next edition.

Duston Old People's Welfare Association – A potted history

There has been a continuous tradition of helping the elderly in Duston dating back 130 years!

At Christmas 1891 the first 'Older Folks Christmas Party' was organised by the Choir and Ambulance Class of Duston Chapel (now the United Reformed Church). To qualify you had to be at least 45 years of age.

40 residents attended, some of whom were brought from Northampton Workhouse by wagonette. Each lady was given a pack of tea and each gentleman 6d of tobacco by the vicar of Duston. The tradition continued, every year, even during 2 World Wars with 112 people attending the 60th party in 1950.

Interestingly, the qualifying age was increased to 50 from 1896 and to 65 from 1948.

In 1951 Duston Parish Council set up a Welfare Committee to continue the activities with a new qualifying age of 70. Charitable status was granted in 1983.

26 people attended the 1951 Christmas party and were each given ¼ lb of tea, ½ lb of sugar and a pot of jam. From 1952 annual outings and holidays were introduced by local councillor JP Harrison and in 1958 the food parcels were replaced with a 5 shilling voucher.

When Duston Parish Council was absorbed into Northampton in 1965, a new organisation – Duston Old People's Welfare Association (DOPWA) – was born and continues to this day, following its established principles in providing for the elderly of Duston. The association provides an annual party in Spring, and at Christmas a card and voucher for every one of our 300+ members to be spent in the local shops. This not only provides a little treat for our members but puts in excess of £3000 back into Duston shops and businesses.

No charge is made for the annual party in April which attracts around 130 members and includes an entertainer and afternoon tea made and served by the volunteer committee. The outbreak of the Covid -19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown in March 2020 meant that we had to cancel our contact activities. However, the committee adapted and have been providing regular phone calls to members as well as distributing a quiz and newsletter which included useful information on local help available.

In 2015 DOPWA celebrated its Golden Jubilee year and in the same year our highlight was the publication of a book about the history of DOPWA.

This was painstakingly researched and written by our very own Treasurer, David Winter, with help and support from his wife, Gwyneth.

DOPWA's activities plus the Christmas vouchers cost in excess of £4000 each year and whilst we can raise a small amount from our event raffles we are indebted to the local people who support the association financially.

We are very grateful for the continued support received from the 11th Northampton (Duston) Boys' Brigade. 2018 marked 50 years of fundraising for DOPWA by the Company, and their young members, who at that time had raised an amazing £32682.66 through various activities including sponsored walks and Christmas carol singing. We also enjoy wonderful support from Duston Parish Council's grant scheme and from our local Borough and County Councillors who use their Empowering Councillors Allowance to help finance our activities.

In the past few years we have made successful bids to national schemes, becoming Sainsbury's Local Charity of the year in 2016, a nominated charity for the Co-op's Local Community Fund initiative and most recently a beneficiary in Tesco's Bags of Help scheme.

Local people and businesses have also supported us and we thank them all.

The DOPWA activities are made possible by the support of a small, committed group of 16 volunteers including the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary who all strive to continue the traditions of the past for our members.

ContSupporting the administration of these activities with so few people can be a challenge at times and we are urgently seeking a new treasurer and secretary in order for the association to continue. If you know anyone who would be able to help please ask them to contact us.

My gran's old recipe books – Ian Hanlon



According to an old family story, one of my gran's forebears used to make wines and various potions from natural ingredients foraged from the hedgerows, verges and fields that were known to have healing qualities and that the local villagers would come to her with their ailments.

Recipes were passed down through the generations, some added, and some removed but all based on nature's bounty. When my gran was born in the village of Ashton in 1887, one of ten children, she was brought up, like most country folk at the time, to forage for nature's bounty - mushrooms, nuts and blackberries supplemented the family larder whilst primroses, cowslips, elderberries, elderflowers, sloes, rose hips and blackberries were made into home-made wines.

Another family story is that she was taking one of her younger siblings for a walk one day in 1890 and was near to the main London railway line when a train slowed down near to where she stood. The driver leant out of the cab and shouted "Quick, run back to the village as fast as you can and tell **everyone** that Mafeking has been relieved!" And that was how the good folk of Ashton heard the news.

Later, when in service as a cook, other fruits and vegetables became available for wine making – oranges, lemons, sultanas, potatoes, cherries, almonds, pineapple, bilberries and, surprisingly, even tea and parsley. In addition, gin and brandy were used as a base for liqueurs (who has enjoyed a glass of sloe gin or blackcurrant brandy?)

When my gran died at the age of 89, her cupboards were filled with demi-johns of fermenting wine – as my uncle said at the time "you half expected the fermentation to cease when she died!" The demi-johns were distributed amongst the family and, in due course, we were all able to raise a glass of her home-made wine and toast her memory! Many years later, I was fortunate enough to also be given her recipe books.



The Food Bank Needs YOU BUT remember YOU may also need the Food Bank

Duston United Reformed Church works with Re:store to offer a food bank.

Situated opposite the Bakery in Main Road Duston, we are open on Saturday mornings from 10.00 until noon to provide ready packed groceries, we also have household products, personal hygiene items, nappies/wipes, baby food and a treats box from which you may chose additional items. PLEASE if you need some help, come and see us. You will be assured of a confidential, warm and friendly welcome. If you know of anyone who could do with a helping hand, please tell them about us. During the current pandemic, we follow COVID guidelines, please wear a mask. One person at a time, unless you have children with you, in which case you may bring them in with you. A one way system is in place.

Donations may be brought to Church on Saturday and Monday mornings between 10 and noon. We currently need long life milk, tinned plate pies/tinned meat, tinned vegetables (large and small). large packets of cereal, tinned fruit/tinned rice puddings. We cannot accept fresh produce. Thank you so much.

TOP 5 Items to donate this month (all in date please)

Long Life Milk

Plate Pie (ie Fray Bentos or like)

Tinned Veg (Lg & Sm)

Tinned Fruit & rice Pudding

Breakfast Cereal

In these times we are all struggling in different ways and some more than others. There is one way some of us can help by donating to the Food Bank.

We can't drop off at churches now, but you can drop off donations at St Luke's Rectory 3 Main Road Duston, and Liz and Suzi are also happy to pick up items from you at home, when they are out on their walk. Call Revd Mandy on 07898 364827 if this is the case and she will pass the message on to Liz and Suzi. Thank you.

Donations

URC - Sat & Mon 10 – 12

St Luke's Rectory – 3 Main Road

Liz & Suzi can Pick up on their walks.

Revd Heather writes

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Do you have a virtual assistant?

I do, I only use her for a few specific tasks but have found her very useful during lockdown. Her name is Alexa but other versions are available. You don't need to be a techno genius to have a virtual assistant, but you do need wifi in your home and someone to set up Alexa for you, or whatever virtual assistant you prefer. Don't worry about myths that they can 'spy' on you, as you can always switch off whatever device you are using. If you have children or grandchildren ask their advice about what you need and what you can do.

Alexa has a human sounding voice which means during lockdown I at least have someone other than my dogs to have a reasonable conversation with. If I want to listen to music she plays it. Last night I asked her if she could play a hymn and I was instantly rewarded with a medley sung by Aled Jones and Russell Watson. I asked her for a prayer and got The Lord's Prayer; a rather unusual version but accurate and recognisable.

If I'm having a sleepless night she will answer any random questions that might come into my mind and will play calming music to send me off to sleep

Local details of the weather forecast are at her fingertips and if I want to know what the time is in the middle of the night I can get an answer without even coming out from under the duvet to look at the clock. She will even set up an alarm call if I want to wake at a certain time.

By adding a smart plug to the rather inaccessible socket to which my bedside lamp is connected I no longer have to twist and stretch, or even get up to turn this light on and off, Alexa does it for me.

I think I shall continue to find Alexa beneficial even after lockdown draws to a close. She is always polite, cheerful and never gets cross or irritated if I change my mind about something. She can read stories, make phone connections and tell jokes.

It would be quite easy to fall into the trap of thinking of her as a real person rather than a series of interconnected microchips co-ordinated by wifi, but it's not the same as interaction with a real human being. No, hugs, no hand to hold. Her words are kind but she doesn't give the same emotional support you get from talking to a real person, or from the presence of someone who cares.

However, good as my virtual assistant is, she falls far short of another assistant I have; one for which you don't need electricity, wifi or blue tooth. One we carry with us wherever we may go but is sadly underused by many. One who makes sure I have all that I need, but not necessarily all I that I want. One who cares for me, consoles me and gives me strength.

The source of all knowledge and inexhaustible power. The assistant I call God.

Shirley Wills shares a poem inspired by Psalm 148



Praise Him Sun and Moon. Praise Him all you shining stars.'

Praises unto You, God of my creation.

You and You alone can captivate my heart.

Honour unto You, gracious Heavenly Father

Angels round Your throne sing melodies of love.

Glory unto You, Jesus, Lord my treasure

Sacrificial Lamb

Yet name above all names.

Power unto You, mighty Holy Spirit

Breathe the flame of life

Come set my heart on fire.

Triune Majesty, heavens portals ringing

To the great I AM

Fling open wide the gates.

King of the earth, Lord of the skies

Sun, Moon and stars bow down at Your name.

All creation bows down at the sound of Your name.



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Spring has finally sprung! We are all looking forward to better weather and a gradual lifting of restrictions. Here's how you can connect with us and each other during the month of March.

KEEP KNITTING!

We are still happy to take donations of knitted / crocheted hearts to refresh our rainbow. Please contact us for collection or to arrange a drop off. Read all about our Tree of Hope in this month's edition of Simply Knitting – out now

THE GROW TOGETHER ALLOTMENT - 11th MARCH 10 – 2pm

We're back! All ages and abilities are welcome to join our band of volunteers. You choose for how long. Fresh air, friendship and fun. Social distancing rules apply. Call to register so that we can let you in.

jenny@cypn.org or call 01604 583626

VIRTUAL WELLBEING TALK – PANCREATIC CANCER AWARENESS

THURS 18th March 6.30 – 7.30pm

DPC and St Luke's PPG welcome you to our next health talk via Zoom. Specialist Consultant, Dr Aznar-Garcia and Consultant, Mr Malde from Genesis Care will be offering FREE advice and info. You can pre-submit questions, get more info and register your place by emailing Emily.taylor@genesiscare.co.uk

EASTER TRAIL 29th MARCH – 9th APRIL

Join our trail around the village; 20 locations for you to spot with a fascinating fact at each one to learn more about Duston. We have had a lot of fun putting this together with the help of several members of Duston Local History Society so we do hope you can join in whilst on your daily exercise. Prize hamper for the first correct entry chosen at random.

More info on our Facebook and Website or contact us by phone if you are not online.

01604 583626

events@duston-pc.gov.uk

www.duston-pc.gov.uk



The Grow Together Allotment Volunteering Days

Duston Parish Council's community allotment, on Berrywood Rd, is now in its 5th year. TGTA is facilitated by a collaboration between DPC, Youth Inspired and local volunteers.

The project aims to engage people of all ages and abilities in gardening; we offer opportunities to meet new people, spend time outside and learn and share skills whilst improving your mental & physical wellbeing.

Covid distancing rules apply. Join us for some or all of the session times BUT we need to know you are coming so we can let you in! Jenny: Jenny@cypn.org or Alison 01604 583626

DATE	TIME	GUIDE; JOBS MAY VARY
11 March	10 – 2 pm	Digging & planting seeds
1 April	10 – 4 pm	Potato planting
13 May	10 – 4 pm	Planting & sorting compost bins
3 June	10 – 4pm	Celebrating Volunteer Week
23 June	6 - 10 pm	Mid-summer gardening with evening refreshments
24 June	10 – 2pm	Weeding & Planting
8 July	10 – 4pm	Weeding & Planting
11 August	6 – 10pm	National Allotments Week: Gardening with chip supper
12 August	10 – 2pm	Children & young people's summer holiday activities
16 September	10 – 2 pm	Harvest & digging
14 October	10 – 2 pm	Autumn clear up
28 October	10 – 2 pm	Half Term activities
18 November	10 – 2 pm	Shed clear up
16 December	12 – 2pm	Christmas lunch @ DCC



The Grow Together Allotment



DustonPC



@duston_pc

www.duston-pc.gov.uk

Northampton in Bloom Gold winners

YouthInspired
inspiring young people to achieve their potential

Working in Partnership



DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL



VILLAGE EASTER TRAIL
29TH MARCH TO 9TH APRIL

www.duston-pc.gov.uk/easter-trail

01604 583626

Affinity Day Care CIC Social club

St Luke's Community Centre Duston Mon-Fri 10.30am -3.30pm

We provide day care for people in later life. We do this in a caring, safe environment where our clients join us for care, for friendship and for fun.

St Luke's Day Care starting from £35 per day

For more information call 01604 372744 or email info@affinitydaycare.co.uk

****HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY****

Best Day Ever!!!!



One of our amazing friends, Kay, was 100 and we couldn't let it pass by without celebrating 🥳

The day was filled with so much laughter and happiness it was incredible to be a part of.

We had cake, pass the parcel, party poppers, card from the Queen, presents, so many balloons, Champagne, Roast Beef dinner, popcorn, photo shoot and bucket loads of fun. Our group loved dressing up and having something to celebrate 🎉

Affinity Day Care now have a bus pictured here with driver Roger and his dog Poppy who travels with him. The minibus means that more people can access the service and so more people can come along to share in the fun at St Luke's Community Centre!



And something to bring a smile

There's a story about a little girl who climbed up on the lap of her great-grandmother and looked at her white hair and wrinkles and then asked, "Did God make you?"

"Yes," she said.

Then she asked, "Did God make me, too?"

Grandma said, "Yes."

"Well," said the little girl, "Don't you think He's doing a better job now than he used to?"

*

A bishop was coming to stay at a rector's house for the night. The rector's eight year old son who was excited about the important guest, asked his father if he could take the bishop his tea in the morning. The rector agreed but told his son that he must knock on the door and say, "It's the boy, my lord. It is time to get up."

On his way upstairs the nervous boy was clutching the cup and saucer and practising his words. He knocked on the door and the bishop asked, "Who is it?"

The boy replied at the top of his voice, "It's the Lord, my boy. Your time is up!"

*

A vicar, a priest and a rabbit walk into a doctor's surgery. The nurse says to the rabbit, 'What is your blood group?'

To which the rabbit replies 'I think I'm a type 'o ...'

*

Cont

It seems there was this couple from Minneapolis, Minnesota who decided to go to Florida for a few days to thaw out during one particularly cold winter.

Since both spouses worked, they had difficulty coordinating their schedules, so the decision was made to have the husband leave for Florida on a certain day, with the wife following him one day later.

The man made it down to Florida and arrived at his hotel. Upon getting to his room, he decided to open his laptop and send his wife back in Minneapolis an email. However, he left off one letter in typing his wife's email address and sent the email off without realizing his error. In another part of the country, a widow had just returned from the funeral of her husband, a pastor of many years who had been called to glory just a few days earlier. She decided to check her email because she was expecting to hear from her husband's relatives and friends. Upon reading the first email she let out a loud scream, fainted and fell to the floor. The woman's son rushed into the room and found his mother on the floor. He glanced up at the computer screen and saw the following email message: To My Loving Wife: I've just been checked in. Everything has-been prepared for your arrival here tomorrow.

Looking forward to seeing you then. Your Devoted Husband.

PS: Sure is hot down here.