

Parish Life Magazine

**Parish of Cirencester with
Watermoor and Chesterton**

March 2021

online



Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and St Lawrence (Chesterton)

Useful contacts:

Vicar of Cirencester: Revd Canon Graham Morris

vicar@cirenparish.co.uk

Tel 01285 659317 Office 239655 Vicarage

The Vicar is very happy for you to contact him directly
for matters of concern pastorally or spiritually.

Associate Vicar: Revd Alison Love

revalison@cirenparish.co.uk

Assistant Curate

Revd Dr Joe Mottram

joemottram@cirenparish.co.uk

Churchwardens

Aileen Anderson

aileenanderson@cirenparish.co.uk

Nigel Robbins

nigelrobbins@cirenparish.co.uk

Organist and Choirmaster

Hugo Kennard

hugo@cirenparish.co.uk

Howard Gray (PCC Secretary)

howardgray@cirenparish.co.uk

Sarah Marshall and Emily Winstanley (Parish Administration)

The Parish Office, Corner Stone, 3 Dollar Street, Cirencester,

GL7 2JA 01285 659317

Email: office@cirenparish.co.uk

Website: www.cirenparish.co.uk

Parish Magazine articles (submitted by 16th day of previous month)

cirpamag4@gmail.com

For other officers please see the website's 'who's who'

Our Church and Town post-Covid

There are too many uncertainties in these COVID times. I find these far from settling and often unhelpful. Length of lockdown, value of vaccine and nature of virus are all a matter of doubt. There will be no uncertainties in this article, optimism will prevail.

There is no better certainty to start with than this traditional Gloucestershire prayer.

“As sure as God’s in Gloucestershire,
Said those who years ago
Walked with him hereabouts
And surely they would know.
They saw him in their daily lives,
Their work and in their play,
Let us give thanks as they did then,
That he is here today.”

Yes, our faith, so important now, must and will remain. Our three churches will also; each with its own identity and each playing a role in our united parish.

The Ministry Team, serving the Parish, is the strongest I have known. Revd Alison has joined us, Revd Joe will soon move to Priest from Curate and following the end of his Curacy, Revd Julian will remain with us. There are several retired priests who are still running ‘the straight race’, although, in my case, it is more of an aging amble. Canon Graham has a warm, welcoming concept of the Parish as a whole and leads us in that spirit.

This team will not go back to ‘normal’, we shall move on to better. There must be discussions and decisions now about how we do this. We shall need to hit the ground running.

Our buildings must be used and adapted to meet all the needs of our complete Parish, and we must take full opportunity of the future opening of 6, West Market Place. We must also make the Parish Church fit for purpose for both church and town. In two major ways it is not. It lacks toilets and a kitchen.

Our music life is expanding and will continue to do so. Concerts of every nature will need to be accommodated. We need to hold these and many other outside events as well. This will cost money but we must be bold and there is every reason for optimism here because all of us can play a part in this by encouraging, suggesting and if the need arises, helping out. A 'vision' group is currently meeting and we must hold them in our prayers.

Our town will look very different post COVID. Familiar High Street names have gone and others are very vulnerable. We shall remain and take the opportunity to support the town in so many ways.

God is definitely in Gloucestershire. We must not let Him down. Yes, we need to talk now but very soon will be the time to act. We must be ready.

God is here – His Spirit is with us.

Revd Penny



If We Only Have Love

Cirencester Male Voice Choir (CMVC) launched its fourth virtual video live on YouTube on St Valentine's Day. The chosen song was "If we only have love" which was considered appropriate for the date. The video can be accessed through the link below. It was launched to raise awareness and funds for Pancreatic Cancer UK.

The video raised just over £1000 on its first day online.

Please have a look at the video on YouTube and support this worthwhile charity.

The video is online at - https://youtu.be/ELJGtYkY5_4

Our just giving page for donations is

- <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cmvc>

Alan Barnes

Alison's Licensing Service



Rev'd Alison Love was licensed to serve in our parish by Bishop Rachel on Sunday 24th January 2021.

The service was held virtually on Zoom due to restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic. The photo is a screen shot from the Zoom service. An excellent sermon reminding Alison that she is licensed to serve was preached by Phil Andrew, Archdeacon of Cheltenham.

Alison was warmly welcomed by the bishop and all who joined in via Zoom. We wish her all the best in her ministry here.

Alan Barnes

Mothers' Union Letter



What extraordinary times we are living through. As I write this we are still some way off the lifting of sanctions. Please let a committee member know if you are aware of a fellow member (or one of their relatives) who is unwell. We can all offer prayerful support even if we are unable to visit. A phone call could be a source of encouragement too.

At our Zoom AGM on February 3rd Kathie Cottey presented the branch financial report which was accepted. It was both humbling and encouraging to learn of the enormous generosity of the members. I believe that this reflects the passion and

commitment that each of us has for our movement. The work and witness goes on around the world in spite of the pandemic. The needs and challenges remain. I have just received the information about the ways we can mark Mothering Sunday this year. The projects range from Parenting Programmes, Empowerment Classes for young girls to financing an AFIA Experience Day. The choices cover desperately needed focus on issues in line with our stated aim in this country and worldwide. The MU material for Mothering Sunday is first class and includes a variety of helpful prayers.

In recent days yet another military coup has been enacted in Myanmar. I was visiting members there back in the 1990s when curfew was the norm and San Suu Kyi was under house arrest. Our fellow members are courageous and faithful. They experience many limitations but remain cheerful and their faith is truly humbling. Please remember them in your prayers. Sadly they are among many communities around the world where the Christian faith and witness is being challenged.

Looking ahead, much of our 2021 Branch Programme will not happen as planned. However, when events can take place I know that you will all turn out and fully support them.

Shellaine Foggin is stepping down as our Branch Leader. She has done a magnificent job, especially during the lockdown. She has kept us all up to date with the information coming from the diocese and MSH. She and the family are now safely home having recovered from the Covid virus whilst in Zimbabwe.

As a branch we are enormously grateful to Kathie Cottey for agreeing to collate all the MU information that reaches her from the diocese and centre when Shellaine steps down. The Branch will be run by the committee until a new leader is appointed. Please pray that someone will come forward as our new leader. Each and every leader throughout the history of the MU will have felt inadequate in many ways when promoted or invited to put their names forward. I know from personal experience that God does not call the able. He enables those he calls. Please pray about this important role.

I am confident that each one of us looks forward to the time when we can once again meet and greet.

With my love *Pat Harris*

Dates

Wed March 3rd at 2pm – Zoom Branch Meeting (speaker Canon Graham Morris)

Fri March 5th – Women's World Day of Prayer

Thu March 25th – Lady Day Service (Revd Rosemary Franklin)

Sun March 28th – Palm Sunday



Persecuted Christians

For more than 340 million people around the world choosing to follow Jesus means that they could lose their homes, their freedom and even their lives. Each year, Open Doors uses extensive research to compile a list of the countries where Christians face the most persecution. For the twentieth year running, North Korea is at the top of that list.

The worst 10 countries are:

- North Korea
- Afghanistan
- Somalia
- Libya
- Pakistan
- Eritrea
- Yemen
- Iran
- Nigeria
- India



With the Open Doors World Watch List 2021 Top 50, you can learn about, support and pray for millions of Christians who are persecuted for their faith. For more information, or to make a donation go to opendoorsuk.org/wwl where you'll also find more information about the countries in the World Watch List Top 10.

Pam Barnes



Lent Lunches

We are delighted to say that Lent lunches will take place this year. They will be 'zoomed' with Paul Springate in charge of the technicalities. The pattern will be:

12 noon: Relay of the Midday Eucharist from the Parish Church.

Then, about 5 minutes after the end of the Eucharist, the speaker will be introduced. After his or her talk the speaker will take questions and the lunch should end at approximately 13:00.

It is hoped you will join with your own lunch at home.

Dates and Speakers:

Wednesday 24 th February	Howard Gray
Wednesday 3 rd March	Fiona Hawes
Wednesday 10 th March	Nigel Robbins
Wednesday 17 th March	Revd Alison Love
Wednesday 24 th March	Kathy Folkestad

Zoom link details:

Join Zoom Meeting

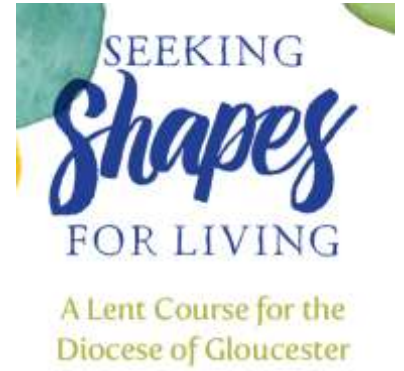
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85708063254?pwd=cy9sL0dHWFo2WnY1bjZmdzNoZmNQUT09>

Meeting ID: 857 0806 3254

Passcode: 116230

Lent 2021

Throughout this Lent there will be the opportunity for study and reflection together as a parish using the **Shapes for Living** course, produced by the Diocese of Gloucester in 2019.



The course enables us to explore how we might seek to shape our lives in ways that help to nurture and grow our faith through five themes: Relating, Praying, Working, Playing, and Growing.

Our hope is that each week's theme will enable each of us to reflect on what shapes our lives, and how we might try to intentionally reshape that in ways, whether large or small, which enable us to grow into the fullness of who we are called to be by God, both individually and together.

You can find more information on the course, including an introductory video, at: <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/your-ministry/shapes-for-living/>

There is a course booklet and some personal exercises to aid in personal reflection, which we will collect together on our parish webpage at:

<https://cirenparish.co.uk/worship-and-services/seasonal-services/lent-groups/>

We will also be running groups for study and discussion on each theme via zoom – see the parish webpage for the links. Each session will last roughly an hour, with the majority of the time spent in smaller facilitated discussion groups. There will be two opportunities to catch each session:

- Mondays at 2pm from 22nd February, and
- Thursdays at 7:30pm from 25th February

It's worth looking at the course booklet before each session, and having a Bible along with pen and paper for notetaking during the meetings.

I'm so excited for all we will share together this Lent. If you're planning to attend one of the groups then please could you let me know which one via email so we have an idea of numbers: joemottram@cirenparish.co.uk

Joe Mottram



Did you check, switch and save this winter?

This winter, Citizens Advice in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust ran a UK campaign for three months to help people cut their energy bills and access specialist energy saving advice.

If you didn't see the digital campaign (we know not everyone uses social media) there are three actions to take:

1. **Check** that you're not paying too much for your energy, and find out whether you're eligible for discounts, grants or other financial support.
2. **Switch** your energy tariff or supplier to make sure you're getting the best deal. This can save people lots of money on their energy bills.
3. **Save** money by making your home more energy efficient. Making small changes can save you money and help the environment. For example, fitting your hot water cylinder with an insulating jacket will save you £20 a year in heating costs and 150kg of carbon dioxide emissions.

If you haven't **checked, switched and saved** this winter and would like help to do so please get in touch. Your gas, electricity and water bills do not have to be worrying issues.

Our advisers can:

- Check you are on the best energy tariff for your circumstances and help you switch to a cheaper tariff.
- Explain your energy bills.
- Help you sort out problems and complaints with your energy supplier.
- Identify financial support and grants which you may be eligible for.

Our service is confidential, impartial and independent.

Call 0808 109 2056, 0808 800 0510 or 0808 800 0511 (Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm) to speak to one of our friendly advisers.

Elizabeth Hall

For those
of a certain
age!

Please refer to the October 2020online
magazine
for the back-story. Thank you.



Horatio's Spot

The archives

Hi Folks

Well it's happened again, no sooner I get settled and arrange my furniture and bits and bobs just the way I want them, and before you know it, it's up sticks and we're on the move again. It's a bit like the man who owned a posh car and when the ash tray was full he bought a new car. In this case I guess the grass needed cutting and Dumbles thought it would be easier to move rather than get the mower out.

Weeks before the move, boxes and tea chests appeared at the big house and the business of packing began. These humans do have a lot of stuff to cart round you know, and I'm sure half of it never gets used. Anyway this moving lark was old hat to most of us, we'd done it before; Mumples, Dumbles, Poppet, Pebbles, Sun, Bubbles, Muddles and myself, of course. We knew that things were going to be a bit difficult for a few days and tempers might get a bit thin but it would work out alright in the end.

But one member of the family who hadn't moved before was Squeak the dog. She didn't know what was going on. People seemed to be too busy to give her much attention, there were boxes piled up all over the place and there wasn't room to run and chase her ball, she looked very dejected. The day Dumbles dropped the hammer on his big toe and did a sort of war dance around the bedroom letting out fierce blood-curdling screams; Squeak thought it was her fault and hid herself under the bed, and the time that Sun stayed in bed until dinner time, saying that he was storing up his energy ready for the move only to be shouted at by Mumples, Squeak thought that she was shouting at her and was too upset to eat her tea.

I think Squeak thought that she was going to be left behind and when the estate agent's blurb said "to include all fixtures and fittings" that meant dogs as well, She looked really worried about the whole thing whereas Bubbles the cat just curled up on one of the tea chests and waited to be moved with the rest of the luggage.

As it turned out, of course, everybody moved together and when Squeak found, that in the new house, it was one big happy family as before she wagged her tail with glee, knocking down all the 'welcome to your new home' cards in the process.

If we belong to Jesus we have no need to worry that he will ever leave us behind. We may find life difficult at times, like starting at a new school, joining a new class, making new friends, or moving to a different place but there are many promises from God and Jesus in the Bible which are all true and meant just for us. Here are two:—

'I will never leave you; I will never abandon you' (Hebrews 13 v 5)

'And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matthew 28 v 20)

There are many other promises like this in the Bible why not underline them as you come across them and remember, God loves you lots.

Bye for now,

Horatio (*Submitted by John Mockett*)

The New Normal

When are things going to get back to normal? It's a question I often hear asked. Politicians like to be robustly reassuring, but their jolly optimism rings hollow in the face of the pandemic, global warming and economic decline. The honest answer is that we will never get back to what we like to think of as "normal". Quite frankly much of what we used to regard as normal was utterly miserable for a great many both in the UK and abroad. What has our Christian faith to offer

us in these troubled times? What can ordinary Christian men and women do to help?

The first thing we need to accept is that it is *not* God's purpose that we should “go back to normal”. Our UK pre-Covid “normal” was a world in which there were massive disparities of wealth. Thousands of children were living in extreme poverty, there was widespread institutional racism and misogyny and we were poisoning our planet. Many nations were guilty of latent or explicit genocide. So what can anyone living in a small market town do to change all that misery? Well, yes, we can do small acts of kindness, contribute generously to good causes, volunteer to help people get by, be good neighbours.

But there is something else which we can do which never features in the manifesto of any party. We can change our hearts. The prophet Jeremiah hears God saying he is going to take away our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. That was part of the manifesto of Jesus of Nazareth. “Unless you change your world view you cannot enter the Kingdom of God!” The word he uses in Greek is *metanoete*, which means *change your thinking* (unfortunately mistranslated as “repent”, which narrowly links it to sin). Change your world view.

How do we change our world view? St Paul tells us: “*if anyone is in Christ Jesus there is a new creation!*” He also told us, “*It is not I who live but Christ who lives in me!*”

Just look hard at that little word “in”. What does it mean? It means that Paul once had a Jesus shaped hole inside him. On the road to Damascus Jesus had suddenly filled that hole with his love and completely transformed the way Paul saw the world. He tells us he was blind for three days and then got his sight back when a Christian disciple touched him. For the first time he saw the world as it really is, alienated from God. He writes urgently to tell his friends that *everyone* has a Jesus-shaped hole in their hearts which can be filled with love. He tells these new disciples that Jesus is already beginning to reshape their hearts which is *the hope of glory!* There is a new world which awaits them beyond all the pain and grief of this world – a *new Creation! Change your world view and believe this good news.*

Okay, suppose, just for the sake of argument, if I come to believe that this Good News is really true, how do I go about changing the way I see the world, and what difference would it make in the present crisis? Well, if I want Jesus to begin to fill my hollow heart I have to give him access, invite him into what the poet W.B. Yeats calls *The rag and bone shop of the human heart*. That means sitting down in silence twice a day to repeat a single word or phrase over and over again in your heart (*mar-an-ath-ar* or “*Your love enfolds me*”) If I do that faithfully as part of my daily routine (like brushing my teeth, a kind of spiritual hygiene) gradually my world view will begin to change. God is faithful and will welcome you unconditionally with open arms as his dear child.

What difference will it make? It will begin to change the world. Just think about that astonishing young black woman declaiming her poem at the Inauguration of President Biden. As one commentator said, “The right words at the right time can change the world”! Those who “live in the Spirit” release an invisible stream of divine love into our troubled world. They learn how to say the right words from Jesus. Jesus lived with his hand in the Father's hand and the Father's love in his heart and spoke words that changed the world. Paul lived with Jesus “in” his heart and changed the world. St. John lived and died “abiding in” Jesus and he has changed the way hundreds of millions now see the world. The saints who opened their hearts to Jesus founded many thousands of hospitals and schools throughout the world. Prayer is a dynamo for change. (St Patrick founded 69 schools in Ireland!) These men and women of prayer have left a legacy of heroic love which still permeates the NHS, often without any conscious reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless good hearted men and women are still responding sacrificially to the call to make a better world in our surgeries, hospitals, schools and care homes. They are doing the Jesus thing which speaks louder than words.

When the Covid plague recedes what shape is the Christian Church going to be? Very different from what it was. But here in Cirencester the shape of that future gathering of the Jesus people will depend on how many of us have discovered for ourselves that there really is the makings of a New Creation in this place. Charismatic communities like the Baptist Church have vivid experiences of the Spirit at work among crowds of young people, changing lives. Pope Francis is

appointing new Bishops and Cardinals who have been baptised in the Spirit. The charismatic Church is God's new “normal”.

With Lent on the horizon, instead of giving up marmalade or chocolate, we would be doing far more to foster the New Creation (the Kingdom of God) by giving up a bit of time to open our hearts every morning and evening to sit in silence with the Enfolding Love and being marinaded in the Spirit. For many of us that means accepting that we still have a Jesus-shaped hole inside us, and asking him to fill it. That is how to change the world.

Hugh Dickinson

SHROVE TUESDAY

For nearly a thousand years Christian men and women have knelt in their churches at the beginning of Lent and received the sign of the cross on their foreheads and heard the priest say these words:

Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel. If I am truthful in the past I have always found the experience pretty daunting and the prospect of 40 days of penitence frankly gloomy. Now that I am in my tenth decade I find myself experiencing a liberating change of heart. And that is exactly what this rite means. A change of heart!



The Kingdom of God begins in the human heart. When we pray “Thy Kingdom come” most people assume that this is a prayer that God will intervene at some time in the (distant) future and finally put things right in this chaotic world of his. But what *is* this Gospel we are told to believe? That God will one day keep his word? I don't *feel* that is Good News except in a remote sense.

When I hear that some clever scientists have invented a vaccine my heart gives a little jump of gratitude. I felt a bigger jump of pleasure when I heard that Joe Biden had won the Presidency. That was a real change of heart after such prolonged despair. When I read of the heroic service of doctors and nurses in our intensive care hospitals and the waves of clapping and volunteering and new neighbourliness and sacrificial generosity sweeping over our country my heart is

warmed. If I don't feel that momentary bubble of delight I am hard hearted; that is the heart of stone which Jeremiah deplored in his countrymen.

So what is this bubble of joy which I am told to feel in Lent – this *God's joyous Word* in my changed heart. David Cameron thought we would all rejoice in his slogan The Big Society. It left us cold. But suppose he had called for a Generous Society? My heart warms to that.

What is the heart warming slogan of the Kingdom of God? It is simply Jesus here and now. God is as God is in Jesus, All Embracing Love. Julian of Norwich repeats that over and over again. That is what Jesus *means*. The Kingdom of God begins and continues in the human heart here and now.

What would it feel like to you if every morning you woke to find yourself in the embrace of love, and if every evening you felt a warm gratitude that Love has walked hand in hand with you through the day? If that is what Lent really feels like would it not warm your heart?

Well, yes, but.....

But what?

I don't *feel* that and seldom have any heartfelt sense of God or of being enfolded in love. So the next question is, Do I *want* to feel my heart being warmed by the close, intimate awareness of being enfolded in love which is as close to me as my own breathing and is fully aware of my frailty and accepts me whole heartedly just as I am? Isn't that a bit overwhelming? Do I even want to want it? Believe the Gospel means use Lent to open yourself up inch by inch to the enfolding love. The Kingdom of God begins in the human heart, my heart and your heart.

I have written before with suggestions how to go about opening up our hearts.

It demands time. I have to sit in absolute stillness twice a day, and trying to quieten the restless squirrel inside me to make space for this gently enfolding Presence. If I do that faithfully during Lent I will find to my own surprise that I want to go on doing it as a regular part of daily routine like having a shower. The Kingdom of God begins in the human heart every day.

HGD

Senior Thoughts

1. Talk to yourself. There are times when you need expert advice.
2. You don't need anger management, you just need people to stop making you mad. Especially during lockdown.
3. Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance of an idiot that needs work.
4. The biggest lie you tell yourself is, "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."
5. Being 'on time' is when you get there.
6. When you say 'the other day', you could be referring to any day between yesterday and fifteen years ago.
7. It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle free and three sizes smaller.
8. You've noticed people your age are so much older than you.
9. You are not going deaf – other people mumble.
10. Forgetting what you have gone upstairs for is quite normal – at your age. Come back down and all may be revealed.



Submitted by Howard Gray (unknown author)

Taking a Snooze

Over 60s who nap could be improving their cognitive health and making them mentally sharper, researchers have said.

Experts have been looking at the impact of taking a short sleep in the day. The research team, led by Dr Lin Sun of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Centre at Shanghai Mental Health Centre and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, say those who rested their eyes for



between 10 and 30 minutes performed better in cognitive tests when compared to those who stayed awake throughout the day.

The study, involved looking at the physical and mental health of just over 2,000 people aged over 60 who live in China. Among those volunteers, 1,534 took regular afternoon naps while 680 did not.

A dementia screening carried out on all of the participants found the nappers scored “significantly higher” on all the tests, which included attention span and problem-solving, when compared to those who did not rest in the day.

Speaking to HealthOnline, Davina Ramkissoon, wellbeing director of Zevo Health and who was not involved in the study, said: “Napping helps your brain recover from burnout or overload of information.”

“While taking naps, your brain clears out unnecessary information out of your brain’s temporary storage areas to prepare it for the new information to be absorbed.”

Fellow sleep expert Katherine Hall added: “If you are able to get a catnap in the afternoon, there are some great benefits to be had. The evidence suggests that napping is great for improving mood, energy, and productivity while reducing anxiety and physical and mental tension.”

“If you’re able to nap for a slightly longer period of time, say 60 minutes, evidence suggests that napping for this length can actually aid your learning. As during this longer nap, your brain will start to transfer memories from your temporary holding facility (the hippocampus) to their permanent home, the cortex.”

She recommends the best time to nap is between 1pm and 3pm.

Submitted by *Howard Gray* (from the *Journal General Psychiatry*.)

(Whoopee! Vindication at last!!)



The Church Peregrine Falcons



So lockdown came in different forms for many. I myself had lost my dear friend Christopher Fear immediately prior to it. Difficult times ahead.

I found comfort in the camera that Chris had left me in his will and a renewed interest in all things nature.

Now the noise we all heard back in February/March time on top of the parish church ended up being a pair of peregrine falcons, the fastest animals on the planet recorded at speeds of 240 mph plus.

I heard that they were possibly there so I would walk on my daily exercise to see if they were on the church. The church, though it was shut at the time became a focal point for me even during lockdown. I managed to snap a few pictures trying to learn how to use the camera without great success. I'd missed other chances to capture them and they became less and less regular. So to hear the noise, sometimes evening time in the dark, was reassuring that they were still around. Although they had seldom been seen of late, when told they were there one Saturday afternoon, a journey was made with the camera in hand to see. I

was welcomed with not one but two. Both the male and female perched on the church. The female being significantly larger than the male was witnessed eating a meal whereas the male was sat on a gargoyles with its hands covering its ears. Not surprising as they screech loudly!!

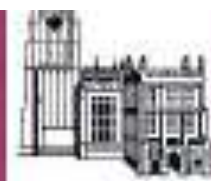
The peregrines have now had a nesting box placed on top of the church with hope that they can raise young to fledge this year.

I hoped the birds were there by the time I made it to church. My hopes were rewarded with these fantastic images I can share with you.

Hope, we must always have hope.

Graham Hill





CHURCH SHOP



Open Monday to Saturday 10am ~ 4pm

Why not take a look at our Parish Church Shop, there's more than you expect!

Books
CDs

Gifts
Cards

Souvenirs
Bibles

Diaries
Calendars

Maps
Pictures

Icons
Prayer Books



Website: <http://www.cirenparish.co.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/churchshop>

Tel: 01285 659317