Alpha News - It was hard but a bit of a no brainer to have to cancel our Alpha course this spring/summer. However we are now thinking about how to create a Virtual Alpha which will work with our new friend Zoom in the Autumn. In the meantime, if you are someone who would like to do a daytime Alpha course, from the comfort of your living room, Hereford Diocese are trialling a Zoom Alpha starting this coming Tuesday 4th August from 10-11.30 morning for 8 weeks and are inviting anyone who would like to take part to contact: e.hackney@hereford.anglican.org
Please feel free to join in or share with anyone you know who is interested in Alpha.

Morning Prayer this week
Morning prayer continues by Zoom again this week, at 9am each weekday. Follow the link from our benefice website to join in. You will also find the order of service which you can use to pray Morning Prayer at https://rossparishes.uk/faith-at-home/

Our Service Today
In accordance with Diocesan Policy and National Guidelines we encourage everyone attending a service in any of our church buildings to wear a face mask throughout the service. There will be hand sanitiser available as you enter the church, and we ask you to sanitise your hands before being seated. Please sit socially distanced.

8.00am BCP Service - Ross
The Rev’d Colin Leggate

9.30am Eucharist Celebration - Ross
The Rev’d Colin Leggate, Dr Derek Glover & Mrs Tiffany Jackson
This service will be livestreamed: https://rossparishes.uk/digital-services/

11.00am Outdoor Family Service - Walford
The Rev’d Canon Chris Blanchard & The Rev’d Prebendary Caroline Pascoe

3.30pm - Picnic Church - Ross
Mrs Tiffany Jackson

Services Next Week
Thursday 6th August
10.00am Eucharist - Ross
This service will be live streamed

Sunday 9th August
8.00am BCP Service - Ross

9.30am Live-streamed Eucharist Celebration Ross

10.45am - Zoom Family Service
Please email Caroline for the link to join this service (this is for safeguarding purposes as it’s a live online service with children participating).

Gospel readings through this week
Mon: Matthew 14.13-21
Tues: Matthew 14.22-end
Wed: Matthew 15.21-28
Fri: Matthew 16.24-28
Sat: Matthew 17.14-20
Sun: Matthew 14.22-33
https://rossparishes.uk/faith-at-home/

Growing inclusive, intergenerational churches that inspire faith, hope and love
Almost everyone I have spoken to this week has expressed their dismay and frustration and fear about how life is right now – and I think these are completely appropriate feelings. It is so easy to enter a downward spiral as we struggle with masks and social distancing, or contemplate another spike in the pandemic, or the economic cost of COVID that will be with us for generations.

But today let us consider an upward spiral that starts with our churches. The bottom of that spiral was arguably the moment when we were asked to lock our doors and stop public worship in our buildings. But from that moment, inspired by the creative Spirit of God and the love and commitment of people to God’s Church, the spiral has begun to bend upwards: pre-recorded Sunday services from the Rectory garden and from within our homes; pastoral care by phone; post service coffee, PCC meetings, Come Dine with Me, Toast and Family services all by Zoom; and many other innovative and caring ways in which our churches have adapted to this crisis, and have continued to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to our communities.

Last week I wrote that during this disorientating time our churches have had a strong sense of direction thanks to a visioning process held earlier in the year. We know the direction we need to head in; we know who God is calling us to be and what he is calling us to do; and now it is time to starting making progress in being inclusive, intergenerational churches that inspire faith, hope and love in our communities. This is the spiritual compass bearing that gives direction to our upward spiral.

Today I would like to write briefly about our identity, about who we are. Our travel passports provide a certain notion of who we are, but at a deeper, existential, and theological level we identify as sons and daughters of God; as those who recognise that we created in God’s image, and are known and loved and forgiven by God; and that we are also called by him to continue the work of Christ here and now. We are Christians, but we are also those who chose to identify as Anglican Christians – a family of believers numbering around 80 million around the globe. While “Christian” is always the term we should primarily identify with,

Rector: Rev’d Sean Semple | 01989 562175 | sean@rossparishes.uk (not Fri)
Curate: Tiffany Jackson | tiffany@rossparishes.uk | 07881420823 (not Fri)
Walford: Rev’d Canon Chris Blanchard | 01989 762368 | chris@rossparishes.uk (Sun - Wed)
Assistant Priest: Rev’d Colin Leggate | Colin@rossparishes.uk
Assistant Priest: Rev’d Prebendary Caroline Pascoe | caroline@rossparishes.uk
Reader: Canon Freda Davies | freda@rossparishes.uk
Intergenerational Missioner: Christine Cattanach | christine@rossparishes.uk
Administrator: Louise Jarvis | 01989 562175 | administrator@rossparishes.uk
our Anglican tradition, our way of worshipping and thinking of God, our understanding of our role in our community, is distinct from that of other Christian groups, each of which have their own identity and traditions and ways of doing things.

And then we are the Anglican Christians of Ross, Walford and Brampton Abbots who by ecclesiological adjustment have been brought together legally, administratively and pastorally into what is called a benefice.

All this reflects who we are, and our vision gives a focus for what we are called to do. It thus makes sense for our “public face” to reflect both our identity and our mission. Our three PCCs have recently adopted the logo you can see on the newsletter this week. One of the first things that you might notice is that we have moved from calling ourselves “The Benefice of Ross and Walford with Brampton Abbots” to “The Ross Parishes”. There are a number of very good reasons for this – but from the start it is important to know that this is simply a change of our public name – our branding if you like – rather than any legal change of name. The word “benefice” has little if any resonance with the general public, while the word “parish” does mean something. We are sure that Rawchurch means anything to the parishes now, and wouldn’t be then. I am not sure that Rawchurch means anything to the public – but “The Ross Parishes” expresses who we are succinctly and clearly.

The logo expresses not just our name but also our vision and mission – our direction of upward travel. The logo incorporates a star to reflect parishes guided by God who bring the light of Christ to others.

I hope that the new life that you see bubbling up through these parishes will encourage and inspire you. God is greater than this pandemic or any other challenge we face, and he at work in and through The Ross Parishes.

Yours in Christ
Sean
Rector

Today’s Collect

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion Prayer

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever.

We pray for those who are ill

Martin Connop-Price and Rob Seabourn and all those infected and affected by the coronavirus

We remember those who have died

Margaret Pennington and Janet Flowers and we pray for their families and loved ones, and for all those who mourn at this time.

Today’s readings

First Reading Isaiah 55.1-5

The LORD says this: Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. 4 See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 5 See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Second Reading Romans 9.1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading Matthew 13.31-33, 44-52

13 When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ 16 Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ 17 They replied, ‘We have nothing but five loaves and two fish.’ 18 And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

This week and beyond

Picnic Church - Sundays in August, 3:30pm at St. Mary’s Church. Join us for a short, family service. Bring a picnic blanket to sit on and a snack for after the service. Social distancing rules will be complied with. For more information contact: Tiffany-tiffany@rossparishes.uk, 07881420823 or Rev’d Caroline Pascoe caroline@rossparishes.uk

Sean is now on leave until 8th August. Please contact Colin 564536 or Freda 562366 during this time.