

The Rambling Rector

Definition: *A White Flowering Climbing Rose Or A Vicar With No Sermon Notes!*

WATER INTO WINE

IS JESUS SAYING
DRINKING IS OK?

Does Jesus enjoy a
good party?

Jesus saves the best
'til last!

Why BOTHER?

Bible Readings

Revelation 19:6-10

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

**Blessed are those who are invited to
the wedding supper of the Lamb!**

THIS WEEK



Spring
Early Signs



Exposé
The Headteacher!



News
Your News and
Stories



Is Thursday please

Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

John 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."
His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

you have saved the best till now."

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

WEEKLY PRAYER

God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.



A Reflection - by Rev Neil

WHY BOTHER?

Why bother?

Why did Jesus turn the water into wine?

Was it to say,
'Yup, fine to have a drink' or 'Look what I can do! Ta Da!'
or 'Hey, Jesus likes to party with the rest of them'

There has to be *more* to this narrative...

THE MORE

Well the 'more' is in some of those little details that John provides in his telling of it.

THE WATER

The water that Jesus turns into wine – where does it come from?



We're told:
"Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim."

We didn't need that much detail really. John could just have said, *"Now there were some large water jars there, and Jesus turned the water in them into wine."*

But we're told more than that. There were six of these large stone water jars, each of them holding twenty or thirty gallons. And Jesus has the servants fill each one of them to the brim.

John is emphasising how abundant, how super-abundant, is the gift Jesus is going to give. That's how Jesus does things. Always more than we can expect or imagine. He is rich in his grace toward us. Full to the brim. Always more than we can measure.

PURIFICATION

So that's one thing that this detail of the six water jars tells us. But John gives us even another snippet of information. He says that these are six stone water jars used *"for the Jewish rites of purification."*

Again, he didn't need to mention that, but he does. Jesus chooses to use, and John chooses to tell us, that these are water jars for Jewish rites of purification.

The Jews had various self-ablutions, various washings, to render themselves ritually clean and to get rid of certain types of uncleanness. And with these, they often would go even beyond what God had commanded for Israel.

We read elsewhere in the gospels too that the Jews and the Pharisees had very particular ways of washing to make themselves clean. Which, is why these six stone jars for ritual purification were there. It was part of their everyday Jewish life. .

Yet, these are the vessels that Jesus is filling full. And then he replaces them with different content, the new wine in old wineskins, if you will. Or in this case, the new wine in old water jars.

THIS IS WHY HE BOTHERED

This is why he bothered. Those old Jewish rites of purification are passing away. They pointed ahead to the new and only way of purification, which is through what Jesus provides.

Jesus fulfils –Jesus fills full – what the old covenant pointed ahead toward. He brings in the new wine of the new covenant.

So, his message to those then at the start of his ministry, his reminder to us as believers today, and the message to those trying to get into the kingdom through living a good life and doing good things is this:

HERE IS YOUR PURIFICATION

Here is your purification, dear friends! It is in what Jesus provides. It is in what Jesus gives. And what does he give? Jesus gives his own body into death for your purification. Jesus sheds his own blood for your forgiveness. This is how you are clean. This is how you enter the Kingdom. This is how you are forgiven: through Jesus giving himself for you, to be your purification.



IN DEPTH

This week, the Headteacher of St Oswald's School, Mrs Sharon Patton

What was your least favourite food as a child?

Anything fishy! Still don't eat any sort of fish or shellfish! I even run out of the sea if I spot one.

What is the worst job you've ever had?

Working in a wallpaper/ decorating shop! A customer was rare but we weren't even allowed to sit down. We used to sneak a sit on the boxes of wallpaper when the manageress went out to lunch!

If you were an animal, what would you be?

A Tawny owl



Tell us something we don't know about you.

I used to be in a Christian rock band! Or I am a campanologist and Tower Captain at my local church!

What's the most exciting thing you've done?

Been to the top of the Burj Khalifa and I don't like heights! Bell towers I can cope with because they're enclosed.

If you performed in a circus, what act would you be?

The Ring Leader!

EXERCISE FOR THE OVER 60's

With gyms closed, and being out and about limited, exercise is hugely important to maintain mobility. As we mature, it can become more difficult, but it is vital if we want to maintain a healthy life, especially in retirement.

With that in mind, we are pleased to offer the following simple exercise routine, recommended by Dutch fitness guru Cardi Ough, and featured in 'Mature Bodies Magazine'. Thanks to Barbara Heaton for sharing the article.



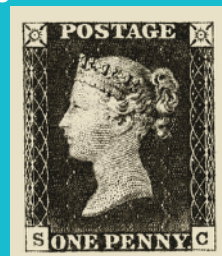
- Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room each side.
- With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your side and hold them as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.
- Each day you'll find you can hold this position for just a little longer.
- After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags. Then try 50-lb potato bags.
- Don't rush, but eventually try to get to the point where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (*I'm at this level says Barbara*)
- Once you feel comfortable at this level, put a potato in each bag.

Recycling Stamps Update

The RNIB have sent me a checklist for collecting stamps for them. It would help me and them if you could follow their guidelines where possible.



1. Stamps are trimmed with approximately one centimetre of paper around the edge.
2. Do not send large gold Post Office printed labels or pre-printed postage marks (these are pre-printed postage impressions printed directly onto envelopes)
3. Please separate stamps into British and Overseas (which includes stamps from the Channel Islands and Isle of Man)



Thank you for your help with this. Tricia



The Church of England's Lent resources theme for 2021, building on the success of recent years, is entitled:

#LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story.

It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, published on 19 November by SPCK.

Both the book and the accompanying daily reflections encourage all Christians to think about their calling, how to share their faith and reflect on the difference Christ makes in our lives.

We witness to God's story and the impact this has made to our story so that others might also find their story taking on new meaning in the light of God's love. While the current restrictions on daily life necessitated by the pandemic present significant challenges, the suffering and isolation many continue to face make the need for us to share God's love with our communities greater than ever. Rather than just being a Lenten discipline, this year's #LiveLent is a joyful invitation to make witness a normal part of the Christian life, the natural overflow of a life lived in devotion to Christ.

What are the key elements of the Lent 2021 resources?

From Ash Wednesday (17 February) to Easter Sunday (4 April), there will six reflections for each week, written by Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness. Each reflection will include a short passage from the Bible, a brief exploration of the reading, and a prayer. Additionally, each week will have a unifying theme and an action to be taken during the week.

The daily reflections will be made available through a booklet available to buy from [Church House Publishing](#), as well as a free app, emails, audio and through the Church of England's social media accounts.

If you would like a hard copy of the booklet, then please let Neil know and we will be happy to arrange that for you

Taking Part

Each week both at Finningley and Auckley different members of our church family read the Bible passages and lead the prayers, for which we are really grateful. But it's not a closed club open to just a few, so if you would like to offer to read or lead the prayers in either church, either after lockdown or online, please just let us know. You may be confident or you may want some encouragement and help, and that's fine and we'll be delighted to help.

Just let Neil, Carol, Helen at Auckley and Paul at Finningley know.

ASH WEDNESDAY & LENT 2021

This year we will certainly be in lock down for some of Lent, for all of lent?...probably? No? Yes?

Ash Wednesday falls on the 17th Feb, currently one day after the next review, with any changes implemented from the 22nd...maybe...

So, our Ash Wednesday service will be on-line. I know that for many the imposition of ashes is very important, but sadly we won't be able to do that this year, nevertheless I wanted to be able to offer something for those who might find it helpful.

There will be an on-line service at 7.00pm, and for those who would find some physical ash helpful, I would be happy to mail some out on a postcard, suspended in some form of resin, along with the usual words printed alongside. Whilst this isn't what we're used to, many churches are adopting this idea. We did consider sending some actual powdered ash out. However, it was pointed out that the little bags look and feel like 'dealer' bags and may be intercepted by post office!



If you would like a postcard, with some ash, then please let me know and I'll arrange that to be mailed out to you.

LENT COURSE

Once again we will run a Lent course each week leading up to Easter. Again, it's likely this will be online this year. More news on this in the coming weeks.

FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ZOOM

If you're unable to Zoom then we have resources available. If you would like fresh copies of Morning Prayer then please just give Neil a call who will be happy to mail them out.

In addition, the Church of England also has the following free Daily Hope line too..



Just For Fun

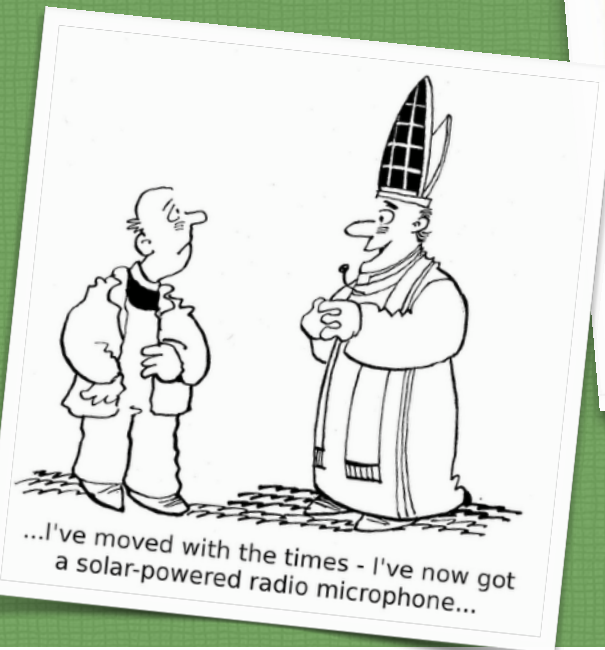
HOME SCHOOLING DAY 1

IF YOU SEE MY CHILDREN LOCKED
OUTSIDE TODAY, MIND YOUR OWN
BUSINESS - WE ARE HAVING A FIRE
DRILL

My wife asked if I'd seen the
dog bowl.

"Didn't even know he played
cricket!" I replied

My doctor said now that I'm older
I need to install a bar in the shower



A Bit Of A Yarn

Kay Pawley is knitting hats and gloves to raise some money for Church Funds.

The gloves are £5 per pair with all the money going to church, the hats are £8 each with £5 to church funds as we're buying in the wool for them, based on the orders we get.

If you would like to place an order then please give Kay a ring, or contact the parish office.



Early signs of spring



In the churchyard the first Snowdrops can be seen now opening their pure white flowers, harbingers of spring and hope for better things to come.

Apart from early flowering bulbs now is also the time to look out for winter flowering shrubs that provide an early source of nectar for insects that are active during the coldest winter months, sometimes woken from their winter sleep by the unexpected warmth of a sunny day.

In my garden the Viburnum that flowered well in autumn is producing blossom for a second time and will probably continue flowering well into April. Its delicate scent attracts insects to its tiny pastel pink tubular flowers.



Another shrub with a lovely perfume that started flowering for me in December and which will go on producing flowers into spring is the winter flowering Honeysuckle. I look forward too to a second flush of bright yellow flowers on my Winter Jasmine that always puts on a good show again in early spring.

I recently went for a walk round the Mosaic Trust reserve at Austerfield where the lovely coconut scented Gorse flowers are starting to appear now. This viciously spiky shrub can tolerate the poorest of soils, which is just as well as it grows on almost pure sand there.



Other species that I enjoy looking out for when walking there are lichens that are easier to see in the winter. I was surprised however to find among the mosses a pretty silvery one, rather like the Pixie Cup lichens that grow in the churchyard, that appeared to be in flower although the red “flowers” are in fact the fruiting bodies.

Tricia

Prayer & Prose

Why is a bluebell so bonnie and blue;
Why is a buttercup gold?
Why is a blossom heartbreakingly pure;
What makes a snowdrop so bold?
How does an apple grow rosy and red
Or russet, or yellow or green?
Why does a peach have a velveteen coat;
Why is a nettle so mean?
How do the bulbs, so snug in the earth,
Hear the light footfall of spring?
How do the feathered heralds of dawn
Learn all the songs that they sing?
Who gave every harlequin flower
Its very own personal scent?
Did all transpire by accident,
Or by Divine intent?
While questions wait for answers,
Sweet wisdom's inner voice
Whispers, "Feel the wonder, and
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice."

*Tricia Sturgeon
Sent in by Wendy Groves*



*I have no idea if these are
bluebells or not, but I like them! Ed.*

Dear Father God,

You promise to hear us when we come to you in prayer, thank you! We so need Your listening ear at this time – and your help, Lord. Winter always brings challenges, but this winter is exceptional as the effects of the pandemic continue. When we are afraid, or lonely, or grieving, or in despair, help us to trust You and to know that You are with us in the middle of it all, sustaining us. You are not social-distancing, You are very, very close, full of love and compassion.

We pray for our National Health Service and ask for Your special strength and protection for all staff. Thank you for the skills You have given to scientists all over the world. Thank you for the hope which the vaccines bring. Most of all thank You for the hope which Jesus brings. This earthly life is a whisper in the light of eternity and Jesus is the key to that eternal life. Thank You, Father, for meeting all our needs in Jesus. Amen.



Psalm 34:8

The Water of Life

She came to the well around midday,
To avoid all the gossip she came alone,
She met a Man there who told her all things
Five husbands she had and not one her own.
He asked for a drink and they started to talk,
A Samaritan woman there with a Jew
Breaking all barriers to meet her need
He told her how she could be made new.
The water of life that He would give
Would mean that she never would thirst again
This transforming draught He offers to all
Once tasted you never will be the same.
At Cana He turned the water to wine
A miracle no-one but He could do
Just as the water was wondrously changed
If you drink from this Fount it can happen to you.

By Megan Carter

Schools and term time amid Covid-19 uncertainty

As we launch in to 2021, with rapidly rising numbers of infections, it is all too easy to lose our bearings. So says Nigel Genders, the Church of England's Chief Education Officer.

He urges that rather than argue along the "usual political fault lines", or to follow newspaper articles putting the blame either on 'incompetent politicians' or 'radical school staff', according to their editorial bias, "there must be a better approach where we can take a step back and consider what is really in the best interest of the children, staff, and communities we serve.

"The Church of England provides a quarter of England's primary schools and more than 200 secondary schools, so I know first-hand, from school leaders the length and breadth of the country, how tirelessly schools work for the good of the nation's children and how committed they are to continuing that work



Open Doors welcomes Fiona Bruce as PM's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion

Fiona Bruce, MP for Congleton, has recently been appointed as the new Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).

Bruce has long been a supporter of the work of Open Doors, including attending the World Watch List parliamentary launch, visiting an Open Doors exhibition highlighting the plight of Yzidi women in Iraq, and regularly raising the issue of persecuted believers to the House of Commons.

The Persecuted Church

China and Covid-19

In common with a number of persecuting nations, China has been exploiting the Covid-19 pandemic to tighten restrictions on underground believers.

"The Chinese Government is trying every way to take advantage of the virus by increasing the crackdown against Christian churches," says Release partner Bob Fu, of ChinaAid. "It has accelerated particular campaigns, such as the forced removal of crosses."

Bob Fu's work has come under direct pressure as a result of a bizarre campaign targeting Chinese exiles in many countries. Even in the United States he has faced bomb threats and been forced to seek police protection, but he says the work of ChinaAid will not be stopped.



She said: "My post will be placed at the service of some of the most vulnerable people across the world." She listed just some of the "continuing large scale horrors taking place" – such as those against Uighur Muslims in China, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and Yazidis in Iraq. She agreed with "the late and much respected former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks" when he had stated: 'the persecution of Christians throughout much of the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and elsewhere, is one of the crimes against humanity of our time'.

Fiona Bruce said: "These are some of the most deeply concerning issues of our generation, on which it will be a privilege to engage as Special Envoy, both nationally and internationally."

Fiona Bruce has been a friend of Open Doors for many years, and is "a real champion for freedom of religion and belief," says Henrietta Blyth, CEO of Open Doors UK and Ireland.

Love Is...

The cards and chocolates are in the shops, (well I assume they are, because I've not been in a supermarket for months) which means Valentines day must fall in the next few weeks or so.

As we mark Valentines' Day next month, it's good to ask the question: what does real love look like?

The Apostle Paul says:

'LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND. IT DOES NOT ENVY, IT DOES NOT BOAST, IT IS NOT PROUD. IT DOES NOT DISHONOUR OTHERS, IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING, IT IS NOT EASILY ANGERED, IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS. LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH. IT ALWAYS PROTECTS, ALWAYS TRUSTS, ALWAYS HOPES, ALWAYS PERSEVERES. LOVE NEVER FAILS.'

(1 Corinthians 13: 4-8).

Love is unconditional:

At heart, love is not just feelings but action! Paul talks here about unconditional love, using the word *agape*, which demonstrated in God's love for us: *'We love, because He first loved us.'* (1 John 4:19).

Love is forgiving:

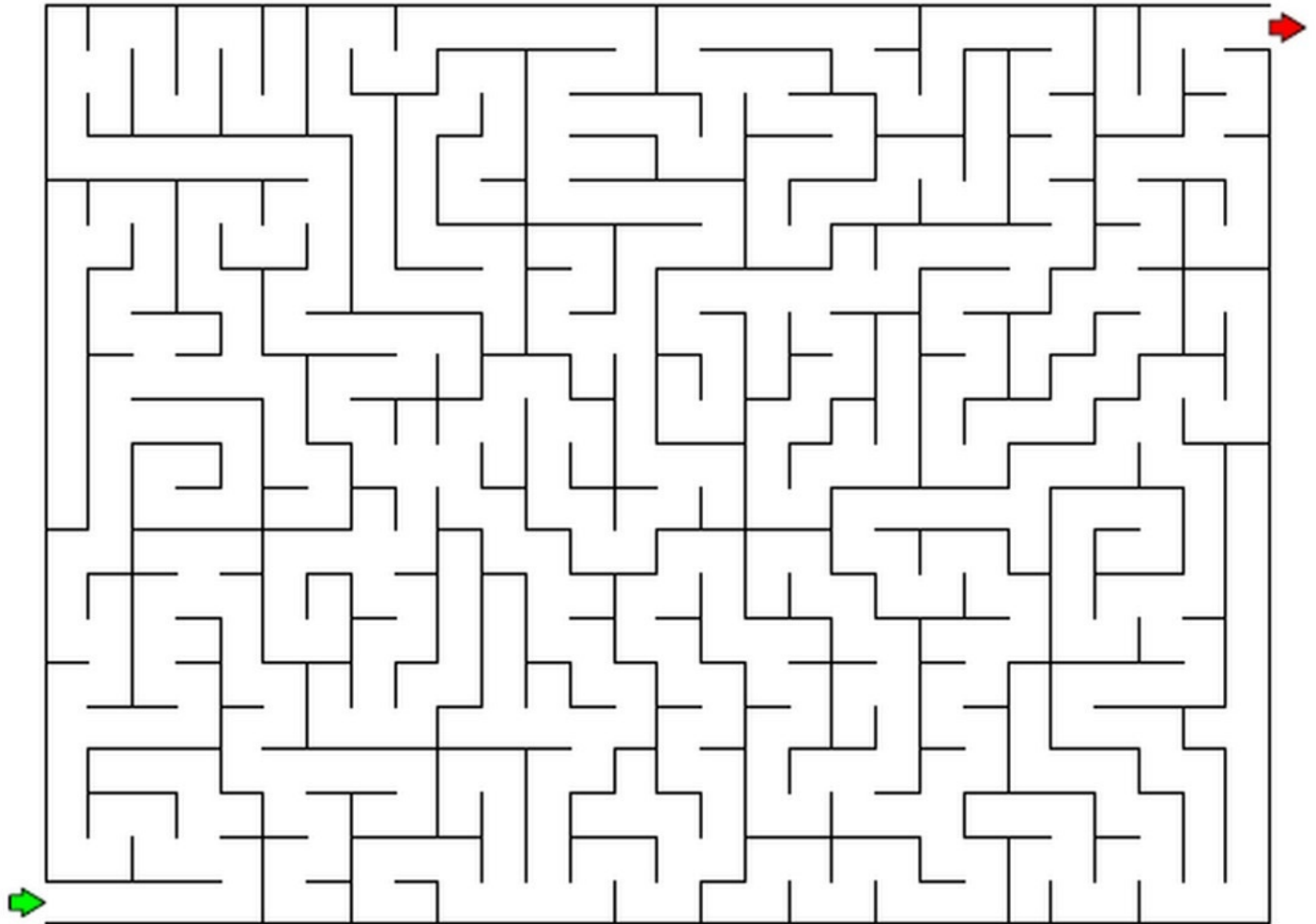
According to the film *Love Story*, 'Love means never having to say you're sorry.' This is rarely true in our experience! According to Paul, love is being ready to forgive others and *'keeping no record of wrongs'* (5). We can only forgive others because we know God forgiveness in our own lives.

Love is sacrificial:

Paul says that *agape* love is not selfish or self-seeking, but selfless and self-sacrificial, putting the needs of other people first. This is modelled by Jesus giving His life for us on the cross. Take the words from 1 Corinthians and instead of the word *love*, substitute your own name. Now substitute the word *Jesus*. This is the *Jesus* who is available to you to make your love for others grow and flourish.

Someone once compared love being like a group of porcupines huddling together on a cold night. The closer they get, the more they jab and hurt each other. *'To love at all is to be vulnerable.'* (C S Lewis).





Live Services

Don't forget that every Sunday at 10.00am we are using Zoom to join together to worship. If you are unsure about using Zoom, then Hannah is more than happy to guide you through initial set up and have a practise run before the Sunday service. Please do get in touch with Hannah at hannah@centenaryproject.org.uk or 07875 500555.

TO SIGN IN, PLEASE USE THE DETAILS BELOW

Meeting ID: 596 313 8891

Password: FABParish

Parish Office

Telephone: 01302 770240

Email: parishoffice@fabparish.org

Web: www.fabparish.org.uk

Facebook: [finningleychurch](https://www.facebook.com/finningleychurch) [stsavioursauckley](https://www.facebook.com/stsavioursauckley)

Twitter: [@finningleycofe](https://twitter.com/finningleycofe) [@auckleychurch](https://twitter.com/auckleychurch)

We also have a parish WhatsApp group. If you would like to join please text Hannah Robinson on 07875 500555