



The Benefice of Epperstone, Gonalston,
Oxton & Woodborough

CHURCH NEWS

11th June 2020



An attitude of compassion

Every year we tell the story of Jesus.

It's a glorious story, full of challenges, hard choices, wonders, of betrayal and suffering. It's a story of joy, hope, forgiveness and new life. The story's been told, but it hasn't ended. In many ways it's just begun. You and I, together with all those who are worshipping today around the world, whether through reading and reflecting, or sharing in streamed services, or gathered on What's App for prayer, or alone in our homes, we are the church.

We live with the joyful knowledge of the resurrection, and the work to be done. Sadly, the shadow of racism fell across this joy recently through the brutal killing of George Floyd. Globally, large crowds gathered in protest at the injustice. Whilst there can be no justification for violence, we share in the pain and sadness with an attitude of compassion.

Compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves.

Compassion compels us to work tirelessly to alleviate suffering in others, to place them before ourselves, to respect the sanctity of every single person, treating each one, without exception, with justice, fairness, and respect.

As I reflect on recent events, I'm reminded it was compassion that moved Jesus to commission the

disciples and send them into the world, bringing the message of hope and healing, especially to those whom society considered untouchable and unlovable; the outsiders and the outcasts. To such as these the disciples were called to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. It's the same today.

For some, the needs are obvious, for others they are hidden. And society still has its outsiders and outcasts. Healing takes many forms. Some people need our prayers, others need us to reach out; a friendly voice, a card or letter, or a 'hi' across the internet. There are people who need more practical help. Some encounters will be easy and pleasant, others will not. I'm reminded afresh that every day is a new beginning.

Our buildings may be closed, but the Church is not, and Jesus, filled with compassion, is still calling workers to the field to proclaim the Kingdom of God in word and deed. And the field to which he calls us is all around.

Let us continue to pray, not just for the gift of compassion, but for an end to the racism and injustice it has wrought on the world.

With Every Blessing
Lynn



Please stay safe, practice social distancing,
continue to pray, and love one another.

The Touch of God

A mother's hand cradling the head of her new born baby: *I am supporting you all the time. You cannot fall.*

A father's finger clasped in the grip of his infant's hand: *making an eternal connection.*

A mother's hand on the fevered brow of her ill toddler: *the healing power of God moving through me to you.*

The gentle stroking of a parent's hand on the arm of a drowsy child: *I am accompanying you to sleep, stroking away your cares.*

The strong handshake between father and high school son: *I honour your growth towards individuality.*

The interlocked fingers of two lovers walking along the shore: *lives intertwined.*

A long hug from a parent at the start of a journey into marriage: *I let you go –freely.*

A hand resting on another's shoulder: *you are not along –I am beside you and I affirm you.*

The gentle stroking of a wife's hand on the face of her seriously ill husband: *I am with you all the time through all of this.*

The casual, passing touch of a couple in their 80s: *a movement into a deeper love.*

The final welcoming touch... *of God.*

*Paul Heppleston
from 'Fire and Bread, Wild Goose publications*



Join us on Facebook

[Benefice Churches of Epperstone, Gonalston, Oxtou and Woodborough](#)

Join Anthony for Sunday worship

Each Sunday Anthony will host a short act of worship on You Tube. We will include the relevant link via each [A Church Near You](#) website and [Facebook](#) available from Sunday morning.

Church opening update

Many of you will have heard the recent Government announcement that places of worship can open for private prayer from 15th June.

Before that can happen, we need to ensure that our church buildings are safe places to access. They cannot open until appropriate measures have been put in place and we are looking at how that might be both practicable and possible.

We know that you miss coming into our churches, but please bear with us. We'll update you as soon as anything changes.

The latest statement from the Church of England can be found [here](#)

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