

## Calling all Techies ...

Your time has come to help us all keep connected to one another.

Most of us have got to grips with email for contacts, many know how to WhatsApp and Skype to see family face to face and some can video conference via Webex or Zoom and livestream activities on YouTube to continue normal life in a different way.

However, some among us need a little help to get up to speed. Would someone out there like to write a short note of simple hints for next month's Amber News? Maybe the younger members of our community could give us older ones a (virtual) lesson or two.

Contact Amber News via [info@amberchurches.org](mailto:info@amberchurches.org) if you might be able to help.

## Your Suggestion Box

The back page of Amber News is usually crammed with notices for local group activities—all of these are suspended for the time being so we invite you to send in your suggestions for activities we can still do such as

- Plant a few extra vegetable or flower seeds ready for a plant swap later in the year.
- Keep active with YouTube yoga and keep fit classes
- Keep to your normal timetable for meals and bed.

## Foraging to the Fore - Nettle Soup

Everyone has a tale to tell about sourcing food items while trying to stay within Covid-19 safety guidelines.

If anyone is short of greens they may like to take advantage of the young growth appearing on stinging nettles and wild garlic. Wild garlic (also known as ransomes) can be used instead of basil in pesto, chopped into an omelette or just as added flavouring in a sandwich.

The dried leaves of nettles can be used as to make tea and fresh leaves used as a vegetable or for soup—*do use rubber gloves for picking*. The fibrous stems are tough and were used as an alternative to flax, so discard these and just use the leaves.

(Please forage responsibly, leaving butterflies etc with ample resources.)

### Stchi or Green Bortsch (Nettle Soup)

(From Marie Alexandre Markevitch's  
*The Epicure in Imperial Russia*)

- 1 colander of young nettle tops, washed
- 1 medium onion finely sliced
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1½ pints light stock
- Salt and pepper
- 2-3 tbsp cream

Tip the nettles into a pan containing a small amount of boiling water, cook for 10 minutes and drain. (After this the nettles will no longer sting.)

Sauté the onion in the butter until it softens, add the stock and nettles and simmer 10 minutes.

Liquidise, season with salt and pepper and stir in the cream before serving.

(Dandelion leaves can be used in much the same way but with the addition of a little potato.)

## Keeping in Touch

Amber News will continue to appear monthly and be available as usual, as far as possible. A copy of the latest issue is posted on the amber churches website and can be downloaded from there.

You may send in news for inclusion in the next issue, for example how you are keeping busy at home, offers of help or suggestions for others, by email to:

[info@amberchurches.org](mailto:info@amberchurches.org)



## amber news

For the amber churches of  
**Ashover, Brackenfield, Handley and Wessington**  
*working and playing together, with God, for people*

April 2020

## Church Services and Meetings

Unfortunately, our church services, events and group activities have been cancelled and the Bassett Rooms will be closed until further notice to restrict the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

All churches are also closed and there will be no weddings or baptisms.

An order of service that could be used by folk in their homes will be available each week and will be emailed to all church members. If anyone else wishes to receive this by email, please contact [info@amberchurches.org](mailto:info@amberchurches.org).

### Daily Prayer

Rector Ralph Lawrence says "I would like all members of the churches to commit to a daily time of prayer at 9.30am to pray for the ongoing crisis caused by the corona virus. Although there are restrictions on gatherings, our prayers can still be co-ordinated at a distance from our homes. Jesus said when two or three are gathered, he will be there. He did not say we needed to be in the same room.

Whatever you are doing would you break off and pray with us? We are all in this together and we all want to get out of it together.

This is something St. Paul would have been familiar with, and I think Jesus would have approved of."

### Opportunities

"There are lots of opportunities to be creative during this outbreak, collectively we might come up with something really new. My hope is that we will get better at this with more practice.

With thoughts and prayers, Ralph"



## Spring Forward ...

Clocks go forward on the night of Saturday 28th March but Spring already seems upon us with sun coming through the curtains earlier, curlews calling up on the moors, blossom on the trees, birds singing and bluebells getting ready to delight us. We are lucky that there is much to enjoy right now in our immediate surroundings and our gardens are certainly getting more attention than usual.



## Contact Information

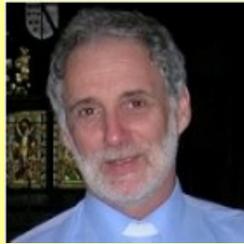
Rector: The Revd Ralph Lawrence 01246 590246  
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[www.amberchurches.org](http://www.amberchurches.org)

## The Rector Writes ...

Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago the Prime Minister Boris Johnson flanked by Professor Chris Whitty, the government's chief medical officer, and Sir Patrick Vallance, its chief scientific officer, gave a press conference, the first of many. When you read this letter things may have improved, but it is possible that the worse of the coronavirus pandemic is still not over.



After the press conference members of the media remarked that the Prime Minister had acted like a statesman. What was also said was that whatever advice was given by the people on the podium their message wasn't going to soothe everyone's concerns.

There has been much praise for the government's strategy in combating the coronavirus and much criticism. This is not entirely unexpected. Sometimes we can feel between a rock and a hard place when faced with differing opinions. John Lydgate a monk and poet described it like this: "You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." What do we do when we find ourselves in such places? When burying our head in the sand is not an option.

There are many stories in the Bible where leadership demanded decisive action. The leader I have in mind is Moses.

As a baby Moses was put in a basket and hidden in the bulrushes in the hope he would avoid the excesses of Egypt's Pharaoh; a statesman who used his power to quench his own fear.

Moses escaped Pharaoh's clutches and ironically was brought up in his household. But Moses rebelled against his privileged background and went on the run.

Eventually God told Moses to return to Egypt with strict instructions for Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery. A battle of wills ensued with Pharaoh losing everything, even his life.

This was to be the start of the Israelites' "long journey to freedom." But along the way they grew tired and thirsty and complained that Moses was not acting like a 'statesman', because he could not provide for their needs.

Moses found himself between a 'rock and a hard place'. The fledgling nation of Israel were a very disagreeable people, hard to lead and difficult to please. Yet, into this unenviable trial, God offered a solution. He told Moses to strike a rock with his staff. Moses simply obeyed, and water gushed out of the stone.

It is a story best taken on face value. While we are not expected to suspend our critical faculties we can reflect on its ability to say something important, particularly in difficult times.

Moses was literally between a rock and a hard place. As the leader of a restive people it was not obvious how he was going to soothe their mounting anxiety. As their leader he stood between them, the hard place and a rock in the distance. But things got better.

At times of uncertainty we need to hold on. Faith can play its part. It is defined as ... "the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen."

By the time you read this letter the coronavirus pandemic may be showing signs of defeat. Let's hope so. In the meantime we need to hold on with hope and courage, co-operation and compassion. We have seen a lot of these lately. There is no reason to stop now.

Yours sincerely, Ralph

## Annual Church Meetings

All the Annual Church Meetings due to be held over coming weeks are postponed and PCC and other meetings cannot take place but business can be continued via email or internet conferencing.

It is expected that the C of E will confirm that the tenure of churchwardens, deanery lay reps and PCC members may be extended until annual meetings can take place.

Contact details for the rector and church wardens are on the front page and more information can be found on the website [amberchurches.org](http://amberchurches.org).

## From the Doctors ...

*Here is a message from the Matlock and Ashover Medical Practice team:*

Dear Patients

The safety and well-being of the staff and patients at the Surgery is our number one priority. In view of the current coronavirus outbreak we have introduced the following changes to the way we are working.

The Doctors and Nurses at the Surgery are not conducting any pre-bookable routine appointments and as such patients are not able to enter the surgery. If you have an appointment booked at the Surgery with the Doctor, you will be phoned at the time of your appointment by the Doctor to discuss your problem. If you have an appointment with the Nurse and it cannot be delayed and you are free from all the symptoms of the virus – ie cough, high temperature or fever, you will be phoned on the day of your appointment to ensure that you are well before you will be allowed to enter the Surgery.

If you are dropping off a prescription, please use the prescription post box to the right of the front door and if you are collecting a prescription, please use the dispensary window to the left of the front door.

Please do not try to order more medication than usual as you will not be able to.

Your patience and good nature at this time will be much appreciated by the Staff at the Surgery who are working under incredible pressure to ensure that all patients are well looked after during this difficult time.

## Thanks for Caring



This might look like a pile of rubbish but it was a collection of your generosity which overflowed when we appealed for food, warm coats, clothing and footwear for refugees a few months ago. Just to update you, everything was taken and distributed to refugees

either in the camps in Calais or via the group Derby centre for Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity which acts as a sorting office for gifts to those in need.

People continued to add items to the green chest in the Bassett Rooms hallway even after the appeal and these have likewise been sent onwards. We hope this can resume once activities start up again and groups have access to the Bassett Rooms. Meanwhile, a big thank you to you all.