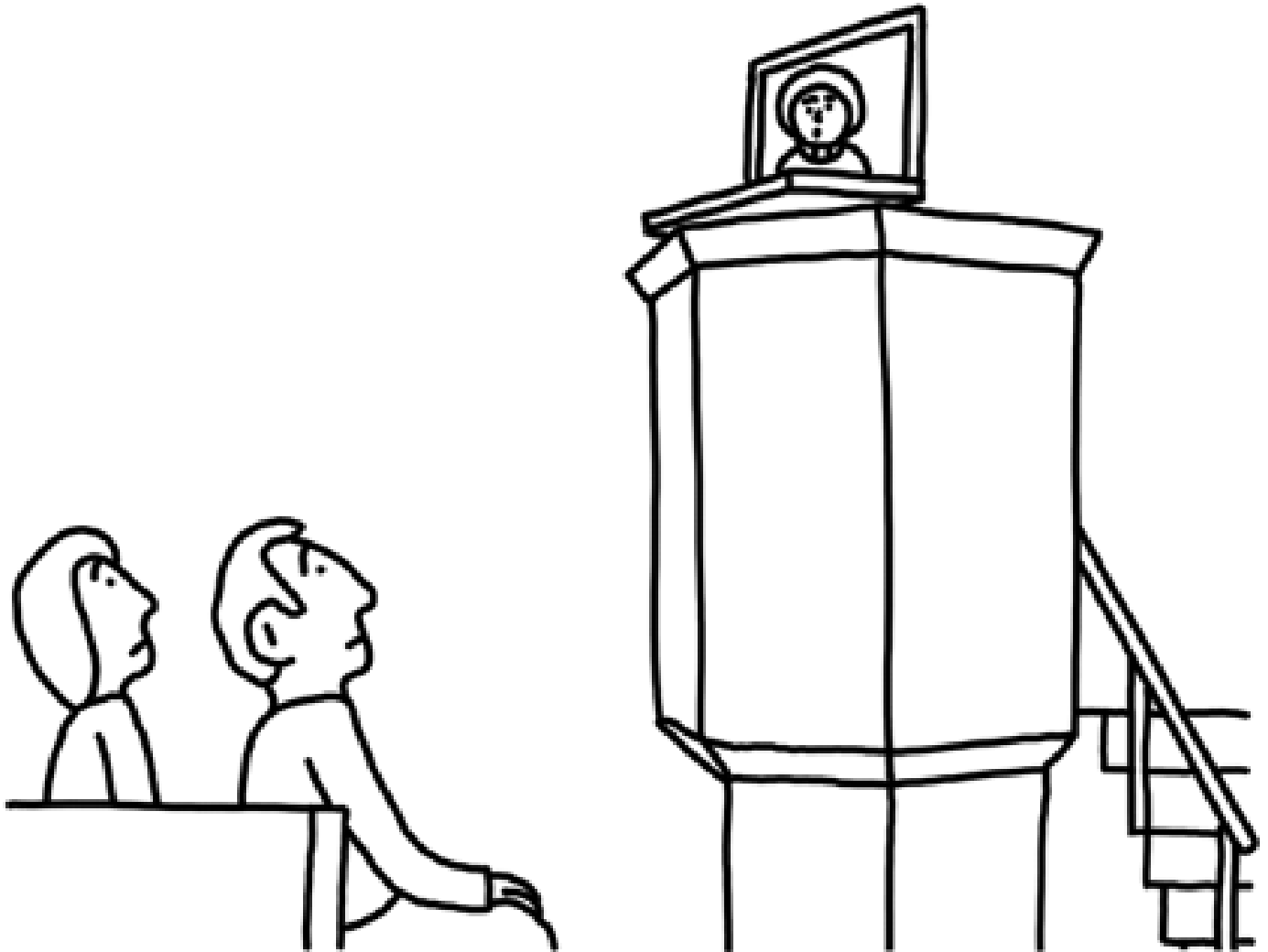


THE COMMONER

ST BARNABAS CLAPHAM COMMON

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EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE [DIGITAL] AGE

I guess that over the past months and during lockdown, most church congregations have got used to an image like this a sermon delivered not from the usual pulpit or lectern but from a laptop screen.

And the coffee table is not the only laptop stand available for there are other stands too!

I wonder though whether Jesus would have preached from a laptop?

Well, if his creativity was anything to go by - as in borrowing a fishing boat for his pulpit (Luke 5.3), or borrowing a coin to preach about paying taxes (Matthew 22.19) - it seems to me that borrowing a

laptop to preach, even from the pulpit, would have been a possible choice. Ironically, lockdown has opened a myriad of opportunities not just in conducting online services but in connecting with more people than we could ever have imagined.

So as we plan to move out of lockdown, don't be surprised if the laptops come with us, too.

However much we long for a return to full, in-person worship, a mixed mode approach is more than likely here to stay.

After all, if Jesus says he is with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28.20), there's no reason why that shouldn't include the digital age, too [ILM].

LENT COURSE



Led by Ian and his wife, Vicki, this year's *River Through the Desert* Lent Course, from St George's College in Jerusalem, started last Thursday. Stephanie kindly agreed to write about it:

Can you tell us more about the Lent course? *This year's lent course is a 5 week course journeying through the Holy Land whilst reflecting on various themes. There is a short text given in advance, a bible reading and a short film from the Holy Land followed by questions devised to encourage discussion. The first week took us to the desert where Jesus was tormented by the devil.*

What did you enjoy most about it? *In the current climate, this might be the closest I get to the Holy Land so it was really nice to be able to see the desert where Jesus was tormented. It's also nice to have a visual as the desert was very different from what I imagined.*

What was your take away? *The session was focused around the desert traditionally seen as a place of isolation and wilderness and encouraged us to look at where we go when we want solitude and how we deal with it.*

What are you most looking forward to? *I'm looking forward to 'travelling' to the other parts of the Holy Land and places that Jesus visited.*

Tonight, we will be looking at *The Water Well* (John 4). Whether for one session or one, you can join us at 7.30pm for 1 hour. Zoom details are on the website <https://stbcc.co.uk/lent>

40 DAYS WITH GOD'S CREATURES

The '40 Days with God's Creature' is another Lent resource which we have shared. Richard tells us more about it here:

I suspect it is unlikely that you've given up on your Lent fast of choice yet; it might be, however, that you never quite got started. So let me give one last nudge to the app I am using this year: 40 Days with God's Creatures (available in all the usual places).

Forget about focusing on slightly abstract spiritual disciplines and allow this app to earth your Lent in the created world around you as you use it to explore what the Christian faith has to say about animals. It might not be a subject that you'd expect to explore in the 40 days following Ash Wednesday but that's why this is so good: it is a refreshing change from the old routine. And because it is in the form of an app, there are links to TED talks, Pixar animations and Youtube music videos as well which really enrich the short, daily section of text to read.

I am not sure where it will finally end up come Easter but I am enjoying the journey so far and being helped to think about God's world differently.

YOUNG PEOPLE

For many children and young people, the 8th of March will be the 1st day in school since the New Year! Returning to teachers and friends will be welcome but not without some apprehension. We've asked Phoebe to tell us about home-schooling and returning to school.

How is home-schooling? *When I 'home-school' I sit at my dining room table with my laptop. I usually get tasks, set by the teacher, to complete and I have some zoom lessons. What is most difficult is not having my teachers and friends to help me and I find concentration a task because I have so many distractions around me. But what I like most about it, is the fact that I am at home and also that I can eat food whenever I want!*

What do you miss most? *Seeing my friends because normally I would see them everyday and now I hardly see them at all.*

How do you feel about returning to school? *I feel nervous because I haven't learnt as much as I would usually do in school, so I might struggle in lessons. Also I don't want to get up at 6.30am in the morning!! However I feel relieved because I will get to see my friends and my day will feel more normal.*

How could we pray for you? *I think you could pray that students are able to get used to being back at school quickly and that teachers will be kind as we adjust to the new circumstances.*

FAMILIES



For families with pre-schoolers, the return to a more social life is still some time away. We caught up with Clair, mum of Phoenix (4) and Xen-Willow (1), and asked her about lockdown:

How has lockdown been? *The thing I am finding the most difficult during lockdown with two toddlers is the lack of social interaction. With them both being so young, it is impossible to explain why things are like this but I am looking forward to being able to move around freely and hopefully some baby groups will open up too.*

Have you enjoyed The Little Commoner (the 'families' newsletter)? *We have loved receiving The Little Commoner and have tried to follow along with a couple of the crafty bits. We have also really enjoyed watching Bethany's Tree episodes.*

Are you planning anything for Lent? *For Lent I have gone vegan and given up animal products which has been a lot easier than I had imagined.*

We can't wait to welcome families once again and will look at ways to meet up soon. In the meantime, let us know if you would like to receive The Little Commoner.



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CHURCH FOR ALL - INCLUDING YOU

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