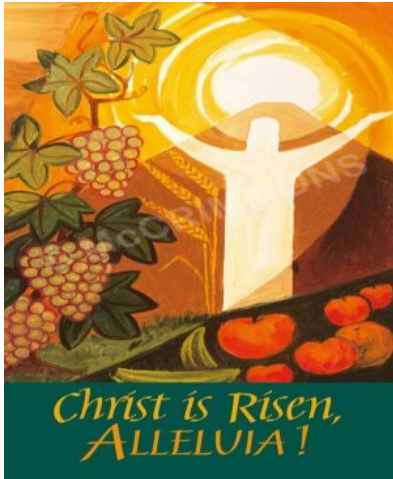


# Thoughts and Prayers for the Week

## Sunday 30th April 2023



### 4th Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,  
faithful shepherd of your  
Father's sheep:  
teach us to hear your voice  
and to follow your command,  
that all your people may be  
gathered into one flock,  
to the glory of God the Father  
Amen



### Readings this week:

Acts 2: 42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2: 19-25

John 10: 1-10

## Julian of Norwich

There's quite a lot of publicity at the moment, not just locally, to celebrate the Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, whose annual festival falls in in early May. The significance this year, 2023, is that it's the 650th anniversary of Julian's 'Shewings', ie the things shown to her, the series of visions she experienced in 1373, which led her to become an anchoress, or hermit, and to write the spiritual classic *Revelations of Divine Love*, the earliest surviving English language work by a woman.

When she experienced her visions – at the age, it's thought, of about 30 and while very ill – she wasn't called Julian. We don't know her birth name or the circumstances of her young life, though some consider she may have come from a noble family. Her 'public' profile began when she became, after recovering from her illness, an anchoress at one of Norwich's many churches, that of St Julian, in the lanes between what we now know as Ber Street and King Street in Norwich, at the time a busy industrial area leading down to the river port. The name of the church became the name of the woman.

An anchoress was essentially a female hermit, living in a cell on the side of a church, from which its altar could be seen. There would be some contact with others through a small window: meals would be taken to her, ablutions taken away, and she would offer advice to visitors. However, her existence was largely one of solitary contemplation. Julian devoted her time to prayer and to reflecting on her visions, which she wrote down in English.

She lived to an old age: no one is sure of her exact dates but probably from about 1343 to at least 1416, through a period of huge change and suffering, with at least two plague pandemics. It would have been a very hard life, both for her and those around her.

So the optimistic tone of her *Revelations* is particularly striking. She describes a positive relationship with God, who is loving and compassionate and who does not blame us. 'Do not blame yourself too much', she writes. 'When we begin to hate sin and to amend ourselves . . . there still persists a fear which hinders us, by looking at ourselves and our sins . . . and the perception of this makes us so woebegone and depressed that we cannot see any consolation . . . [This] is . . . blindness.' Since God in his grace forgives us and never stops loving us, so we must forgive ourselves. Julian takes sin seriously but her conclusion is that notwithstanding our failings, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." We remain enfolded in God's love.



The messages that Julian imparted of God's unconditional love ran counter to the prevailing orthodoxy. Although she probably had a following in her lifetime, her manuscripts fell into obscurity after the Reformation: the cell at the church was demolished then, too, and wasn't reconstructed until the rebuilding of the church in the 1950s after it was bombed in the Second World War. It was really only in the 20th that the importance of her work in both literary and spiritual terms was recognised. Julian's writing is now much valued and much loved.

As Bishop Graham of Norwich writes in a foreword this year to a booklet about the 650th anniversary:

*'Julian of Norwich's legacy has made a significant contribution to English spirituality, and she is revered not only in this city and diocese, but across the world. We find deep wells of consolation and hope in her writing as she seems to have an uncanny knack to speak directly to us, 650 years after her Shewings in May 1373. Perhaps that is because we remain a people who are, at our core, afraid. Afraid of conflict, pandemic, illness, ecological crises and death. Afraid of all these things despite Jesus repeatedly saying in the Gospels, "Do not be afraid". Julian helps us to knit together our lives so that we live with less dis-ease [...] May her wisdom, as well as her insight into God's hope and love, bless us and our communities in this 650th anniversary year.'* Amen

~Liam Pilgrim ~

(abstract from reflection by Liam Pilgrim at Hempnall Group Zoom Evening Service on Sunday 23 April 2023)

**Let us continue to support and strengthen each other**

- ◇ Daily, by saying The Lord’s Prayer together, morning and evening
- ◇ Lighting a candle at home 10.00am on Sunday if we are unable to come to church

**Our Services:**

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 30<sup>th</sup> Apr 2023</b>	<b>10:00am   Morning Praise</b>	<b>Hardwick Church</b>
<b>Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023</b>	<b>7:00pm   Celebrate the Coronation</b>	<b>Hardwick Church</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023</b>	<b>10:00am   Group Eucharist</b> Revd Charles Read (Diocesan Co-ordinator of Licensed Lay Ministry Training)	<b>Woodton Church</b>
	<b>4:00pm   Family Praise</b>	<b>Hempnall Church</b>

**This week we pray for:**

- ◇ In the morning: the day and its tasks; the world and its needs; the Church and her life
- ◇ The people of God, that they may proclaim the risen Lord
- ◇ God’s creation, that the peoples of the earth may meet their responsibility to care
- ◇ Those in despair and darkness, that they may find the hope and light of Christ
- ◇ Those in fear of death, that they may find faith through the resurrection
- ◇ Prisoners and captives
- ◇ In the evening: peace; individuals and their needs

**FOOD BANK**

Items for our Food Bank are still needed; we are very grateful to all who continue to contribute during this difficult time.

Our next collections will be on:

**Sunday 7th May 2023 Any items can be left at Hempnall Church Office Mon-Thu, 9am-12:30pm. Please phone before arrival - 01508 498157**

**URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS:**

- PASTA SAUCE
- TINNED VEGETABLES
- TINNED FRUIT

**NON URGENT ITEMS:**

- INSTANT NOODLES (NOT POTS)
- TINNED POTATOES
- MICROWAVE PUDDINGS/CAKES

**WE REMEMBER:**

Martin, Molly, Ian

**Hempnall:** Lesley and family,  
Phillip, Sophie, Ross, Claire, David

**Bedingham/Woodton:**  
Sheila, Hilary, Peter, Liz, Anne, Chris, Barrie,  
Carolyn, Bruce, Pat, Anthea, Harry, Sally, Kath,  
Richard, Susan

**Topcroft:** Gerald

**LONG TERM CARE:**

**Bedingham /Woodton:**

Dennis, Shirley, Jacob

**Fritton/Morningthorpe:** Beryl



**RECENTLY DIED:**

Paul Trudgill, Jessie Whiteley

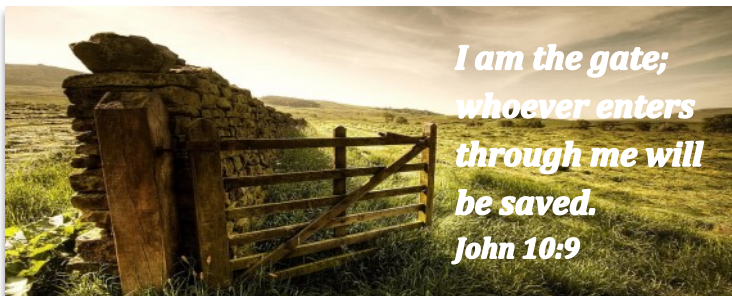
**Please ring us if you need:**

**The Revd Lynn Chapman—Priest in Charge**  
**01508 558479**

[chapman.lynn@btinternet.com](mailto:chapman.lynn@btinternet.com)

**Group Office: Mon-Thurs 9am-12.30pm**  
**01508 498157**

**Email:** [hempnallgroup.office@btinternet.com](mailto:hempnallgroup.office@btinternet.com)



Acknowledgements regarding article on Julian of Norwich  
See material on website of Friends of Julian of Norwich: <<https://julianofnorwich.org/pages/friends-of-julian>>, including article by Margaret Coles in *The Times* on Saturday, May 8th 2021 and booklet by the Friends about celebrations this year. For information about St Julian’s Church, see Simon Knott, St Julian’s Church, Norwich (uploaded Feb 2023): <<http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/norwichjulian/norwichjulian.htm>>.