

**The ODBE Annual Service took place on November 18<sup>th</sup> 2021. We were privileged to hear four 'Covid Reflections' created by students from The Marlborough C of E School in Woodstock.**

**These pieces had a very powerful impact during the service and are made available here for you to read.**

**With grateful thanks to Hannah, Katherine, Edward and Ben.**

**We could have never predicted it.**

**If you had asked me three years ago what lockdown and quarantine was, I would have told you it is just something out of an apocalypse movie. In a way, our lives then were something so out of the ordinary, it could have been in a movie. A continuous loop, living in a history book.**

**Wake-up,  
Breakfast,  
You Tube,  
Joe Wicks body coach 9.00am,  
Mum's joined me,  
Check Show My Homework,  
Do lessons,  
Close laptop  
Open Snapchat,  
Instagram,  
TikTok dances embarrassing parents,  
Netflix season 1,  
Lunch, tinned food,  
No pasta,  
Daily dog walk,  
Empty streets,**

**Muddy verges give way to spring blossom then summer fruits...**



**Daily briefing,  
Boris and Chris,  
Infection rates,  
Hospital numbers,  
Death tolls,  
Hands, Face, Space,  
Dominic Cummings - disgrace.  
Olympics cancelled,  
Everyone is a Great British Baker,  
Thursday 8pm doors open,  
Clap for Key Workers,  
Bang a pan,  
Netflix Season 12,  
it's 10pm, I better do that homework.**

**Bed.**

**Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat.**

**Hannah Ransome**



Days merging,  
Vision blurring:  
Losing my bearings,  
everything scattered.

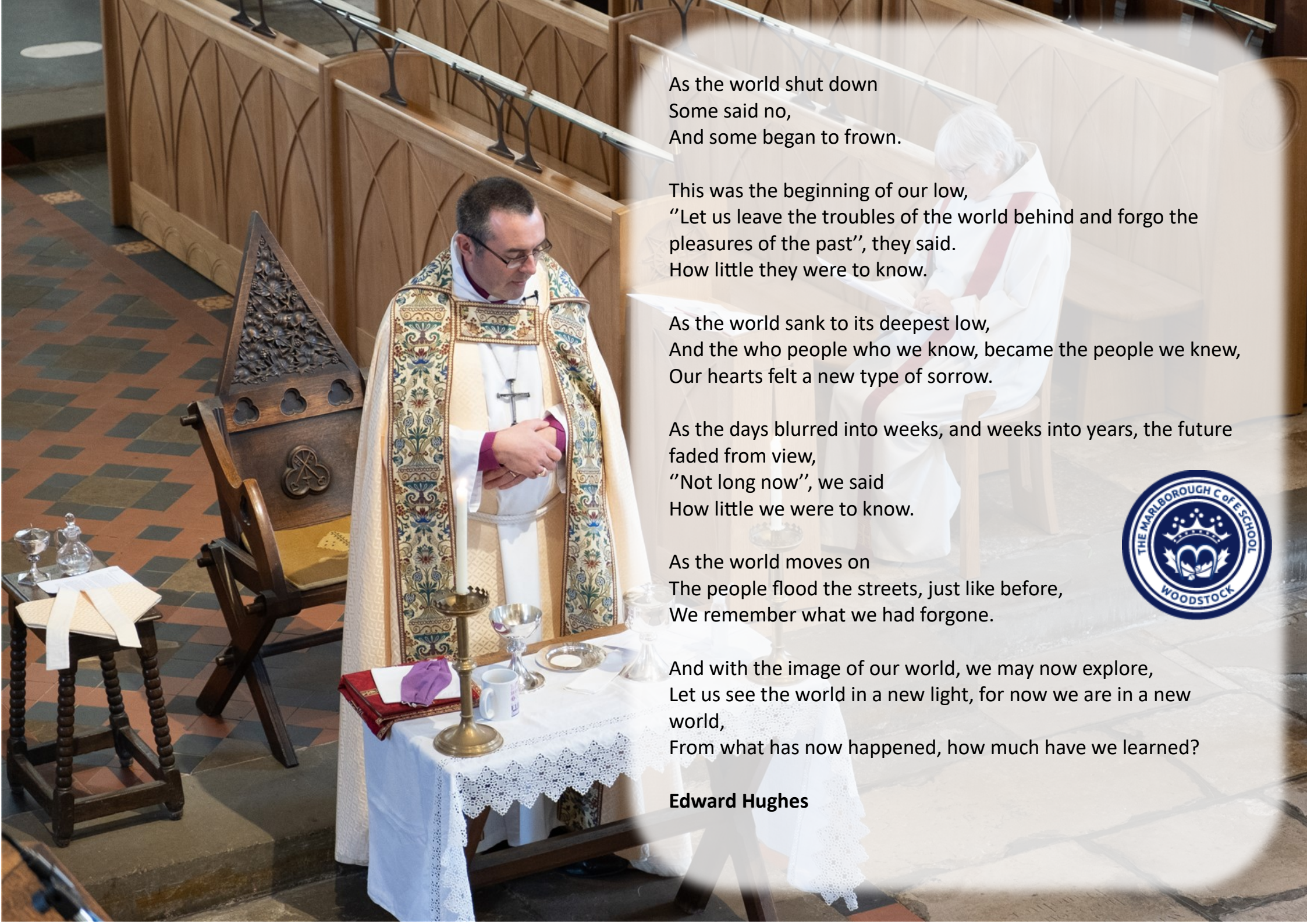
Feeling so disorientated;  
Not knowing tomorrow's story,  
Trying to see the world through the window,  
But nothing.

Nothing but fog,  
Fog that conceals hysteria,  
Fog that seeps in the mind,  
My peripheral vision compromised.

The light and hope  
Tries to break through,  
Giving us a glimpse of old times,  
Another lockdown; another fog arrives.

Instead, the effects are long lasting  
Falling apart even to this day -  
Is this an eternal state?

**Katherine Richardson**



As the world shut down  
Some said no,  
And some began to frown.

This was the beginning of our low,  
“Let us leave the troubles of the world behind and forgo the pleasures of the past”, they said.  
How little they were to know.

As the world sank to its deepest low,  
And the who people who we know, became the people we knew,  
Our hearts felt a new type of sorrow.

As the days blurred into weeks, and weeks into years, the future faded from view,  
“Not long now”, we said  
How little we were to know.

As the world moves on  
The people flood the streets, just like before,  
We remember what we had forgone.

And with the image of our world, we may now explore,  
Let us see the world in a new light, for now we are in a new world,  
From what has now happened, how much have we learned?

**Edward Hughes**



When lockdown started, the world began to slow. Machinery ground to a halt, the roads were quiet. Lots of us were wondering what to do with ourselves with all this free time and nowhere to go. People began new hobbies, went on walks. I realised that some of the simplest activities had the biggest impact on my day. Whether on the giving or receiving end of the Thursday clap for those who were still hard at work like my dad, or picking up the shopping for our neighbours, or calling in to check on those who needed it, we showed that, if given the time, we are all good and caring people.

In Woodstock where I live, spring was in full bloom, accompanied by the arrival of the park's baby geese. On our allowed daily walk, we would follow their progress, and we were not alone. I found myself talking to strangers about goslings, trading amusing gosling stories and anxiously counting the number of goslings. The simple desire to socialise and enjoy (distanced) life together as a community was so strong that it didn't matter if I knew you or not; we could talk, we could laugh, and go home happier than we when we left.

So, I ask, why change?

Keep up the work by enjoying the little things. Help those who are vulnerable in your community, not because it is easy, but because it isn't.

You can brighten your day and hopefully that of others with a passing smile or shared experience and make even the strangest and most isolating times better.

We can all do so much by doing so little.

Ben Gwilym

