

Letter from the Vicar

Friday 24 April 2020

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Last night, like many people across the country, I tuned in to watch some of *The Big Night In*. Comedians do their best to make us smile, relieve some boredom, and raise money for charities helping families and the vulnerable during these unprecedented times of lockdown. As I write the total raised so far stands at over £27 million – a huge amount.

As you would probably expect I was interested in the Vicar of Dibley sketch. Thankfully our Church Council meetings have never felt like those of Dibley Village Council but the possibility of misprints in Newsletters and other publications, and for them to be potentially risqué is something I am always keen to avoid. Following in the steps of Dibley, and many other actual parishes, we are going to start to return to the important issue of governance and therefore will start to reconvene some, although not all, of our committees via Zoom – the online video communications platform. This could be quite an interesting experience and I hope members will bear with one another as we learn to work in this way.

I am also proposing using Zoom for some virtual get-togethers. On Wednesday morning at 11.00am I will host a Coffee Morning and on Thursday evening at 8.15pm a Happy Hour Drinks for anyone who wishes to join me. Please email if you are interested and I will send you the appropriate link to join the conversation. Up to 100 people can join so don't be shy. I know that many folk are longing for interaction with others and this could be an ideal way in these strange times.

Every other day on my daily walk I pop-in to St John's to check all is in order and turn the page of the Memorial Book in the south porch. Below are 2 pictures I took whilst there the other evening. It is so strange being in our church and know that I'm not going to see any of you in it for quite some time. It's even stranger being told I'm not allowed to pray the Daily Office there. Needless to say, every time I am in there I say a prayer for you all and often light a candle. I am most grateful to still be able to say Morning and Evening Prayer though as it not only helps give me a structure to the day and helps me relate to times before the pandemic, but it also enables me to think of and pray for all of you. It is a different experience sitting on the sofa in my study but the words and the rhythm bring continuity and familiarity. If you have never said either Morning or Evening Prayer the Church of England has produced an App where you can get all the daily readings. A link to it is available on our website. I am also going to be producing this week (ran out of time last week) a recording of me saying Morning and Evening Prayer leaving silence whilst the psalms and readings for the day to be read individually. An Order of Service for each will accompany this on the website.

I hope you have been able to enjoy the sunshine over the last week. My children have insisted it is warm enough to get the water sprinkler out so they have been running around the garden in their swimming costumes getting wet! School should have returned following the Easter holidays on Monday and I know many parents are very appreciative of the work teachers are providing for home learning along with BBC bitesize and various YouTube webinars. I know too that many have been using this time of lockdown to do those jobs that have been waiting to be done for some time: a thorough spring clean; painting the garden shed/spare room; teaching a child to ride a bike; communicating via letter or phone with folk with whom we have lost touch. Others are doing some of the wide variety of online quizzes and puzzles available. Thank you Alan for testing our grey-cells each week. Whatever it is you are doing, I hope you stay well and stay safe.

May the risen Christ shed his blessings be upon you, for

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In Christ,

Mike

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