

Letter from the Vicar

Friday 15 May 2020

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

Technology! What a joy when it works. What a nightmare when it doesn't. Has anyone else ever been tempted to throw whatever device they're trying to use but isn't working across the room? Last Sunday I came pretty close to doing just that, to multiple devices, I don't mind admitting. After recording the Parish Eucharist in our Parish Church it took an age to find a way to upload this into a format that you could download and therefore join in worship in your church. I have received some lovely feedback, albeit tinged with sadness, stating it was lovely to be back in St John's virtually but they would have rather been back in person.

Technology permitting the Eucharist will come from St John's again this Sunday. Please check the Website or Facebook for the relevant link on Sunday morning. I am most grateful for the efforts of Keith Beniston who both played the organ and worked the camera last week and who was a patient support whilst all the techie-gremlins came out to play. I should also like to thank Stacey Barton who has been a great support in uploading new material to our website despite working full-time from home and looking after a boisterous 4 year old.

Like many folk in recent weeks, I have been reflecting a little on the cost/price of lockdown to society and to individuals. The cost to our economy is going to be colossal and will no doubt lead to recession, unemployment for many, and all the uncertainties that go along with it. Many families and those just starting out in jobs market fear what is to come and wonder if they can make ends meet. The call on Food Banks has already seen a huge spike in demand, and this will only continue. To those who have been donating to DENS – thank you for the compassion you are showing to your brothers and sisters in need.

But the cost of lockdown is more than financial: it is emotional, physical, psychological. Many of the people I have been speaking to, regardless of whether they are on their own or part of a larger nuclear family, have expressed how they long to be touched; to have a hug or the comforting support of a friend; to engage with another human being face to face rather than through a screen or over the phone. For some, the distance lockdown has created has brought on the sense of being disconnected: to family and friends; to place; to work; to God. For some, lockdown has caused a deep anxiety to bubble-up or caused them to spiral into depression. And of course for some lockdown has just been an inconvenience but they have managed to weather it quite well.

It has been inspiring to hear how so many of you have managed to keep yourselves stimulated and active during these past weeks. From gardening to decorating, sewing to quizzes, learning a new skill to taking some time to relax and enjoy stepping-off the whirling merry-go-round of life's usual business. Whatever you are doing, I hope it is working for you. If, however, you are feeling it is not please do not think or feel you are completely alone. Drop either Ruth or myself a line and let us see if we can help. Perhaps joining our online "Church Socials" may be a good way to interact with others. Perhaps ending each day with the service of Compline (available on our website) might be a way to give thanks for what you have and ask the Lord for his protection for the night and day to come. Perhaps thinking of, and completing, one task each day – no matter how big or small – might give a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment at the end of each day.

As our community and country begins to move out of lockdown I am conscious that many will still be isolating or shielding others. You are not alone. As a Church community I hope we can continue to

bear with each during these strange days, sharing the load by phoning each other, helping each other, serving each other, loving each other, praying for each other.

From Thursday 21 May through the next 10 days (Ascension Day to Pentecost) you are invited – with Christians around the globe – to pray for God’s Kingdom to reign here on earth: a Kingdom of justice, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, joy. When you say your prayers each day you might like to use the prayers on the bookmark we have prepared. Might you know 5 people whom you would like to come to faith and know Jesus? If so, pray for them by name. The bookmark is part of our mailing this week and can be found on our website.

Sending you my love and prayers, and may the Blessing of the Risen Christ be upon you and those whom you love, for...

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

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

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