

Letter from the Vicar

Friday 19 June 2020

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write the heavens are giving our gardens some much needed watering. It is pleasing to know that tonight I will be able to binge-watch quite a few episodes of *Dad's Army* instead of watering the garden! Perhaps it is because I have been able to spend more time than usual in my garden this year that I am appreciating it a little more this year – our roses under my study window have done particularly well – or it could be that I am now just a bit more interested in gardening. Either way our garden has been a real blessing during lockdown as I know your gardens have been too for many of you.

This week we were officially allowed to open the doors of our churches to the public for Private Prayer. St John's is already open every day and St Francis' will open next week (see Newsletter for timings). To prepare to re-open safely, Marian Davies and I spent much of last weekend completing the Risk Assessment and putting in place the necessary precautions so that all who would wish to come into this sacred space, God's presence, and offer their prayers, can do so. I hope those of you who have been able to pop-in to St John's have enjoyed your visit 'home'. For me it was another of those defining moments knowing that I could walk into St John's at any time during the day and not need to use a key; not need to lock the world out; not to feel guilty about being allowed in when others weren't. Our church has been returned to us. Now we await news as to when our Church can re-gather. It is hoped that an announcement will be made this coming week.

But whatever the news on Church re-gathering I suspect we will need to continue to stream our Services for a little longer. I know that many have been joining online services from here and other parishes along with joining the clergy at the Abbey. During these weeks of lockdown I think it's true to say that everyone who has offered Divine Worship online has improved with experience and technical knowledge. Keith and I are learning every week. It will be nice, though, to join with you all in worshipping with our Bishop this Sunday as we celebrate the life of St Alban.

It seems like only yesterday that I wrote to you last week and yet a whole week has passed. In that time many more shops have opened. I was amazed/perplexed at the queues I saw on TV on Monday as people patiently waited to enter their store of choice. Fearing the worse, I ventured into town with my family on Tuesday to buy the girls some sandals as their feet had grown. Expecting to queue I found none; we walked straight in. My girls were literally jumping for joy at being able to go shopping again. Town was obviously quieter than pre-lockdown but nonetheless people were about, shopping, observing the restrictions and following the one-way systems in place. There was an air of hopefulness and positivity as well as calm. With any luck this mood of positivity, calm, and hope will last for a long time as together we move forward, out of lockdown, into a new, yet familiar, world.

In hope for the future I send you my love and best wishes, praying that the Peace that Christ brings may be with you and remain with you and those whom love.

In Christ,



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