

Letter from the Vicar

Friday 11 September

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this day 19 years ago our world was shaken by the terror attacks on New York. Like many, I remember all too clearly the planes hitting the Twin Towers live on TV thinking this is horrendous. It looked like some poorly made CGI for an action film and yet it was real. Nearly 3000 people died in the attacks with another 6000 people injured. Whilst on sabbatical a few years ago I visited the memorial at Ground Zero. The huge void where these massive towers once stood brought home once again the enormity of the attack whilst the respectful calm and quiet at the memorial reminded me that the victims were people – with families, friends, hopes and dreams. Since 9/11 the blood spilt on the War on Terror, on both sides, has been colossal. It was a moment that truly shaped how our society interacts.

This year, the world is going through another paradigm shift as we all grapple with Covid-19. Things we all took for granted have had to cease as we try to contain and control a virus which has claimed the lives of 913,000 people world-wide and infected at least 28.3million people. Things are now very different to how they were when we entered Lockdown in March, and they are still evolving as the virus continues to move among us. Only this week the Government announced new legislation on limits for social gatherings. As I understand it, it will be illegal for groups of more than 6 people to gather at a social event from Monday although larger gatherings are still permitted in Covid-secure settings, schools, and the workplace. Places of Worship have also been exempt from this legislation so our Services will continue as normal – ensuring that we continue to maintain social distancing, good hygiene, the wearing of face coverings, and retain contact details for Track and Trace. I look forward to seeing you at one of our services over the weekend and in future weeks.

As you will all know from last week's letter this Monday was a much anticipated day in the Macey household. Both Sophie and Abbie were to be in School and Nursery – at the same time – for the first time since March. Thank you to so many folk for asking how they got on. They loved being back and have had a great first week. Predictably the volume level in the Vicarage went down bringing a calmness that facilitated more concentrated work, but the downside was that the house felt empty. By today equilibrium has been restored and once more we feel like life is back to normal – albeit with restrictions on gatherings.

As a Parish not a huge amount has happened this week other than a lot of planning for future events, responding to government announcements, and getting ready for Public Worship to recommence at St Stephen's this Sunday at 11.30am and for the choir to return to Choral Evensong (with some stunning music performed live) at St John's on Sunday evening at 6.30pm. Last Sunday we held a Children's Praise Service in the afternoon and it was pleasing that 10 children (all of whom we are associated with) came with their parents as we tried to re-engage our young people whilst Junior Church is necessarily suspended. St Francis' also returned to regular services – another step forward in the return to normal for the congregation there.

As ever, I hope you are all remaining safe and well, and secure in the knowledge of our God who loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.

In Christ,



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