**Letter from the Vicar**

Friday 2 October

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Another week has passed – most of which I have been cold! We have a family rule not to put the heating on until October (if possible). Added to which Emma was busy cycling 1000miles for The British Red Cross’s appeal *Miles for Refugees* which meant she didn’t want the heating on! Now, thankfully, she has completed her challenge and it is October so the heating is on.

Today, saw another ‘first’ for me - I returned to the gym! I’m not expecting to be able to walk tomorrow as it was a brutal session – my first time of serious exercise in 2 months and in the gym for 7 months. What possessed me? At least it should be easier next week and I might be able to rid myself of some of the extra pounds I put on during lockdown. Tomorrow night, I will also host our first virtual quiz. Numbers have picked-up in recent days which is encouraging. I hope it will be a convivial evening for all who join us.

It seems strange to be saying this but most of my week has been spent thinking of Christmas. From musical requirements to communication, community outreach to fundraising, capacity to decorations I have been meeting with various people and committees to ensure that the folk of this Parish know that Christmas is not cancelled. Yes, it will be different – but not cancelled. In the coming weeks I will be in touch again about how we are enabling us to celebrate Christmas during these difficult times of pandemic. As you might imagine, with all this attention to Christmas, I have started to sing Christmas carols already!

This Sunday is another busy Sunday in the life of the Parish. Firstly, we are celebrating Harvest – giving thanks to God for his bounty in creation and supporting the work of DENS with physical produce and the Bishop’s Harvest Appeal: Creating a Buzz in Nepal with our financial offerings. Please can all physical donations be left at the back of church on your way in, and financial donations be put in a completed Gift Aid envelope with the heading “Harvest” and then placed in the offerings plate as you enter/leave. We are delighted that the Bishop of Hertford will be joining us for our Parish Eucharist at 10.00am as our preacher and celebrant. In the evening we will celebrate St Francis’ Patronal Festival with Sung Mass and Benediction – sung by our choir! Our guest preacher is no stranger to the Parish, Fr Benjamin – our former curate. I hope you will be able to join us for one or both of these services or are able to worship at our other services tomorrow. Due to time pressures on Sundays we are not always able to publish the streamed service at 6.00pm for which we apologise. Taking this into consideration we are going to stream the service by 12noon on Monday from now on – I’m sorry that time pressure has meant that we have needed to do this.

It’s now time for me to get wet and do the school run, so for now, please remain assured of my prayers for each of you; keep safe; and remain secure in the knowledge of our God who loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.

In Christ,

 

The Reverend Michael Macey The Reverend Canon Dr Ruth Goatly

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