

Letter from the Vicar

Saturday 27 February 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What a joy it has been these last few mornings to wake-up to glorious sunshine. Despite my girls physically jumping on me to arouse me from slumber what a difference these beautiful mornings have on your mental health. Speaking for myself, I am invigorated to ensure that I smash my step-count target of 10,000 steps each day. There is also a hint of nostalgia or déjà vu as these glorious mornings and our current circumstances are reminding me of Lockdown 1.0. But mercifully, we are a year on – there are vaccines available, a road map for returning to some kind of normal, light at the end of the tunnel.

On Monday, like you I suspect, I was glued to BBC news to find out what the Prime Minister would announce. I was pleased that the emphasis was more focused on human interaction than on the recovery of the economy, but I still have some concerns. Although the Timeline is not definitive and should rather be seen as indicative of what is possible I fear that it will become a straight-jacket to which we are beholden and, that as we approach each date, the mind-set will be “we’re only a few days out, what difference will it make if I start the next phase now!” That being said, isn’t it great to have some kind of framework on which to start to plan normal interactions.

Like thousands upon thousands of families I was delighted to hear that schools would be returning from 8 March. Home schooling has not been much fun despite our schools doing such a fabulous job at making content so much more presentable and engaging during Lockdown 3.0. The children are longing to see their friends and to learn in their classrooms. Parents are longing to be parents and not teachers – especially of things we don’t even understand or were never taught when we were at school.

As for the Church: we were not forced to suspend Public Worship during this Lockdown but we voluntarily chose to move online in the interest of keeping people safe. Our decision to resume Public Worship on 21 March is in line with the Government’s Roadmap and local data and we look forward to welcoming you back to St John’s and St Francis’ – St Stephen’s will remain closed for at least another week but the hope is to resume there on 28 March, Palm Sunday.

Lent is always a time of preparation for Easter. Normally that involves preparing our hearts and minds to enter into the great mystery at the heart of our faith: the depth of love of God in Jesus Christ that he should die upon the cross to absolve us from our sins and be raised to new life so that we might have life. But this year we will also be preparing our buildings to become, once again, places where the living stones of the Church gather to be strengthened, encouraged, and nurtured before being sent-out to live God’s love in our community. Our buildings meet all the Covid-secure measures and we look forward to welcoming you back as, and when, you feel able to return.

As ever I leave you with my prayers and best wishes. Keep safe; keep positive; keep warm; and remain steadfast in faith that God loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.

In Christ,



The Reverend Michael Macey
Vicar

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