



Tacket Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AU



COMMENT JULY & AUGUST 2020

THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

Remarkably, three months have now passed since we began to be a Church in 'lockdown' with our much valued time together across the life of our Church curtailed and our lovely buildings closed. It was a difficult and disorientating time of change for us all. And of course, for all of us, the necessary restrictions imposed upon us in March did not just affect how we worshipped God and sought to be a Christlike community together but almost every aspect of life, including our contact, not just with one another but with our dear loved ones. There have been difficulties and challenges faced, and wherever possible, new ways of worshipping, living and staying connected with our Church family and our loved ones have been embraced.

Amazingly, although nothing is quite like being physically together, a real sense of feeling connected to one another and to our families has been sustained and we are truly thankful for this. There have been, and still remain, some difficult restrictions faced by many of us, but mostly, we have sought to accept and adapt to the season and have found ways to live as fully as we possibly can. Whilst we've not learnt to like everything about this time, a number of us have, nonetheless, been able to find aspects of this unusual time that we've been able to receive as a gift. This may just be a more restful pace and a space to think and 'breathe' more than usual but still, this is a precious blessing. Perhaps, in this space we have been able to feel connected to God. I hope this is so. A lot of us are fortunate enough to have gardens and I know that much time has been spent there since March! Maybe the famous poetic line about being 'nearer God's heart in a garden' has been true at least some of the time or maybe it has just been really hard work in the garden!?

I'm sure that we are all wondering when we will be able to worship together in our Church Sanctuary again. I'm sure that we'll all be keen to move forward as a Church and to embrace, what will no doubt be, another new 'new'! At the moment, we do not know with any certainty what our life together will look like. As I write, the Government has just said that Places of Worship are allowed to open again for worship services from the 4th July. Soon, it will issue comprehensive guidelines (including restrictions) which will be closely followed, (as has happened with all other changes affecting faith Communities), with very helpful Church specific guidelines being issued to us by the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union. We keep a close eye on all guidance issued by the Government and by both Denominations, and the Deaconate will be discussing and deliberating possible ways forward for us all as often as is necessary over the coming weeks and months. We will, as always, keep in touch with you with any suggested plans and ideas but please do bear with us, as when Government changes are announced, it often seems that their guidelines follow afterwards, and as mentioned, we need all the guidelines before we can shape our proposals. There will be many things to consider and much detail to decide upon but it goes without saying that, in keeping with the whole point of the 'lockdown', caring for one another and keeping each other safe and well, as well as seeking to be as inclusive as is humanly possible, will continue to be guiding principles when considering new possibilities. We may well need to be patient as part of our pastoral care for each other and thorough in our preparations as well as creative and innovative in our endeavours to plan for the future.



As we have all along, we continue to hold in our thoughts and prayers all those who have lost loved ones throughout this period and all those among us and beyond who have faced difficulties due to the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown. Right back on the very first Sunday when we worshipped together in our own homes, I suggested that we should 'lean into God'. May I share some of my thoughts with you again? If you don't mind me saying, I believe this remains sound advice for this moment. As we begin to discern how we might best walk forward into our new future as a church, we do so trusting in a God who is always there for his people, always watching over his people and is always a loving home and warm embrace for us. We may lean into God today. God is real and near, very much close and present. The God '*in whom we live and move and have our being*' (Acts 17:28) is the God who upholds us and envelopes us in lavish love today. As we confidently sing in '*Great is thy faithfulness*', God is always a '*strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow*'. This continues to be exceedingly good news through every season of life, including this one!

Every blessing,
Neil

FUTURE EVENTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Holiday at Home

Sadly, July's Holiday at Home will not take place this year as it will not be possible to have a large group of vulnerable, elderly people (both guests and helpers) together safely by then. We look forward to 2021.

Heritage Open Days 2020

As this has been cancelled, we will not be opening our church to visitors on the 2nd Saturday in September as usual.

Suffolk Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride



As no notification has been received yet, it is possible this may go ahead. As soon as we hear, Deacons will decide if we should receive cyclists and walkers at Christ Church, possibly sitting outside. If so, a request will be circulated for volunteers who would be happy to do this. No

sponsor forms have been received to date.



CHRISTIAN AID

The wonderful sum of £1,518.50 and another £52.50 gift aid was sent to Christian Aid from Christ Church. This will be very gratefully received, especially at these very uncertain times. Very many thanks to all of you who participated in the online auction and sent donations.

Well done Christchurch!

To those of you who haven't yet received your promised free jar of marmalade, it will be ready for you to pick up when we get back to church.



Sheila Storey, Christian Aid representative



AN EXTRACT TAKEN FROM A SPEECH BY THE POPE

"Today I believe we have to slow down our rate of production and consumption and to learn to understand and contemplate the natural world. We need to reconnect with our real surroundings. This is the opportunity for conversion," he explained.

The Pope also said the crisis is a "moment to see the poor."

"We can't settle for a welfare policy such as we have for rescued animals, which is how the poor are often treated," Pope Francis said.

"We disempower the poor. We don't give them the right to dream of their mothers. They don't know what affection is, many live on drugs. And to see them can help us to discover the piety, which points towards God and towards our neighbour," he added.

This coronavirus crisis is affecting us all, rich and poor alike, and putting a spotlight on hypocrisy. I am worried by the hypocrisy of certain political personalities who speak of facing up to the crisis, of the problem of hunger in the world, but who in the meantime manufacture weapons," the pontiff said. "This is a time to be converted from this kind of functional hypocrisy. It's a time for integrity. Either we are coherent with our beliefs or we lose everything."

Francis said every crisis contains both danger and opportunity.



A QUICK QUIZ

Complete the following quiz and the first letter of each answer will give you an anagram of a book in the Bible. Rearrange the letters accordingly to find the name of the book.

1. A town in Shropshire whose name corresponds with a famous 19th century road builder
2. Eve was tempted to eat this
3. Which Austrian composer wrote the Trout Quintet?
4. Name the famous race track which has held the F1 German Grand Prix
5. What triangle has two sides of equal length?
6. The British Prime minister whose surname equals 0.416 of a year
7. The 1994 Winter Olympics were held in this town in Norway
8. Which Japanese car manufacturer started by originally making sewing machines?
9. Which brothers had a hit in 1960 with Cathy's Clown?
10. Sultan Qaboos Bin Said was the longest serving Middle Eastern ruler until his death this year of which country?
11. What type of acid is used in vinegar for pickling purposes?
12. Name this palace in Surrey built by Henry V111 but long since demolished leaving today just a park.

With kind permission of Redhill URC, Netty's previous church

The answers are at the end of Comment.



ECO CHURCH - CREATION CARE

It is now about a year since the church decided to set up a group to urgently consider the climate crisis and help steer the church towards a more climate and environment friendly way of living. It has of course been a highly untypical year for all of us, but it still seemed a good idea to review what we, as individuals, have actually been doing and what changes we may have made. Here are some of the things that various people have been doing.

1. improved roof insulation
2. reducing the use of plastic by using block soap rather than shower gel, refilling bottles at the Fair Trade Shop with laundry liquid, liquid soap, washing-up liquid and all-purpose cleaner, using beeswax wraps or silicone lids rather than clingfilm, buying loose-leaf tea or Clipper plastic-free teabags, ordering milk in glass bottles from the milkman
3. fitted solar panels to the roof
4. buying British food as much as possible, doing a supermarket shop just once a month with fruit and veg shopping from local nursery in between, using local shops and producers more, planning weekly menu to avoid waste
5. made a composting area from wooden pallets, bought water butts made from recycled plastic
6. trying to grow more fruit and veg (with mixed results!)
7. reduced meat consumption
8. used charity shops for the first time to buy clothes
9. discovered that you can make do with a lot less ironing
10. changed car to more fuel efficient option
11. switched energy provider to renewable energy supplier
12. replaced halogen bulbs with LEDs and fitted thermostatic valves to radiators
13. using Ecosia as a search engine
14. using vinegar for window and household cleaning
15. left a hedge and some grass to grow wild for butterflies and birds and made hedgehog highway through the fence
16. recycling everything possible and re-using inventively eg making plant labels from large, white yogurt pot
17. resolved to continue with more walking and cycling

And of course many people were aware of these issues and doing many of these and other things already.

The coronavirus seems to have led people world-wide to re-evaluate many aspects of the way we live. Let us continue to work towards a “new normal” which is a more planet friendly way of life, one which takes care of creation rather than threatening it.

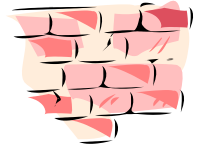
Kate Helleur



OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras

Dear friends at Christchurch,



It seems a long time since we have been able to wave in passing since lockdown closed our churches. I am missing that sense of community but many of us have discovered a new community as a result. Many of us have felt bereft with no access to the Mass, the sacraments and communal prayer. So many people are not online and cannot 'live stream' services or Zoom social meetings.

At St Pancras we have managed to keep 'the place' going, doing deep cleans and general jobs, but our Church is the people! Thank God we have been allowed to make the first steps to re-joining our brethren face to face, as our church is able to open for two hours, three days a week.

Just as the fabric of a building falls into disrepair when not used, so our Christian community needs to be able to meet and praise and worship and support each other. We realised too late we do not have a current or usable database to keep in touch with all the vulnerable and lonely church members, even by post, and have relied on them calling for support instead.

Coronavirus appears to have killed about as many people in the UK in a few short months, as died in the blitz during the whole of the second world war, and we owe it to each other to continue to stay safe and protect each other. How will we commemorate this crisis in our churches I wonder? Will we even know, for sure, the full impact on our community and the faith of the people who have been so socially and spiritually challenged since March? Pope Francis said that prayer is "our greatest weapon against the virus" and reminded the world that "we are all brothers and sisters".

This virus is more than just an infection, and its effects are reverberating through employment statistics, mental health services, cancelled health services, economic and social functions, and our children will have the sense of threat deeply implanted in their memories as they grow up. When will the elderly and vulnerable feel safe to venture out? Who knows.

Our God reigns over the whole world and he is the great healer. Pray for us please as we send our love to you all and pray for all your needs in Christ Jesus.

Bernie and the folk at St Pancras

<p>Quick Quiz Answers 1. Telford 2. Apple 3. Schubert 4. Nürburgring 5. Isosceles 6. May 7. Lillehammer 8. Toyota 9. Everly Brothers 10. Oman 11. Acetic 12. Nonsuch The book in the Bible is Lamentations</p>
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