CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

To make Jesus known and grow together in Him

Dear friends

"The Levites…instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.' For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, 'Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'" Nehemiah 8: 7 - 10.

The book of Nehemiah describes a time of great significance for Israel. They were exiled, their city and Temple destroyed; and then, miraculously, they were given a chance to return and rebuild. And they did so, in the face of enemies and upsets. Halfway through the book we see Ezra reading from the book of the law. In their physical struggle and emotional turmoil, the people hear the word of God. And it causes them to weep. The word of God is authentic and life-giving. It speaks truth from beyond us, into us, and it changes us. It is not always comfortable: it brings tears, from remorse, or as we are made aware of our helplessness. But it also brings strength and joy, as we remember the eternal, gracious God, who holds us still.

It is good for us to keep on hearing God's life-giving words: if they are truly effective, they will bring tears and joy.

And now for the news…

Sunday service.
Do join us again on Sunday at 10.30, through the website or by going straight to our YouTube channel. It may help you if you subscribe to the channel.

If you are in touch with people who are not online, do tell them about **Dial a sermon**. For the cost of a local rate call they can ring up and hear last week's sermon. The number is **0151 318 0420.** One or two people have managed to hear the service over the phone when a friend who is watching the service has put their phone next to their computer!

Pray at Home
Our prayer meeting this week will take place through Zoom. We will meet together, and I will send you, through Zoom, a document that gives topics and encouragements for prayer. After an introduction from me, we will split into what they call breakout groups, small groups in which it is much easier for everyone to speak and pray, if they wish to. The prayer topics will

also be made available on twitter and Facebook after the meeting. It is another new thing - there have been a lot of them in the past few weeks! But we hope it will be an encouragement, allowing us to see each other and pray with each other. Do come along! The link is
https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76548084571
Amongst other things we will be praying for key workers, members of our church who work in the NHS, or who work in social care, in the emergency services or in shops or transport.

The Hub
We are planning to use Zoom for a new Hub series. It will start on April 30th, running for four Thursday evenings, from 7.45 - 9.00. We are going to think about questions that people ask about church life, in particular about Anglican church life: Why do we have bishops? Why do we baptise babies? What are vicars? Is Sunday special? Do join in and have your mind stimulated and your confidence in God strengthened.

Reading and Books.
TenofThose have been a great friend to us as a church, running book stalls and supplying a lot of what we use at other times. They are having a book sale and there are all kinds of books and that you might benefit from. This is a good time to be doing it! You can find the book sale here:
https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products/sale

You can look at their catalogue here:
https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/catalogues

Ten of Those Offers

If you would like advice or a conversation about books, or if you would like to order through them, you could ring Joanna Hill (07775 562224) or Linda Edward (07786 521758), who run the bookstall at Christ Church. They also have some books available to borrow, do ask about those if you are interested.

Support Group
Increasing numbers of people are being helped in practical ways by our wonderful volunteers. Thank you very much to all who have gone shopping, picked up prescriptions and generally supported those who are unable to get out.

Pastoral needs
If you are feeling particularly anxious or troubled and would like to talk privately to someone trained and experienced in listening and Christian encouragement, do get in touch with Joanna Hill. Joanna has been trained by Biblical Counselling UK and is willing to be contacted on 07775 562224 or through Peter.

PCC accounts.
You will know that the church's APCM has been postponed. However, we thought it would be good to let everyone in church have a sight of the church's annual accounts, before too much time passes and they become of only historic interest. They were attached to the email sent this week. Do ring Bob Jarvis Bob Jarvis (home 342 2143 or mobile 07759 272742) if you have any questions or comments them. They show, as I said last week, some difficulties for us. Please pray on for the Lord to provide through the generosity of his people.

Help with the computer or internet
If you have the internet at your home but are unsure how to use it to take part in church life, we may be able to help you. This may apply particularly to Zoom, which is new to many of us. Ring Cecelia in the office (648 2404) who will either help you or put you in touch with someone else who can.

As our lock down extends still further, please be aware of the prayers of many for you and of the important part you play in the life and health of the church. Though we are physically separated, by our prayers and conversations, by letters and emails, we continue to build one another up in Jesus Christ. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Peter