CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

Dear friends,

I hope this finds you well. But I wonder how you are feeling? As we take slow and tentative steps out of lockdown people will be experiencing very different emotions. It all depends how vulnerable we feel: if we feel we will basically be OK, we can't wait to get out there and back to the cafe, the campsite or the swimming pool; if we feel vulnerable these are worrying times - will it be harder to keep a safe physical distance when the world is running so much faster?

It is good to recognise these two views. Freedom is joy for some, danger to others. Our church is made up of so many different people - that is why it is a glorious construction, as we have been seeing in Ephesians. The way that God has brought us together, with our different ages and backgrounds and conditions and circumstances, is a demonstration of the magnificence of the gospel. And having been brought near, to God and to each other, we are to live out that nearness. And that means being aware of our different conditions and needs. I always think of something good to say when it is too late, so here is my second chance after last Sunday. Paul tells us to watch our mouths - "Do not let unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is good for building people up, according to their needs." (Ephesians 4: 29) How easy it is in these days to be destructive, to doubt other people's motives or question their good sense, especially when they don't share our joy or our anxiety. Paul didn't know about social media, but I think he would have written this bit in red ink if he had. How easy it is online to sow unease or suspicion. But instead we can use our words to encourage, to praise, to sympathise, to offer advice, to pray. When we are physically distanced, our words are pretty much all we have to offer, the only instrument we can use to reach out to others and build them up. How good to use them in this way!

And I wonder if we need to be reminded about this. There is a tendency, over time, stuck in our houses, to turn inward, to narrow our horizons. Or to focus on those few others whom we know well. But many are still in need of friendship and human warmth. And Paul says: remember that this other is one Jesus died for, one he has brought near. So, let's keep on going, let's keep on keeping in touch, for their sake if not for our own. The Generosity Project has wonderfully reminded us of the freedom we have and that the generosity we show is a celebration of that freedom. May God fill us again with his Spirit, with his generosity and help us to use words to build each other up.

Dear Lord,
Whose words in Jesus brings life and healing;
help me choose my words wisely,
help me speak life into those around me today
to be a source of encouragement rather than discouragement,
of hope rather than pain.
Amen

Much love in Christ to you all,

Peter

Good stuff for you to know about…

As you may remember, we have decided that regarding the opening of the church we will, for the time being:

1. Open Christ Church for funerals (with a limited number of people)
2. Use St. Michaels for a service, attended by a small number of people, to be broadcast on YouTube as at present. The government has indicated that this will be possible after July 4th but as I write we are waiting for guidance from the Church of England. Our hope is that we will do this from July 19th. We will use July 12th to check our technology and our organisation. We will have to limit numbers so will we have to devise a way of allocating spaces that is clear and fair. We will let you know about this in due course.
3. At this time, we do not propose to open either of our churches for private prayer.
4. We want to keep remembering that God hears our prayers wherever we are!

Do join us as we **pray** this week
To join in Morning Prayers
From Tuesday 30th June to Friday 3rd July from 9.00 to 9.20.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87596002986
To join in Pray at Home
We pray from 7.00pm to 7.30pm every Thursday. To join us on Thursday 2nd July
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81544256378
This week will include prayers for our Mission partners, Neema Children's Home

The Hub continues as we look at the Generosity Project, seeing how God can open up our hearts to the generosity of God so we show it to others.

To join us on Wednesday 1st July at 10.30 am
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82979311648
To join us on Thursday 2nd July at 8.05pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81544256378

In our Sunday service yesterday Victoria Lacey told us about God's Big picture. You can find out more about it at
https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products?q=God%27s+Big+picture

Please contact Cecelia in the office if you would like a copy.

Pray for those who have been bereaved, including the family and friends of Les Sharp, Linda Bailey, Donald Stroud, Annette Stainsby and Margaret Jones and remember our mission partners, Neema Children's Home.