CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

Dear friends,

I hope that this finds you well, persevering as our confinement continues. This letter comes with news from the wider church, with our love and thoughts of you. We pray each morning by name for members of our church family and will be praying for you. Members of the church are ringing regularly, reminding you that you are remembered and significant. Others are bringing practical help to those in need, friends are keeping in touch. We thank God for all that he is bringing us through one another.

We do what we can as a church, and I know this has made a difference to many. But still the struggle goes on, often a struggle not so much with our physical health but with our feelings of anxiety or despair. I think we have all faced this in different ways. I have been helped recently by reading a piece by Mark Meynell (you may remember him from a weekend he did for us a couple of years ago) about the importance of the imagination. What we consider possible is so often determined solely by what we currently see. The Bible, however, urges us to live by faith and not by sight. It tells us, and enables us, to see a reality beyond our present experience. We use our imagination, our minds eye, to fix on this.

Here are words from the beginning to Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus." We have two addresses! There is Ephesus, or Barnston or Pensby, the place where we physically live. But we have another address, another place we can be found, "In Christ Jesus". This is our spiritual home. We are united with Christ, by faith, bound to him. And where he is, we are too. So, Paul can say: "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 2:6). Astonishingly, because we are where Jesus is, spiritually we have a heavenly address as well. We are raised and seated, loved, valued and secure, with our heavenly Father. Our imagination allows us to look at this truth, with growing wonder. To ponder it, to turn it over, to allow the joy of being in Christ in the heavenly realms to fill us. Perhaps you might take time to meditate on these words. The four walls are real, the limitations are still significant. But they are not the whole truth about us, nor will they ever be.

May God bless you and give you patience and wisdom and his peace and protection in the days ahead.

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation, be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness, be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness, be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
that when the doors re-open we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities and speak of your goodness to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake.
Amen.

And in other news…
We are praying that we will be able to have some people attending **church services** from July. This has been hinted at by the government, but it will depend on the health situation in the country and the wisdom of the Church of England. Whatever we are allowed to do, we will continue to show services online and to have them broadcast on the radio.

Do **join us as we pray** this week
To join in Morning Prayers
From Tuesday 9th June to Friday 12th, from 9.00 to 9.20.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82711455490

To join in Pray at Home
We pray from 7.00pm to 7.30pm every Thursday. To join us on Thursday 11th June
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89108797438

This week will include prayers for our Mission partners, Sena and Jane in Caen.

And do join in T**he Hub**! We will continue to look at The Generosity Project, a course helping us to appreciate the generosity of God and to grow in generosity ourselves. There are two meetings that you can phone in to:

Hub (Wednesday) June 10th 10.30am
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85944603349I

Hub (Thursday) June 11th 8.05pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89108797438

If you want to watch the video before the meeting, look at the video for session 2 at https://matthiasmedia.com.au/pages/tgp-videos

And if getting in touch with the Hub is not for you, why not ring a friend and see what they think about the book? We will be on Week Two this week - find out what they thought! If you would like to talk to someone from the staff team about it, do ring Cecelia in the office and she will arrange it.

Don't forget **Dial-a-sermon**! People have appreciated listening to the sermon from last week by ringing **0151 318 0420.**

You can also listen to our morning service on **Flame Radio** (**1521MW)** at 6.00pm on Sundays. Do tell others that this is possible, and encourage them to listen in, especially if they aren't able to get our service online.

For those who have been unable to give financially to the work of the church during lockdown we have just added a new 'Giving' page to our website https://www.barnston.info/giving. We hope this will help those who normally give on the plate or by envelope to continue supporting the ministry of the church, although of course anyone can use these facilities. There is a link to a Standing Order form and to a third party website, which will process a donation to our church. Both of these forms of giving are completely secure and the use of them will help the parish hugely in these uncertain times. If at all possible, we would appreciate as many people as are able, giving through Standing Order.

Please continue to **remember the family and friends** of Shirley Carling, Linda Slorach, Joan Jones-Menon, Joyce Cashin, Peter Starkey, Rene Dodd, Brenda Davies, Vera West, and Harry Sharpe as they mourn their passing.

Vera's funeral will be taking place on Friday 12th June, at 11.50 am. As is sadly usual at the moment, only a very small number will be attending. Please pray for Gill and Huw and for the rest of Vera's family in particular.

May God bring you patience and peace in the days ahead.

Peter