CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

22nd June 2020

Dear friends,

*"I confess I feel very out of my depth in the face of this pandemic. I don't see the situation clearly. I don't know what God is doing. I feel very short of answers. It's not a nice place to be, feeling so small and inadequate. But I take comfort from the fact that the psalmists have been there before. They don't promise us an all-seeing perspective, or a 'God's-eye view' of things. They won't answer all the questions we have. But in these ancient prayers and songs, we'll find a bedrock to build on and pathways to follow*." **Matt Searles**
**Excerpt From: "*Healthy Faith and the Coronavirus Crisis*". Apple Books.**

I have found this a helpful thought recently. The Psalms help us when we feel small, isolated and powerless. In the words of another Christian writer, they remind us that "God is always bigger than all of our troubles." And the reason this is so is not because our troubles are small. Our troubles are, at the moment, very significant. No, God is bigger still. And the Psalms help us to magnify God, to look at him more closely and more clearly and get a sense of who he is for us at this. One of my favourite moments of clarity is in Psalm 93:

The seas have lifted up, Lord,
the seas have lifted up their voice;
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.
Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea –
the Lord on high is mighty.
(Psalm 93:3–4)

Here are the pounding waves - they come again and again, three times in the first three lines. But here is God, three times he is mightier and mighty.

Our homes have been little harbours for us in the last few months. It has been hard to be confined there, but we have felt safe. And as we slowly emerge, we will feel more anxious and uncertain, life will be more complicated, with hard decisions to take. And perhaps we fear another wave will emerge and send us scurrying back to our homes. But whatever comes, our Psalm reminds us that God is mightier still. We find hope and confidence in him.

*"I often think that I just need to try harder in the Christian life: to praise more, to trust more. I look within for reserves of strength, but that well is so often dry. But the psalms don't tell us to look within, but to look up! They show us God in all his glory and call us to sing with them. In days when we may find it hard to praise and hard to trust, we need these psalms. These psalms tune our hearts to the reality of who God is; not minimising circumstances, but magnifying God!"* **Matt Searle**

So, I hope you will keep on praying, keep on looking to God and learning to lean on him. Much love in Christ to you all,

Peter

And now for the news…

As many of you may be aware the Government and the Diocese have said that **churches are now able to open** for a limited number of purposes, including funerals and private prayer. The Standing Committee discussed this and decided that we would do the following:

1. Christ Church will be open for funerals (with a limited number of people).
2. St. Michaels will be used for a service, attended by a small number of people, to be broadcast on YouTube as at present, **when this is allowed**. We are working towards July 12th, but are still waiting to see if this will be possible.
3. At this time, we do not propose to open either of our churches for private prayer.

We decided not to open for private prayer because Wirral still has quite a lot of COVID-19 and we don't want to encourage anyone to put themselves at risk. We want to keep remembering that God hears our prayers wherever we are!

There are some great **books** on prayer available at the moment. Have a look here:
https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products?q=prayer
In addition you might enjoy this lovely devotional book: Tumbling Sky.

Or maybe this one Before you Open your Bible encouraging us to desire to approach our Bible as God wants us to, to read it and be renewed as a result.
There are some good devotionals for families to download on kindle ebook such as Exploring Grace Together
If you are interested in finding out more about them, do ring Joanna Hill (07775 562224) or Linda Edward (07786 521758).

Have you ever been to the Keswick Convention? You can go for free this year, with a week of talks and events on the theme of Hope. Find our more here:
https://keswickministries.org/convention-2020/

Do join us as we **pray** this week
**To join in Morning Prayers:**
From Tuesday 23rd June to Friday 26th June, from 9.00 to 9.20.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81531457613
**To join in Pray at Home:**
We pray from 7.00pm to 7.30pm every Thursday. To join us on Thursday 25th June
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81450680291
This week will include prayers for our Mission partners, St Peter's Rock Ferry

**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 24th June at 10.30am
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84410616418

To join us on Thursday 25th Jun at 8.05pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81450680291

Do keep on listening to **Flame radio** (1521MW). Our morning service is replayed at 6.00 pm every week, and a shorter version of the previous week's sermon is on their Sunday morning show as well.

Pray for those who have been bereaved, including the family and friends of Peter Starkey, Rene Dodd, Brenda Davies, Vera West, Les Sharp, Linda Bailey and Donald Stroud and remember our mission partners, St Peter's Rock Ferry.