CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

Weekly update **14th September 2020**

Dear friends,

At the APCM I spoke on Hebrews 10: 19 - 25. This is summary of what I said:

Two aspects of the Christian life are pressed upon us here. There is the vertical and the horizontal. The vertical aspect is our relationship with God. The writer wants us to take hold of the great privilege of access to the presence of God himself. There is a new way - through the blood of Jesus, that is through his sin-bearing death. Now it is possible for us to come into the holy place, where only a very few were able to go, on a very few occasions, after very special preparations. And since we have access to God in this way, the writer urges us, let us draw near with full confidence.

So when our ability to attend church is taken from us, when the pattern of the week is broken, when the building is inaccessible and our meetings with fellow Christians forbidden, when we aren't able to do the good things that made us feel valued: when all those are gone, what is left? This is left, we have confidence still to enter the most holy place. That as we sit at home, perhaps by ourselves, and we are still and we pray we remember that this is where we are, in the most holy place, in the presence of the awesome and holy God.

The horizontal concerns our relationships with one another. We need each other. We need each other to spur us on. We are not to give up the habit of meeting together.

What a blessing our online services have been and are. How amazing that people who are unable to come because they are stuck at home can still be with us. Our experience of this pandemic would have been so very different ten years, possibly even five years ago. We will continue to meet online. But it is not the same. It is not the same to be just a receiver at home. To be wholly Christian we need to be encouraging one another, and this means meeting together. One of our Mission Leadership Team said: I don't know how anyone would ever grow as a Christian if we didn't have to rub alongside each other in person.

I heard someone use this analogy recently: our online services have been a lifeboat to us, but you wouldn't want to stay in the lifeboat forever. It is wonderful to have it - and we will keep it as long as it is needed. But we pray that we would be able to be back together in church. Peter

<u>News of the week</u>:
At the APCM:

Bob Fiddaman and Rob Moots were elected as Church Wardens.

Linda Edward, Graham Hill, David Mann, Sue Orman, and David Reed were elected to be our representatives on the Deanery Synod. Linda Edward and David Mann will also serve on the PCC.

Roy Edward, Eleanor Haslam, Bob Jarvis, Alan Johnston, Colin Leeman and Zoe Putman were elected to the PCC.

Sunday services:

Please join us on Sunday, for a Communion service at Christ Church at 8.30am, and for a Communion service, with Sunday groups for children, at St Michael's at 9.30am. I am particularly looking forward to our first service at Christ Church since March. If you would like to come, please ring Cecelia in the office.

A number of people have raised concerns about the pattern of services that we are looking towards as we reintroduce worship in church. Can I say the following?

As we come out of lock-down it will be a gradual process. We have to take it slowly. This means that we won't start up with the old pattern of services. We want to do one formal service and one service that is more informal, with work for children going on.

This means we are already going to change what we did before - having an 8.30am service is a compromise that is meant to suit people at Christ Church and St. Michael's. We also think that it is a chance to try something out, while we are doing the live streamed services, to see if there is something that will suit more people, getting a better balance of the services at Christ Church and St Michael's. So, we will aim to introduce the pattern of services that we outlined before.

We are not certain that this is the right thing to do, but the PCC who discussed it felt that there is enough that is good about it to make it worth trying.

We will get people's reactions to it after it has been running for a bit. We want to do a proper exercise in getting feedback and will then see if we want to change back or not. We can do this because of the strange times we are in. We would not be able to try this out at another time, at least not nearly so easily.

I hope this provides some reassurance.

Knitting!
Alison and Alan Golightly have asked for willing knitters to help them by knitting hats. They want to give them to homeless people that they are visiting in Liverpool, aware that there are increasing numbers on the streets at the moment. If you are able to help, please ring them on 648 3855.

Do join us as we **pray** this week:

To join in Morning Prayers:
From Tuesday 15th September to Friday 18th September from 9.00am to 9.20am.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89838111021

To join in Pray at Home:
We will pray on Thursday 17th September from 7.00pm till 7.30pm.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83994184949
This week will include prayers for our Mission partners, St Peter's Rock Ferry.

Many blessings to you.
Peter