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NEWSLETTER

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PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friends,

It is unimaginable that something that had never been heard of before, Covid-19, could lock down most of the world. It is also incredible how much fear the virus had generated. So much so, that even the government is surprised at how obedient most people have been to their instruction and mantra of **'Stay at home, Protect the NHS and Save lives'**.

The devastation and sadness Covid-19 had caused is immeasurable. I pray for God's - Comfort for all those who have lost loved ones; Healing for those infected; Protection for those unaffected; Courage, protection and peace for all who care for the infected and affected.

What had surprised me during this lock down is how creative a lot of people have become in order to cope with it and be at their best. Many churches including ours had quickly resorted to virtual worship. Haven't our talented minister, Revd. Ruth Moriarty and Diana Bensted, our website manager done so well? Who between them have ensured we had a virtual worship on the YouTube every Sunday since the lockdown and especially throughout the Easter celebrations. We even got to celebrate virtual communion on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Great thanks to John Moriarty, Ruth's husband, who played his saxophone brilliantly during the worship to accompany our hymns.

Clare Jenkins, our new Church Secretary had also been great at ensuring no one missed out with her regular updates on the worship times and how to join them. I too have learnt how to join in virtual meetings using Zoom and have managed to see the faces of a few of us. You should all speak to Clare on how to use Zoom to join in and chat with others after the Sunday worship if you don't know how. It's great fun.

As well as the virtual worships, so many have come up with various creative things like clapping for the NHS staff and frontline workers to boost their morale while others have been providing them with free food and drinks.

Isn't the 99 year old Captain Tom Moore inspirational? In order to help the NHS, he decided to complete 100 laps of walking up and down his 80feet garden with Zimmer frame two months before his 100th birthday. He was hoping to raise £1000 for the NHS. He had since raised £15million and still counting. (30/04/20-Happy Birthday, 100 today. As his fund closes over £32million has now been raised, Ed).

I was also impressed by the compassionate thousands of people who returned to work at the NHS to help staffing level and the thousands who volunteered to help the vulnerable within days of the government's request for help.

They are all great acts to remind us there is a lot of good and God's light shining in our world despite the ongoing gloom of Covid-19. A good reminder that Jesus Christ had conquered all by his death and resurrection. We are assured of His peace and eternal life. Jesus loves us and will fulfil all his promises to us.

Let us encourage ourselves as we wait for the lockdown to be lifted with Romans 3:38 (NLT) – *'I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.'*

God bless you all. Keep staying safe and well.

Ola Lawal

FAMILY NEWS

In the April edition we printed the poem “Hope”, written and sent to us by our good friend Dorothy Brown. A belated big thank you goes to Dorothy for her efforts.

As always, we thank all those who send us articles each month. All contributions are greatly received and we look forward to items from others in the months ahead.

The Treasurer wishes to thank all those who have paid monies direct into the Church Bank Account or set up Standing Order payments. As mentioned in last month's Newsletter, if you can complete a Gift Aid Declaration then this is of additional benefit to the Church.

We hope you may have been able to remember your favourite Charities at what is a very difficult time for many at the moment.

“Christian Aid Week” (10th -16th May) is going ahead, but will be very different this year, as door to door collections and events are not possible. Help raise vital funds by simply sending your family and friends a personalised message in an e-Envelope. Encourage them to donate and join the fight against poverty and injustices around the world. See their web site(www.christianaid.org.uk) for details on this and events on their Facebook including – Quiz Aid Quiz at 7.30pm on 2nd May, Worship at 1pm on Sunday 10th and daily Prayer and Reflection and fun quizzes throughout the week.

Many others are needing to raise funds.

The BBC are still collecting to raise funds for many causes across the UK following their “Big Night In” (see www.bbc.co.uk/bignightin).

As the London Marathon has been postponed until October this year, many Charities will miss out on much needed funding. Take a look at the web site www.twopointsixchallenge.co.uk to see how you can help raise additional funds at this time and have fun in the process.

There are of course many in need and if we can only help in a small way then this will be greatly appreciated. Follow the example of “Capt. Tom” and his wonderful efforts to support NHS Charities Together.

We pray for fundraisers at this time and thank them for their good works.

Dear all at Christ Church,

Each of us are experiencing different challenges through this lockdown period. Busy or bored, lonely or overwhelmed, these days are demanding on all of us. I am praying for you - for all of our members in their own situations. But above all, I am deeply thankful for Christ Church, thankful for your patience, care and kindness.

Please continue on in faith, and know that even when we feel unable to draw near to God - he is close to us.

Below are a couple of news items, please do read and get in touch.

Love Ruth

Rainbow at church

I've recently put up a new display board at church, I hope you like it! We are having an all-age service on 10 May which will be based around the rainbow in the bible. I have set a quiz for the children to match the symbol to the rainbow colours. The symbols: crown, leaf, cross, star, flames, heart.

May I lay down a challenge to each of the adults too? Can you find a bible verse that depicts the theme of each colour? The themes are: Love, Spirit, Hope, Life, Care, King. Winning entries will be rewarded!

Prayer booklet

I'm hoping to put together a prayer booklet to share with each other. If you have a short prayer (max 150 words), or favourite bible reading, would you email it to me please? It would be a great resource to share. Please send your ideas to revruthm@gmail.com by 17th May.

Services at the moment

We are currently providing services online via our website and YouTube, on paper printed and delivered and via WhatsApp. If you know of someone who is not accessing any of these, please do put them in touch with me or a deacon and we can arrange for them to receive them if they wish.

It is a time of experimentation and an opportunity for creativity. If any of you would like to do a reading or lead some prayers please do let me know. If you would like to record your own on a phone or computer and send it to us that would be great. Or if you live near the church, Clare is happy to meet you in the grounds (and at a safe distance) record you.



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING OVER RECENT WEEKS?

Diana Bensted led the Sunday video service on the 26th April and mentioned the time of “New Beginnings”.

We’ve all adopted new daily routines over recent weeks and many will have been following a regular schedule to their day. Some may still be getting up and going off to work, particularly if they are a Key Worker, but many others are now working from home and have learnt how to “juggle”, whilst trying to carry on their own job but also looking after their youngsters.

Schools may have provided tasks for children to complete at home, many online. Parents have become “teachers”, setting daily timetables, logging onto various web sites for lessons and physical activity (Many have been following Joe Wicks online PE classes).

Vulnerable people are having to live in a new way, some shielding completely for 12 weeks. If you’ve not been able to get out, food supplies may have been ordered “online” (if able to book a slot!) or family, friends or volunteers may be calling and leaving bags of food on your doorstep (remembering social distancing).

As we progress through and come out of these unprecedented times, many things may be different, there will be a “New Normal”.

Interestingly at the start of their lockdown someone mentioned that they were keeping a diary (perhaps you have too), now that will make a good and surprising read in a few years’ time.

What have you been doing over recent weeks?

Having done the spring cleaning, 3 times over, or finished redecorating the bathroom, what’s next. Keep phoning around, ensuring family and friends are all OK and don’t need anything. As the saying goes “Keep Calm and Carry On”. Turn to your Bible whenever necessary.

Whilst we are all watching too much TV, some good, some not so, at least we can catch up on all those programmes we’ve recorded and not got around to viewing yet. If you didn’t see it on the BBC recently, their series called “Secrets of the Museum”, about conservation at the V & A is a good one to watch on the iPlayer. Don’t forget, all you crafty people, Kirstie Allsop’s “Keep Crafting and Carry On” on Channel 4, or “Life Drawing Live” on BBC FOUR (there are no doubt similar programmes on other channels).

There are now many things to watch on the BBC and other channels or YouTube and other social media sites, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram or on Sky or other Pay to View platforms including plays and opera.

Here's a few thoughts – CBeebies, BBC Bitesize, for children's learning, or there's always BBC Food, if you can't get enough of it (learn to cook something, if you can get hold of the ingredients!).

Look at the Scouts (scouts.org.uk) or Girlguiding (girlguiding.org.uk) web sites for many activities for youngsters of all ages.

Go to the Sport England web site (sportengland.org) for ideas to keep active for numerous sports or general fitness.

Have a look at the Royal Academy of Dance site for the “Silver Swans” course or a class for children (royalacademyofdance.org.uk).

Take a Virtual Tour on the London Zoo web site(zsl.org) and watch web cams on the Edinburgh Zoo site(edinburghzoo.org.uk) or find out what's happening “bird” related on the RSPB site(rspb.org.uk).

Remember the National Trust and English Heritage sites for an insight into many lovely places or to find out information on historical places and events. We can at least plan to visit in the months ahead.

You can of course start looking and planning for a future holiday and just “day dream”!

For those who have been able to get out in your gardens have a look, if you haven't already, at the RHS web site for all sorts of ideas and information and details of this years “Virtual” Chelsea Flower Show.

All Thomas the Tank Engine lovers will know of his 75th Anniversary. See a special edition on Milkshake! on Channel 5 at 9.05am. on 2nd May. Friday 8th May is to be a special Bank Holiday to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. Although many events are now cancelled see www.veday75.org or www.britishlegion.org.uk for current news.

Tell us what you've been doing and let us have any more ideas to report in the June Newsletter. Articles to be received by Sunday 17th May, if possible, please.

There is Light at the end of the Tunnel and New Beginnings ahead.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

None of us could have imagined that barely three months into the year 2020, that most of the world will be in lockdown because of Covid-19 virus. One of the ways I have been trying to cope with the lockdown is by reading books and articles that attract my attention.

Loneliness is a hot topic presently due to the lockdown. I am not a fashionista but an article on loneliness in a recent ‘Stylist’ magazine caught my attention. In it, Dr. Becky Spelman a registered psychologist, explained there are four distinct types of loneliness namely, emotional, social, situational and chronic. She explained, ‘Emotional loneliness’ is not circumstantial but, rather, comes from within.

My guess is this lockdown will cause emotional loneliness for many, as we no longer seem to have much control over our movements, social life or on what is available to eat or drink.

I believe the easiest way to counter emotional loneliness is to remind ourselves only our Lord God is the one with full control over everything including our lives, not us. This is why we are told in the bible passage below not to be anxious but for our peace to take our fears and worries to Him in prayer instead. Stay safe and well.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not **be anxious** about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Ola Lawal

As all regular services and meetings are cancelled at present please look at the Church web site(www.christchurchnsfb.org) to read our Monthly Newsletters and for other information and to see a short “Sunday Service” with worship, prayer and a sermon on YouTube.