



Holy Trinity, Hartshill

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PASTORAL LETTER 2
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St Peter's Galley Common.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

We are still the church ... for although our buildings may be closed ... you, the body of Christ are still out there in the community – and we continue to pray for you and thank God for you. We are also committed to staying in touch with you ... as and when we can. Because of the lock down for those without internet access we will now be posting out these pastoral letters with some service/prayer ideas on an ad hoc basis – so PLEASE if you do have internet access we may not know about – let us know and we can add you to our email list. (If you aren't getting weekly emails by now – we obviously don't have an up to date email address for you – please let us know.) Hartshill church magazines will also now only be available by email for the time being too – so apologies for that....please bear with us...we are trying to keep everyone safe.

For those on the internet we will continue to email out a Sunday service to you each week that we are suggesting we do together at 10 am every Sunday (even on a 2nd Sunday – to keep it simple!) If you are off line...please do think of us and join in with your own or the other prayer resources I have sent you....and thank you for the feedback we have received...it is good to still be able to 'worship together' albeit at a distance.

We will NOT even be able to worship together on the Hayes at 6am on Easter day as all public worship has to be suspended. As part of that we will miss the opportunity of worshipping with and fellowship together with other churches - so please do remember our extended church family in our Churches Together group ... and let others know who may have been hoping to join us. On a practical level please also note that our buildings must remain closed at this time and so please do not attempt to enter (even if you have keys) to ensure everyone's safety.

On another practical level we are aware that those who generously and graciously give their offerings to our church by cash on the collection plate are not having the opportunity to do that at the moment. We still have our regular commitments and overheads to pay as churches (insurance, bills, utilities and our most significant outlay our parish share.) With reduced finance from church activities and especially at Galley Common our decimated hall hire income - our resources will be drastically reduced during this lock down period. One idea is that if you do on-line banking and would like to consider setting up a regular (or one off) gift to the church – let me know and I can send you the appropriate banking details. An alternative (low-tech approach) may be to set aside what you would normally give each week and then save it up for when you can give your offering to God when we worship again at church together. And please can I encourage everyone (however you give) to prayerfully respond to the issues of stewardship that we will be facing as a church.

Some ideas for Holy Week

We have thought about lots of things we CAN do as 'church' and there are lots of ideas out there. Services are still being broadcasted on TV and radio and many resources are on-line if you have that facility. One idea from the Diocese for Palm Sunday is the following....

“Do you want to be part of something BIG this weekend? We are encouraging everyone in the diocese, to make a palm cross using any material they like. Write across the horizontal limb 'CHANGING CHURCH' and down the vertical limb whatever you choose. For example: 'UNCHANGING GOD' or 'FAITHFUL GOD' or 'JESUS SAVES'. If you are able, take a 'selfie' of you holding your palm cross. Then post it on your Facebook timeline at exactly 5.00 pm on Palm Sunday to remind everyone that the CHURCH IS ALIVE! You might also like to put your cross in your window where people can see it.”

Another idea so that we can still “journey together” during Holy Week is an echo of the candle lighting we did a couple of weeks ago. I have included (by post) or attached (by email) a reflective way of doing that each day. At 8pm from Palm Sunday to Easter Day – I am inviting you to light a candle in your window each night (ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO! – if not perhaps a lamp or torch or another source of light.) There is a prayer resource to use each evening and it may be a helpful way to signify this most holy of weeks...Jesus' journey to the cross and beyond. If you do this – why not let your neighbours know why (by text or distanced conversations!) and let us mark this most holy week with a symbol of light and life and hope.

As we said last time, being isolated doesn't mean being alone...DO keep praying, phoning and remotely supporting one another wherever possible. We are slowly trying to pair/group people up into 'buddy' groups – where people can intentionally look out for (phone/contact) other specific people. If you would appreciate that kind of support or would like to offer it – let us know....although we have heard some lovely stories of that happening naturally already – you are an amazing church family....such a blessing. And please continue to pray for our wider church community (home communion recipients, baptism families, wedding couples and funeral families) especially as the ever changing rules has meant that hopes are dashed, and for those who are mourning, it is even more restrictive now in how people can say goodbye to their loved ones.

Some other resources for those on line are:

link for Coventry Cathedral service at 9.15am on FB. Need to have an FB account to watch it.

<https://www.facebook.com/coventrycathedral>

Diocesan link for Resources and Ideas including for families with children and young people

http://dioceseofcoventry.org/coronavirus/resources_and_ideas

And for those not online – please find enclosed with this letter some resources especially for you.

And don't forget... love God and your neighbour.... be kind....stay safe and keep others safe... and continue to 'be' church in the community.

With the assurance of our very sincere thoughts and prayers (and we miss you too!)

Heather & *Sharon*