



*Holy Trinity, Hartshill*

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**PASTORAL LETTER 3**

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*St Peter's Galley Common.*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

It has now been almost two months since the UK's 'lockdown' and we know that for some, it's certainly felt like a very long time. We know too that some of you might have so far enjoyed the opportunity to give time to the things you've perhaps always wanted to do, but never had the time before. We do know, however, that this imposed lockdown in these unprecedented times has not been all that easy, and especially for those of you who live alone.

Unfortunately for now, we are asked to remain patient in our waiting during this time in the hope that as the lockdown now begins to ease a little, we might be able to meet together in some way some time in the coming months. What that might look like and how we will do it is yet to be considered and decided (and it is still too soon yet) but we pray that this will indeed come to fruition at the right time, and sooner rather than later.

Being socially isolated is not how any of us were intended to be. God made humankind for relationship with him and with one another, and not for being separated and apart. It is an important part of all our being to be together in relationships, which is life giving, whilst being isolated from one another means our life can be diminished. That's why it's been so important that we've all striven to keep in touch with one another by whatever means we could. Thank you so much to everyone who has made efforts to pray and be in touch with at least one of your brothers and sisters in Christ both in Hartshill and Galley Common. As we said before, the church is the people of God, loving God and loving one another.

We hope that you feel that there has been some sense of mutuality as we have shared our services and seasonal prayer resources during this time especially as many of us are committed to reading them at the same time on given days.

We would like to encourage you to continue to do the same with these enclosed resources for Ascension Day and leading into Pentecost and beyond. When Jesus' disciples experienced these events, those times were also unprecedented, which likely caused trepidation of what their future may hold for them all in a different time from all that they had ever known previously. A future unknown, much like that which we all currently face today.

Let us then be encouraged that whatever the future has in store for each of us, we remain together as one with Christ Jesus at the centre of all that we are and do and as the Letter to the Hebrews says "Let mutual love continue" (chapter 13:1).

## Church Buildings

Our buildings are still most definitely closed at this moment although you may have heard that ministers only are now allowed in to either pray or record/stream services. Sharon and I (in consultation with others) have decided NOT to do this, for the moment at least. This is in part because of a sense of **solidarity** (if you can't be there, we don't want to be there) and **safety** as both Sharon and I are potentially coming into contact with people carrying the virus in the times when we are going out to minister to people outside the safety of our homes. I saw a great quote about this from a religious leader "We do not want to be the ones who cause harm to others" something that Sharon and I both passionately believe in. So, like you, we are taking comfort and solace in the fact that God is everywhere and so we can pray anywhere which we continue to do for you. \*\*Also please note that even with Government hopes, plans and potential 'unlocks' we will also have to abide with the Church of England guidelines and more importantly what is both practical and safe for our own context. So even if you see 'places of worship' being planned to be open on government briefings it will be severely limited, if at all, in our local context on the dates set. Please pray for us as we will, at some point, have to start making those tough decisions.\*\*

## 10 Days of Prayer between Ascension and Pentecost

Another idea, similar to what we did during Holy Week, is to light a candle each night between and including Ascension Day and Pentecost Sunday. (but ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO! – if not perhaps switch on a lamp or torch or another source of light.) With daylight hours being longer we thought we could do it at 9pm. We suggest during this time each evening we could pray the Diocesan prayer 'together.' There is also attached with this an extra document to help you. If online you can also tap into the full resource [https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2019-03/CW%20Daily%20Prayer%20for%20Thy%20Kingdom%20Come\\_0.pdf](https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2019-03/CW%20Daily%20Prayer%20for%20Thy%20Kingdom%20Come_0.pdf)

## Other Resources



Daily Hope is a free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers launched by the Church of England. It has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. 0800 804 8044

Giving Both churches would be 'celebrating' gift days in the next few weeks – Holy Trinity on Trinity Sunday - 7<sup>th</sup> June and St Peter's on 28<sup>th</sup> June. This has traditionally been an opportunity and invitation for people to give an extra financial gift to the church to help with our finances and sometimes for particular projects or expenditures. Please do still consider doing this either by bank transfer or again setting aside something which you can then give when we do meet again. If you would like to do this, or consider changing your regular 'on the plate' giving by bank transfer instead – do let me know and I can pass on the relevant information.

Staying in touch. If you want to be in touch with others to either call someone or get a call from someone else regularly let us know and we will try to pair people up or put you in buddy groups if that would help. We do know, however, that a lot of you are already doing this – great news!

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

*Heather* & Sharon