

St Matthias & St George Parish Church.
A member of “Christ the King” team ministry.
Week commencing 17th May 2020, 6th Sunday of Easter

Jesus Christ is risen, hallelujah: He is risen indeed, hallelujah

Jesus said to his disciples, “....They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” John 14 v 21

Last Sunday, and in a subsequent Government document, we had the Prime Minister’s pronouncements regarding the next phase of restrictions that we’re to follow regarding the Corona virus. These included some sensible relaxations of the lockdown, benefitting both the health and mental welfare of the population, and also benefitting the economy.

In the last edition of Spotlight I wondered what might be in it for us, the Church. Mmm, it turned out that not a lot was there, in fact really nothing at all. I haven’t heard from Rev Barry Jones this week, I suspect he may still be attached to the ceiling! Of course this further highlights the situation in Germany and other countries where limited access is allowed. And where is the reasonable voice of disagreement from the Church’s hierarchy to this continued closure? I certainly haven’t heard any.

Should we just sit back and accept things on the basis that as Christians we shouldn’t get involved in politics? Well Father Glenn has disagreed with this notion on a number of occasions in his sermons, and Bishop Desmond Tutu is reported to have wondered when he heard people say the Bible should be kept separate from politics as to what Bible they were reading, it certainly wasn’t the same copy as his.

I shall be writing to Ms Rachel MacLean MP with a copy to Bishop John asking them to make representation to the Government for a relaxation of some of the lockdown restrictions relating to churches. Needless to say there’ll be those who will say why it can’t be done, there always are, but we know it can, Germany and other countries can show us how. The spiritual health of the nation is a very important component of our regeneration from this awful pestilence. My letter alone will have no effect, it needs others to do likewise, lots of them.

Please don’t forget about all the different art and craft activities available for young people on the church website. Just click on the ‘Sunday Stars – Activities for Easter’ page which now include some on the theme of ‘Jesus the Good Shepherd.’ Remember to take a photo of all finished articles and upload them to the website.

Despite not being able to have services in ‘reality’, the next best thing of course is to have ‘virtual’ services, and one of the blessings of all the modern technology so suddenly available, is to be able to worship along with Glenn on Sunday mornings and with Victoria nightly on our own website. Please see below for details.

*Have you yet tried the free worship phone line called **Daily Hope**? Launched by the Church of England it offer hymns, reflections and prayers. Archbishop Justin said: “With many in our country on lockdown, it’s important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are. The Daily Hope service will allow people to hear hymns, prayers and words that offer comfort and hope, especially in this Easter season’. It’s available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**, why not give it a try, after all it is free! **I have listened to it.** When I got through I chose option 2 and had a good old sing along to lots of well-known hymns, all for free.*

This Sunday Glenn will again be holding Morning Prayer online (10.30 am) whilst Victoria continues to live-stream Compline each evening. (Please see below.)

Fr Glenn Reading - Team Vicar
Tel 01527 894436 or 07964 282278
Curate: Mthr. Victoria Barlow email
victoriabarlow@hotmail.com

We pray for those who are sick: - Philippa, Rosie, Alex, Jean, Margaret, Marion, Alexei, Dora, Margaret, Margaret, Nesta, Hazel, Heather,

Our Website: Be sure to go onto our website www.astwoodbankchurch.org.uk and under ‘on-line resources’ see all the material that Mother Victoria has uploaded to help us through the coming weeks. She also wishes to mention that the services **ARE** live streamed every Sunday at 10.30 on the Church website, (go to Virtual Church) and that she is live-streaming Compline

Carol, Carla, Carole, Tim, Jon & Naomi (Naomi is Paul & Diane Harrison's daughter and Jon their son-in-law), Pastor Robin Baker, Colin, and Steven Taylor.

Foodbanks: New arrangements! It's crucial that we support foodbanks more than ever during this time of considerable anxiety for many. **Please note that our church collection arrangements have changed. Please leave any food or toiletry donations on the Vicarage doorstep. Glenn will then take them to Newstart in Bromsgrove which is still operating for vulnerable families.** You can of course leave them in the box provided in supermarkets if you prefer; these will go to the local Redditch foodbank.

Congratulations to Rev Barry Jones who modestly writes 'A bit of news for those interested, if anyone. I was made a deacon in Lichfield Cathedral on 24 May 1970. 50 years ago. How time flies!' Well we are interested Barry and thank you for your wonderful service over that period especially as Chaplain at the Alex and your many services you've led here, particularly during our very long interregnum.

Astwood Bank Neighbours Scheme: this is a group of people offering support with shopping, prescription collections and simple errands for people on the village. There are correct procedures in place and some vetting of volunteers has taken place. All the volunteers are also under 70. There is also a friendly phone call service that is being offered by the group as well, which is led by a trained psychologist. **Please see details in the flier below.**

Astwood Bank Neighbours Group

An offer of help in response to COVID-19:

If you are **self-isolating** or a **key worker** and need someone

to help you in some way, then we are here to help.

Get in touch if you would like assistance with:

Shopping for groceries (subject to availability in the local shops); Collecting and delivering prescriptions;

A friendly phone call; Running local errands

Please call us 7 days per week from 9am-5pm

07513 015557

astwoodbankneighbours@gmail.com

or via our Facebook group 'Astwood Bank Neighbours'

We are your local neighbours and not a professional body – we will do our best to help you where possible, whilst keeping ourselves safe at the same time.

We will follow current government guidelines regarding hand washing and social distancing and request that you do the same ☺

IF YOU ARE SELF ISOLATING & NEED SOME SUPPORT, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH

We are here to help you!

each night at 9.20 pm, on Facebook. Victoria also states that '**In this way, there ARE services, and we can in a sense all worship together as a dispersed community.**'

Please pray for all patients in hospitals throughout the country suffering from Covid 19; for all NHS staff and Chaplaincy Teams and for Care Home staff and carers in the community. We pray also for the souls of **160 NHS and care-workers** who have died from the disease and for their families and loved ones.

CTiR: Here are this week's prayers sent by **CTiR** – We pray:

- for all NHS staff, care workers, emergency services, cleaners, caterers etc. - for their protection, health, strength, wisdom, perseverance, encouragement and that hope will be kept alive.
- especially for those running hospitals and making day to day decisions in this time of crisis.
- for the adequate provision of personal safety equipment and other necessary resources
- for the protection of funeral directors, and that their role in caring for grieving families will be compassionate, professional and comforting
- for all Christians in the caring profession, for their protection and for opportunities to comfort, show compassion and speak hope in Jesus' name to those who are struggling.

Ascension Day: Ascension Day, this coming Thursday, 21st May, marks the end of the Easter season and occurs ten days before Pentecost. In the New Testament, Jesus met several times with his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection to instruct them on how to carry out his teachings. On the 40th day he took them to the Mount of Olives, where they watched as he ascended to heaven.

'**Thy Kingdom Come**' - May 21st to May 31st, is the period between Ascension and Pentecost. To find out ways that we as a church, or a family group, can join the global prayer initiative for those who don't know Christ, please follow the link below

5 Ways your family and church can be involved in this year's 'Thy Kingdom Come'

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/stories/5-ways-your-church-can-be-involved-years-thy-kingdom-come>

Please give notices for inclusion in next week's edition to **Richard Porteous** by next Thursday on 01527 542620 or at richardporteous@yahoo.co.uk Log onto our website for more information www.astwoodbankchurch.org.uk

