



Dear Friend,

For some 'lockdown' will have eased considerably but for others they will still be feeling the full force of it and will be doing so for some time to come.

It is against this background that we move into resuming services in church. The PCC has been meeting most Thursday evenings during June via Zoom to pray, to discuss the evolving situation and to keep on top of 'normal business.' Yesterday (7<sup>th</sup> July) we met in church to plan together the way forward and to look at the detail of how to enable, particularly, services of Holy Communion which are as safe as possible.

At the time of our meeting we had yet to receive the implications of both suspending and resuming public worship on the school admissions process. We have 16 families who have registered for this in 2020 so this is a significant group of people to consider, especially when we can fit not many more than 30 people in church at a 2 metre social distance.

Last week the Bishop of Birmingham, in his comment to clergy and church wardens, included these words *"We are all considering in detail the guidance for re-opening church buildings and the possibilities for public worship alongside our valued virtual life together. With your local colleagues I am sure you are working out what is practicable while pacing yourselves in anticipation of the second half of a year that will be very different to those we have known."*

Like many churches, we have surprised ourselves by how quickly (and by the hand of the Holy Spirit) we have managed to do so much by 'Zoom' and Conference Call and have managed to continue to worship together yet not in the same room. We do not wish to lose this!

So the plan is that we continue with our 3 weekly services by Zoom and Conference Call plus pre-recorded Rise and Shine just as they are for the time being but, **from SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup> July we add a service of Holy Communion in church at 4.30pm** using the same readings as for the Sunday. In order to keep everyone as safe as possible and to avoid people arriving and there being insufficient room this will be ticketed. We will hold attendees' contact details for the required period of time to enable 'track and trace.' Full details are on the gold insert.

Bishop David also added,

*"The months ahead will also bring new opportunities to have deeper transforming conversations leading to action in some of the major issues facing us in the 2020s, especially Eradicating Racism, Achieving Zero Carbon and Living in Love and Faith."*

We must not forget these important issues whilst facing the pandemic and its aftermath, especially having observed the improvement in air quality brought about by lockdown. As I write this, the rain beats down but I rejoice that my new water butt is close to full!

I can also add that the church bank account is fuller than it has sometimes been! The accounts for 2019 have now been examined and we are delighted to report a surplus on day-day income and expenditure of £13,310: the result of increased use of the Pastoral Centre, steady fund-raising, few unexpected maintenance demands, re-negotiating our telephone contract and changing photocopier supplier and some catch-up on Gift Aid reclaims. However, it should be noted, we offered only a 5% increase in Common Fund payments to CofE Birmingham (£51,750 instead of the £66,685 requested.) Clergy costs and Diocesan support costs are paid from Common Fund. We do need to work to close this gap.

Alongside this we have been notified of a legacy of £60,000 from Eleanor Chapman (former congregant) with the request that it be used for "general maintenance and improvement of the church fabric." The PCC will be deciding how best to use it but better heating and lighting are on our wish list.



Meanwhile, the nearly-Revd **Theresa Morton** was licensed as Assistant Curate by Bishop David on 27<sup>th</sup> June by zoom and is now working with us full-time alongside the second stage of her training.

Her contact details are :

e-mail: [theresa.curate@gmail.com](mailto:theresa.curate@gmail.com)

Phone 07557 472096

Day Off: as she will have to work very closely with Canon Janet for the first few months we are both taking FRIDAY as R &R day.

Her first week was so exhausting that she slept most of her day off!

Unlike many of us in Northfield, Theresa has been very much impacted by the pandemic. Sadly her cousin has died and her sister is still recovering from the virus. In addition four of her former colleagues have died. We hold them all in our prayers. At the moment Theresa is shielding a family member so can't be 'out and about' but she will be handling the 'box office' for our public acts of worship.

At her first PCC meeting we introduced ourselves by way of a favourite book and here is our list should you be in need of more ideas for lockdown reading. To add to the excitement we've made it into a quiz!

Who recommends which book(s)?

Fr David, Theresa Morton, Mark Reynolds, Chris Michael, Roy Pouncett, Canon Janet,  
 Emily Corns, Debbie Keeves, Jennie King, Claire Whitmore, Gerardine Merrick,  
 Ruth Clarke, Hilda Pouncett, Elaine Clements,

	Little Women by Louisa May Allcott
	Calm by Michael Acton Smith (a good coffee table book to dip into when you need to press the reset button!)
	Gold Finger by Ian Fleming No Time to Say Goodbye by Linwood Barclay
	Anne Frank: the Diary of a Young Girl
	The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
	A House for Mr Biswas by V S Naipaul (He creates brilliant word pictures) The Castle by Franz Kafka (a much harder but rewarding read)
	The Shipping News by Annie Proulx
	Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo
	Remarkable Creatures by Tracy Chevalier
	The Gormenghast Trilogy by Mervyn Peake The Lord of the Rings Trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien
	The Plague by Albert Camus, in translation
	Darling Buds of May by H E Bates
	Crime novels by James Patterson and Agatha Christie (she's got all the Agatha Christie's!)
	The Boy, the mole, the fox and the horse by Charlie Mackesy And the book I mentioned in the sermon on 21 <sup>st</sup> June The Good Immigrant by Nikesh Shukla

Finally, we are very grateful for your prayers, your financial support and also the many comments of appreciation of these packs and for all we are doing within our church life. It is very much a team effort between ministers, wardens, PCC members, safeguarding co-ordinator, the Rise & Shine production team, Look-Out group co-ordinators, private-prayer-in-church stewards and many more – the 'two Roys' were in church today cleaning away at a Social Distance!

May God keep us all safe until we can all meet in person again – and party as well as pray!