



Hello Everyone,

Since I last wrote Peter and I have had Covid. We don't recommend it but six weeks on we are feeling much better so long as we have a proper afternoon nap and don't get cold. Like many, we think the Covid restrictions have been lifted too early so we are still wearing face coverings in church and encouraging everyone to take LFT's within the 24 hours prior to attending Sunday services or busy activities in church or the Pastoral Centre. However, you no longer need to book for services except the Sunday School Service.

We are continuing to worship at 9.30am on Sundays and the congregation is growing week by week. There is still space for more but we are introducing a service of Holy Communion at 11.30am on some Sundays. See the yellow sheet which includes all of our Lent activities and services in Holy Week for more details. Hopefully, from Easter Sunday we will be back to singing hymns and the liturgy. We are very grateful to Lawrence Bacon, our organist, for invoicing for only half his agreed rate for all of the past year and longer. Barbara Finch is again co-ordinating the making of Palm Crosses and invites others to join her at Ash Grove (by the Baptist Church) on Monday 4th April from 2.30 – 4.30pm.

We are no longer including the Sunday readings in these packs. They will be available in church, as well as on the church web-site and can be delivered or posted by request. The current set lasts until early April.

The PCC has been thinking about how we can become more inclusive as a church and especially around the communion table. We have discovered that over a decade ago, under Fr Robert, the Bishop gave permission for us to become a parish which administers communion to baptised (but not necessarily confirmed) children. Following preparation with the children, this was implemented at the Junior School Eucharists for a few years. In 2016 Church of Wales agreed that communion can be given to any one who has been baptised. The Church of England isn't quite at this point but Liz Domain, who leads the Parish Mission Support Team in Birmingham, is coming to the next PCC meeting to talk about current developments on Thursday 31st March at 7pm. If you are not on the PCC and would like to attend or find out more about the meeting please contact Canon Janet or Revd Theresa.

Meanwhile, if you are interested in adult confirmation, please let us know as we are gathering a group. When they will be able to meet will be a challenge but we're up for it!

I am delighted to report that the interior porch is very nearly finished and church is less draughty. The upgrade to the sound system should be completed this month and we are expecting the renewal of the lighting system to have started by the end of March. Also, the millstone which was rescued from the River Rea is now residing near the entrance to the Pastoral Centre. An information board about it is on its way.

Barry Gardner is now co-ordinating the Flower Guild and has done a brilliant job at providing silk flower displays in recent months. The church is bare for Lent but we plan to decorate it with silk or fresh flowers for Easter Sunday on the morning of Holy Saturday (16th April.) We are also looking for a small group of people to help with creating 'flower pots' for Mothering Sunday from 10-12 on Saturday 26th March in church. If you could help with either of these please contact the office.



It is great to learn that a few members of church are going into St Laurence Church Infant School to hear readers. The Juniors are also looking for help and their need is particularly desperate as so many have lost confidence due to their erratic schooling over the last two years. If you could help for half an hour or more between 1.30 and 3.15pm any afternoon or want to know more please contact Mrs Lyn Haden lyn.haden@stlrcnj.bham.sch.uk or phone the school office on 0121 464 6499. Every half hour makes a difference! Peter Chapman was a librarian some years ago and he's been helping the Juniors refresh their library. There are currently 20 boxes of books in our garage! The caretaker, Mr Cartwright, is his new best friend.

Many in the congregation have been busy completing their reports for the Annual Meeting. This will be held on Sunday 15th May as part of the 9.30am service. At it we will elect church wardens (both are willing to stand again) and at least 3 vacancies on the PCC as well as 2 on Deanery Synod.

You may have noticed that the recent storms have taken their toll on the church flag. This has now been removed and a new one ordered – and we've had an offer from a local resident to help pay for it. We plan to have it in full sail on Easter Sunday and pray that we won't need to have it at half mast before then.



Steve Clements and his colleagues Martin Lane and Stuart Briscoe from ALSTOM UK Ltd have been doing some volunteering days in the Pastoral Centre including mending chairs, replacing lighting, rubbing down the paintwork on the outside window ledges and creating some beautiful planters. A lot of dust has also been removed from the old stage lighting but that may be down to a different set of good fairies!



If your workplace can offer us some volunteering days as

part of their Corporate Social Responsibility we'd be delighted. Contact Lorraine in the office.

I have recently turned 64 and Lorraine made me this beautiful cake in the shape of a flower pot. Peter is a couple of years older than me and was diagnosed with heart failure shortly before the first lockdown. Over 2 years on he has just had his first review and medication is working well. However, it has made us think seriously about retirement and especially housing. We have just put down £100 on a house 5 miles to the NE of Newcastle city centre. It won't be built until the end of the year at the earliest so we aren't rushing off just yet but will probably be moving sometime between May and October 2023. It isn't great timing as Revd Theresa's curacy will probably finish between July and December 2023 and it is only in exceptional circumstances that a curate can become the Rector. However, by giving early notice of this we have the chance to work together to get things into good order and be on top of all the ongoing changes to enable as smooth a period of vacancy as possible and to attract a good range of candidates as Rector.



We will be very sorry to leave Northfield and especially all at St Laurence Church but how this is all working out does seem to have "the hand of God" about it. In the meanwhile, we won't be packing our bags as there are lots of exciting things coming up – see the Social and Fundraising Diary for starters. I'm already busy making a Nativity Set out of Pom-Poms!

*Every blessing,
Canon Janet*

5th March 2022