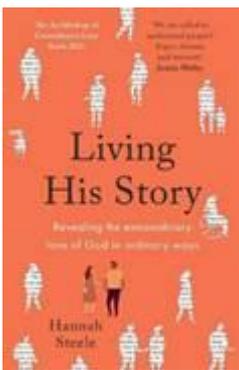


Dear all

I wonder if we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. There is a sense of buoyancy, of hope, that I have not seen around for a while. The roll out of the vaccine, and the cautious timetable set out by government are hinting that things might be able to get back to some sort of normal. The PCC has taken some time to discuss how we might return to public church services in light of this.

This is the very cautious decision we have arrived at, provided that there are no new restrictions announced. The dispensation for suspension ends on Passion Sunday, 21st March. We were hoping to start public services in church by Palm Sunday, in time for Holy Week and Easter. This is one week earlier, but it seemed appropriate to aim to open on that day, 21st. The option of suspension may be extended, but we feel that the significantly falling infection rate, and the number of our congregation who have been vaccinated, will allow us to open as safely as we are able (I repeat what I have said before – there is no zero-risk scenario!).

We have heard nothing officially from the CofE or the diocese yet, but are assuming that we will be expected to re-open under the same risk assessment and practices that we produced earlier. I will update if we hear anything different.



Our third session of the **Lent Course** continues to be as challenging.

Early in the chapter, Hannah Steele refers to the story of the healing of the demoniac, and how the man is told to return to his people, and tell them how much the Lord has done for him. He was not told to follow Jesus, and learn from him. When he returned to his family and friends, he would not have all the answers. All he would know was his little part of the story, his own experience. We too should not expect to be able to answer every question that others might put to us – it's OK not to know, but just to tell what has happened to us. Neither are we expected to know all that the bible says about everything!

Hannah suggests we think a bit about our story – not to have it as a glib script to rattle off, but rather to have confidence that we know what to say if someone says “why are you a Christian?”. She then had a series of headings – that we should be prepared, accessible (using normal language, not ‘church-ese’!), authentic (true to ourselves – honest, but not perfect), bold (we have Good News), relevant, and respectful (listening to the other, and allowing that they might be right and we wrong about something!). Above all, it should be a story lived, and lived in the open – but not shoved into people’s faces! Certainly not smug, or ‘holier-than-thou’!

A reminder that the Lent Course will take place on Zoom, Thursdays 2.30-3.30ish pm. The Zoom details are: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1MnI0bjJZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

Service details for this coming Sunday, Lent 3.

Readings – Exodus 20: 1-17; 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25; Psalm 19; John 2: 13-22.

Hymns: We love the place, O God; Inspired by love and anger.

Evensong: Readings Exodus 5: 1 - 6: 1; Philippians 3: 4b-14; Psalm 11. Music tbc.

Today's musical offerings (apologies for adverts – it's how they are able to make content free!):

Firstly, the Psalm for this Sunday, Anglican chant.

[Psalm 19: The Heaven declare the glory of God - YouTube](#)

And, for total contrast...

[Psalm 19 \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

The Sons of Korah version (in 2 parts).

[Sons of Korah psalm 19a - YouTube](#)

[psalm 19b - YouTube](#)

Or the original 3000 year-old melody, rediscovered.

[The Original 3000 Year Old Melody of the Psalm 19 - Revealed? - YouTube](#)

The poet Malcolm Guite has provided a poem for each Psalm, reflecting on its meaning for him. Here is his reflection on Psalm 19.

[The Heavens Declare the Glory: my response to psalm 19 | Malcolm Guite \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Anthems recommended for this Sunday include:

The heavens are telling by Haydn (revisited – I know I have posted this before!)

[F.J. Haydn - "The heavens are telling" <The Creation> Oratorio / Christopher Hogwood - YouTube](#)

If ye love me by Thomas Tallis (a slow, but amazingly resonant version!)

[If ye love me \(Thomas Tallis\) – The Gesualdo Six - YouTube](#)

Jesus and the traders by Kodaly

[Jesus and the Traders | Zoltan Kodály \[NDSU Concert Choir\] - YouTube](#)

Finally, from Jesus Christ, Superstar by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice

[The Temple - YouTube](#)



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark