

Dear all,

Firstly, an apology. It totally escaped my mind that I had not done a letter for last week until Sunday morning, when it was too late to prepare for the service.

This weekend – or rather Monday – are going to be momentous for this country. ‘Freedom Day’ they are calling it. This is happening in the face of dramatically rising numbers of cases, and 1,200 scientists from around the world warning us that it is a dangerous course.

The CofE released guidelines yesterday, essentially saying that all restrictions CAN be off – but emphasising that full risk assessments must be done, and sensible practices complied with. We will need to determine what can and can’t be done here – what is appropriate, and what is the most loving thing. The guidelines state that *Within the Church we believe that everyone is known and loved individually by God and that as many members within one body we are called to be responsible to and for one another, respecting the more vulnerable whose suffering is our suffering (1 Cor 12:12-27). The move to step 4 means we are being asked to take even more personal responsibility around coronavirus than when we were compelled to adhere to Government restrictions.* The passage reminds us that we are all part of one body, the body of Christ, and that *if one member suffers, all suffer together with it...*

We need to ensure that all are made to feel welcome, and safe – especially those who are immune-compromised. This means that, out of love, we may have to make choices contrary to what we would ideally want. It is crucial that we do not go the way that we have seen so much recently, of playing the blame-game, and scapegoating one another. Paul has faced a comparable situation earlier (1 Cor 8:1-13) regarding meat offered to idols. He concludes by telling them to *take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak...* and makes the personal commitment that *if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.*

Watch this space!

Next Sunday, 25th July, is our Patronal Festival – the Feast of St James. We will be having Holy Communion at the normal time, followed (God & good weather permitting) with refreshments in the Church Garden. This to be followed at 12.00 noon with a picnic (please bring your own), and ending in a Songs of Praise, probably about 1.30ish. If you want a favourite hymn sung, please let me know which one, and also, preferably, why you like it so much.

This Sunday we will be thinking about the diocesan initiative ‘Resourcing Sustainable Church’ – something I have mentioned before. It is very significant for the future of the church in the diocese. I will be preaching on the subject, and will have copies of the sermon available afterwards, as well as being available online. Please do take note.

We have had problems recently with broadcasting the service live – for some reason, my computer doesn’t seem to want to link up to my phone as a wi-fi hotspot. If it fails again, we will post videos on Facebook as soon as possible afterwards.

The readings for the service are Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; and Mark 6:30-34, 53-56. The Psalm is Psalm 23.

[King's College Cambridge Psalm 23 The Lord's My Shepherd \(Chant: Goss\) - YouTube](#)

[The Lord is My Shepherd \(Psalm 23\) \[Goodall\] — Choir of Wells Cathedral - YouTube](#)

A very contemporary Hebrew version: [MIQEDEM - Psalm 23 \(Live in Studio\) כ"ג תהילים - YouTube](#)

Hymns chosen for Sunday are [Immortal love for ever full - YouTube](#) and [To God Be The Glory \(Royal Albert Hall, London\) - YouTube](#) (we'll just be having one or two fewer instruments!).

The anthem is one I have never come across before, but it is a stunning one. [Thomas Tallis - All the People that on Earth - YouTube](#). Tallis was a great survivor, managing, as a Roman Catholic to not only survive, but to thrive under the English Reformation. This is a classic of his Protestant output – being in English, scriptural, and (relatively) plain (often one word/syllable per note).

Other anthems recommended for Sunday include:

[Litany To The Holy Spirit : Southwark Cathedral Boys Choir - YouTube](#) by Peter Hurford

[I am with you always - John Rutter, Cambridge Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra - YouTube](#)

[Ubi Caritas - Maurice Duruflé performed by Octarium - YouTube](#)

In a recent blogpost ([Home - Nick Fawcett \(devotional and reflective writer\)](#)), Nick Fawcett offers this prayer:

Here's a prayer I wrote while out on a late evening walk last night. It will again feature in my forthcoming book, *Still, Still with Thee*.

You keep in perfect peace those whose mind is focused upon you, because they put their trust in you.
(Isaiah 26:3)

Peace of the setting sun be yours.
Peace of the caressing breeze be yours.
Peace of the rippling wave be yours.
Peace of the serenading blackbird be yours.
Peace of the star-filled night be yours.
Peace of the tranquil stream be yours.
Peace of the restful meadow be yours.
Peace of the gentle dove be yours.
Peace of the serene pond be yours.
Peace of the falling snow be yours.
Peace of the turning leaves be yours.
Peace of the shimmering sea be yours.
Peace of the morning dew be yours.
Peace of the swaying flower be yours.
Peace of the mountain view be yours.
Peace of the refreshing sleep be yours.
Peace of the Holy Spirit be yours.
Peace of the risen Christ be yours.
Peace of our Father in heaven be yours.
Peace,
perfect peace,
be with you,
today,
tomorrow
and every day.
Amen.

Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark

