

Dear all

It's good to be writing again with another of my now much more infrequent letters.

We are entering into a period of further uncertainty, with COVID levels rising again. New measures are being put in place which, it is hoped, will stem the second wave (if the first wave ever went!). The exact details of these measures change with confusing regularity, and we remain uncertain quite how they will impact our church life.

At the moment, we continue much as we are, being very careful to observe all possible precautions. The infamous, and rather confusing 'rule of 6' does not yet apply to church services. However, it does apply to our gathering after the service. What that means is that we cannot gather in a great huddle and chat after the service.

The 'rule of 6' essentially means that no more than 6 (unless they are of the same household/bubble) can meet together socially, and they must observe the physical distancing. This remains as 2m or 1m+ (e.g. with mask). There can be more than 1 group of 6 in an area, if that area can cope with the numbers. Each group of 6 must themselves be physically distanced from other groups, and must not interact with other groups. Clergy are partially exempt in that it is part of their job to greet and say farewell, and to chat with congregation, but I suspect we are not allowed to move from 6 to 6!

Meanwhile, I believe that the church is called to have a 3-fold role to play – nationally, locally, and as individuals. In no particular order of importance, we are called to be prophetic, hopeful, and caring. Prophetic in that we should be speaking truth to power and to ignorance – that we are made in the image of a God who is a God of justice, mercy and love, for all of His creation, especially the weak and the marginalised. Hopeful in that we have a message that is Good News for all of humanity – a hope that the valley of the shadow is not forever, not all that is and will be. Caring in that we put our money where our mouth is – caring by word, or by deed. Who knows – it might be catching!

We have a couple of important events coming up at the beginning of October.

Harvest Festival

We will be celebrating our Harvest Festival, in as far as we are able, on Sunday 4th October. We will be supporting the Tearfund initiative Bin Twinning, which aims to donate towards initiatives in the developing world for rubbish disposal and recycling.

2 billion people round the world don't have their rubbish collected. By donating £45 to twin our bins, we help fund community projects that prevent disease, protect the environment and create jobs. We hope to twin all 4 of the church bins. When we twin, we'll have a certificate to put on our bins – showing a photo of the rubbish collection and recycling enterprise that we have twinned with overseas.

Friday Knights are taking part in a sponsored litter-pick round Deeping St James during September to help raise money for Bin Twinning.

You can find out more information at www.bintwinning.org You are also welcome to support this for your own bin.

Any surplus funds will be given to the Deepings' Foodbank.

We will not be having the same collection of produce as usual. We will not be collecting fresh produce. Tins and packets can be given for Foodbank, but please no pasta! They have a pasta mountain at the moment! There will be no auction of produce after the service.

Annual Meeting

Our postponed Annual Church Meeting will now take place on Sunday 11th October, at 11.00am, immediately after the main service. The Annual Report will be available soon, and I hope to see as many as possible who can make it for the meeting. As the meeting will follow on from the service, we might be able to stream the meeting on Facebook. However, we will not be able to provide an interactive link.

We are looking to appoint new PCC members, and Deanery Synod members. Anyone feeling called to this, or who wants to know more, please have a word with Mark.

There will need to be an Extraordinary Church Meeting before the Annual Parochial Meeting, and Annual Church Meeting to agree to extend the Churchwarden's tenure beyond 6 years.

Please note that the 'Stronger Together' collection for clothing, blankets etc. for the homeless in Peterborough has been suspended due to the virus. Please do not deliver donations to the church until further notice – we have nowhere to take them.

I have mentioned Nick Fawcett's work before, and that he is running a series of discounts for books he has published. Apologies for the late notice, but there are still 2 more days! This is from his latest post:

Here are two more extracts from *The Animal Lover's Daily Prayer Book*, which you can buy this week, until 27 September, at a 10 per cent discount, using the code ANIMAL10. Just type the code into the relevant box at the KM checkout between the dates given.



Speak, Lord,
speak your word,
for I'm listening –
all ears.

Amen.



What can I do, Lord?
Where can I turn?
Trouble has struck,
and there's no one to help.
You alone are my strength and support.
Be there to see me through.
Amen.



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark