

Dear Friends

This week's pastoral letter is intended to share some news with you about different things that are happening and some things that are not happening too.

Sundays

As you know the Prime Minister has announced that the end of lockdown is delayed. Therefore, we shall continue meeting on Sunday mornings in a covid safe way, without congregational song except when we go out of doors but welcoming the contribution of our singers who enable us to sing in our hearts. We shall usually livestream the service and look forward to the 25th of July, when we may be able to meet without Covid restrictions.

This also means that we cannot easily share communion on Sunday mornings. The deacons have thought about this quite carefully and I'm grateful for the suggestions we have received which might help us find a way. In the meanwhile, communion will be part of the Sunday evening Zoom service on the 3rd Sunday in July.

For similar reasons we shall have to postpone our first church meeting and I now anticipate this will be on Sunday 8th August.

Different people will return to church in person at different times and that's a good thing, for some people this will still be a while and I look forward to seeing you when the time is good for you.

A new window

If you are passing New North Road, you may see a new picture in the window of the Café, with thanks to Barbara for the idea, Marion for the original art and Martin and his firm for the design. The window says, 'Sharing God's mission- in the care of creation' and the picture is beautiful. It could put you in mind of the hymn 'How Great thou art' which speaks of wandering through forest glades. Over the coming months we shall face the challenge of how we seek to address the climate emergency as a church. We may consider becoming members of one of the Christian environmental networks and the ways a greater environmental awareness may shape some of the choices we make together. Thank you to everyone who has already made suggestions about this.

Prayer

In seeking to think about how we can add strength to our community and spirituality through prayer I have been exploring ways of doing this that resonates with our desire

to be a town centre church. If you visit great cathedrals and town centre churches there is always somewhere quiet you can pray.

I am very grateful to Anne Credland who has suggested an idea which she outlines below. I think it's a great opportunity and look forward to these Monday afternoons when the church will be open, to drop in for prayer, in other words you can come and go.

'In July we will be able to think more positively about the things we can do in the future. For most of us after staying home for so long our confidence has diminished and it seems a huge step to venture out into the world again.

We will all need time to rebuild our lives and live as we used to as well as continuing to build up our church. We need to lay firm foundations for this and one of the best ways is in prayer seeking God's help and guidance.

For this reason, we are planning to open the sanctuary on Monday afternoons from 3:00 to 6:00pm as a drop in for people to come to pray in quiet contemplation. It may be that prayer triplets or groups of friends would like to meet as well, that would be welcome.

Initially this is being arranged for the first and last Monday in each month. Later it may be that others would like to open other Mondays.' The start date will be Monday 26th of July'.

I commend this to you.

Your friend and pastor

Mark