



The Link

June 2020



Churches 4 All

Whimble - Talaton
Clyst Hydon - Clyst St Lawrence

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The Pastoral Care Team has grown! Its members have been trained and are available to lend a listening ear, offer practical help and support, visit those who are housebound, ill, in hospital or bereaved, and to offer prayer.

**If you or someone you know would like a visit
from a member of the Pastoral Care Team,
please contact any of the following:**

Revd Ruth Heeley (758708)
Margaret Burrough (822257) or
Lorraine and Malcolm Crozier (822953) or
Rebecca Hardy (822405) or
David Rastall (822486)

If you have any articles that you think others might find helpful during these anxious times please let me have them. Hopefully it won't be too long before normal service is resumed!!

Dianne

Articles to Dianne.goodwin@btinternet.com

From the Registers

In May we commended John Aiton from Whimble into the hands of Almighty God.

WHAT'S ON

Normally, at this time of the year we are looking forward to all the events which usually take place such as the Annual Church Fete, our Songs of Praise service and the weekly Morning Coffee sessions. These have been put on hold for the time being. Although the government have said that churches could open from July there is a lot of work to be done to see how this can be done in a safe way. The Church of England says that it does not expect to resume normal services before the end of the year, although the approach would vary on a regional basis.

The Rt Rev Sarah Mullally, who's leading the Church's plans for reopening, says questions remain about various aspects of worship including sharing hymn books, distancing within the church buildings and Holy Communion.

In the meantime our curate Marc has been working very hard, helped by his family, to produce a weekly service that can be found on YouTube. He has also produced a weekly session called Wednesday Wonderings which have included topics such as The Da Vinci Code and God's response to prayer.

Our Church of England churches are locked, including for private prayer, in an effort to help limit the transmission of the coronavirus COVID-19.

There will be no church weddings until further notice; funerals will not take place inside church buildings and the only baptisms will be emergency baptisms in a hospital or home.

It follows the announcement by the Prime Minister of wide-ranging restrictions as part of a national and international effort to help limit the spread of the disease.

“These are unprecedented times,” the bishops write.

“We are all having to get used to being the Church differently.

“It is not easy. However, our belonging to Christ has never been measured by the number of people in church on a Sunday morning (though we long for the day when this way of knowing Christ can return) but by the service we offer to others.

“Therefore, and despite these very harrowing restrictions, please do all that you can to minister to your people safely, especially to the sick, the vulnerable and the poor.”

FAITH FLOURISHING IN LOCKDOWN

Is the nation turning to God in prayer? Well, not quite yet, but research from Tearfund has shown that prayer is more common than many would think, with just under half (44%) of UK adults saying that they pray and one in twenty (5%) saying they have started praying during the lockdown. Daily data from Google for 95 countries corroborates this increased interest, as searches for prayer are at their highest levels ever recorded.

In addition, a quarter (24%) of UK adults say they have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown, 5% of whom say they have never been to church before. Some churches are seeing double, sometimes triple, the number of people watching their Sunday meetings online that would normally attend in person.

Tearfund released this research (which received a huge amount of media coverage) on the same day that The UK Blessing was unleashed over the country. That was completely coincidental but it felt an extraordinary day when matters of prayer and faith were talked about across both traditional and social media channels.

I am struck by Augustine's prayer, 'You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you'. Could it be that as the noise and busyness of normal life have subsided, restlessness has started to surface and, faced with new fears and uncertainties, hearts have started to turn to God?

I find this research encouraging because it is my experience that prayer and practical action go hand in hand in responding to any crisis. We have seen a wonderful outpouring of practical action in our society and I believe we need an accompanying movement of prayer.

The research tells us that people are inevitably and understandably praying most for family and friends, and Tearfund is calling people to broaden that out to pray for both our global and local neighbours, and for our government as it makes key decisions around how to stimulate the economy. It is crucial that we use this opportunity to reboot our economy along lines that are climate resilient and socially fair.

So let this research give you a new courage to offer to pray for people you know who are struggling, or invite them to watch an online service. And let's also turn our prayers and actions beyond our immediate horizons to remember that we are part of a global community.

Dr. Ruth Valerio is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund.

Tearfund has recently launched a resource called The World Rebooted to help church leaders and their congregations explore how they can help positively .

Don't forget you can find our online services on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=churches4all

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=from+the+curate%27s+study

A LIFE WORTH LIVING

A Life Worth Living – sequel to the Alpha Course – starts on Zoom on Monday evenings each fortnight

The follow up course for Alpha is called A Life Worth Living. It has not got fancy film videos (yet!) but it does have a good book by Nicky Gumbel. We aim to meet on Zoom on Monday each fortnight from May 25th. The first session may be more social as we make a start together.



We suggest getting the latest edition (2018) of the book (A Life Worth Living) which is only 3.99 on Amazon kindle or £7.87 including p&p from Eden.co.uk You can dip in and out as you wish! We'll just cover one chapter every fortnight so not too much to read and the Zoom discussion lasts only 40 mins. The book has 9 chapters and is based on a study of the book of Philippians in the Bible.

The first week (Monday 25th May) may cover just the Introduction to the book so we can also have time to meet each other. That will also give you time to order the book and read Chapter 1 for the following session! Don't worry if you can't make every session – just join us when you can!

If you want to get a Zoom invite please email Phil Dominy dominypr@hotmail.com Any questions, just ask!

PRAYER DIARY

June 2020

Prayer for the month

Covid19 continues to dominate our lives and, although the peak may have passed, we will need to be vigilant and adapt our lives, with some of those changes being permanent.

Pray that testing, a vaccine and PPE will now all gather pace and that countries will be more prepared should there be further spikes this coming winter and in respect of further virus pandemics.

1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray that the whole world will now work together and develop a vaccine for the coronavirus and also to find ways to reduce the possibility of new viruses in the future.
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today, pray for those whom you love.
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for those who have suffered increased domestic abuse during the lockdown and for the people who try to help them.
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for teachers and pupils as some degree of relaxation reaches the classroom and that education can soon be successfully resumed.
5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On World Environment Day, pray for our planet. Lockdowns around the world have led to less pollution so pray that authorities will take note for the future.
6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give thanks to our NHS and carer staff after their amazing work in dealing with the pandemic.
Sun 7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for some form of economic recovery in the near future, after our economy descended into severe recession, affecting people in very negative ways, especially the vulnerable.
8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray that the UK will establish a permanent system of testing for Covid-19 and other viruses and that policies can be tailored accordingly.
9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will all have come across toxic or difficult people in our lives and many can be almost impossible to reason with so pray that we can find the patience and tolerance to be better at this in the future.
10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today, think about a mistake you made in your life and then ask yourself what lessons you learned from it.

11th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for children at a time when they will have been worried and concerned and when they need reassurance more than ever.
12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for residents and staff of care homes at a very difficult time.
13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for the truth to prevail and that peddlers of distorted facts would be uncovered with people being able to recognise when they are not being told what is correct.
Sun 14th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When things look bleak, as they do at the moment, try to put your faith in whatever you believe in or in your own abilities to resolve things.
15th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for families that have been separated because of travel restrictions.
16th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for refugees around the world as they try to survive in very difficult circumstances.
17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have all been under increased stress and anxiety these last months so, more than ever, it's a time for prayer that people will work together and help each other.
18th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for university students at a time of great uncertainty and for successful resumption of degree courses in September.
19th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray today for our neighbours, especially those who might need help with aspects of their lives.
20th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray that we can recognise the warmth and love of God in these dark times .

Sun 21st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for fathers everywhere to celebrate the valuable contribution they make to the lives of their children
22nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for refuse collectors who have had increased workloads these last months and that they would receive the appreciation they deserve.
23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for our sanity during difficult times and that we would have the resolve to carry on. And pray for those who are mentally vulnerable who will be finding things even more difficult.
24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray that PPE can continue to be acquired for frontline staff.
25th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for the people of Syria and Yemen as conflicts continue and that solutions can be found.
26th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for football and other sports as clarity for the way forward is still being sought and the threat of clubs going out of business is still very much a concern.
27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give thanks to delivery drivers who have performed a vital function during the lockdown.
Sun 28th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for those people who have been laid off from their jobs and may not recover them because of businesses going under during the crisis.
29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today, tell God about something you are sorry for; we all have these things in our memories and it's a good idea to get be open and honest with yourself.
30th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for those who would have represented their country at the Olympics and Paralympics as they suffer disappointment and have to keep themselves in shape for next year.
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SIGNS OF HOPE

Dear friends,

Something beautiful has happened in the last few weeks -- I think we've all seen it.



In the face of a vicious pandemic, when it would have been so easy for fear and selfishness to rule, we've found our shared humanity again.

But there's a danger that as we beat this pandemic, the tenderness of this moment will fade too. We can already see it in the divisions being redrawn for political gain and the conspiracy theories going viral.

The spirit of compassion, wisdom, and unity that millions of us have felt amidst this horrific crisis is a fragile thing that needs to be defended.

That's why, with the help of Avaazers across the globe, we've curated some of the most beautiful stories of this shining new humanity. It's to remind us of who we really are when it matters most, and that we really are capable of meeting the biggest threats we face -- together.

In Bangalore, India, one little restaurant called Desi Masala is feeding more than 10,000 vulnerable people every day -- and they aren't the only ones! Thousands of volunteers, everywhere, are helping to cook fresh, healthy food for frontline workers and those in need.

After decades of fighting each other, rival gangs around Cape Town have agreed an unprecedented truce and are now working together to bring food to struggling households in their communities. "What we're seeing happen here is literally a miracle," said Pastor Andie Steele-Smith.

Hassan, is a former Syrian refugee who has joined over 750,000 (!) UK citizens who signed up to help the national health service. He's now working as a cleaner at his local hospital, and says, "London has been my home since leaving Syria, and the least I can do is make sure my neighbours and the amazing NHS staff are safe and sound."

Thanks to Aubrey Curry for sending this.

SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER

In any other year, unexpected freedom from end-of-term lectures and exam timetables would surely be cause for celebration. But this year, many students' terms have ended with a tremendous anti-climax.

Spare a thought for those who, whether they're sixth-formers or prospective grads, will have no summer term, no celebration party, no opportunity to hug their friends goodbye. Many had to leave their student houses and head home suddenly, now figuring out how to complete their degrees from a distance. It wasn't meant to be like this. And there's nothing they can do about it, except sit in the disappointment.

The temptation is to run from or deny this reality: be it watching all of Tiger King in a weekend or bulldozing our emotions with 'God's in charge' mantras. But the gospel shows us and the students we know a better way.

Rather than a God who shows us how to escape disappointment, Christians believe in a God who shows up in our disappointment.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews captures this fact, in pointing out that Jesus is not 'unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses' (4:15). Jesus dealt with disappointment too – we see it in his response to his townsfolk's lack of faith, his closest friends falling asleep when he needed them most, and even in his anguished cry to his father from the cross: 'Why have you forsaken me?'

If disappointment was an experience for Jesus, we can be sure it will be an experience for those who follow him. Recognising there is no quick fix, on-demand, life-hack solution might be a way to help the students we love to come to terms with their disappointment.

To do so might even be the first step towards a more profound truth: Christians do not believe that we face disappointment alone. He is Immanuel – God with us. And as we discover that reality, our disappointment might not only be validated, it might be transformed.

Knowing Jesus and trusting him is a hope that ‘does not disappoint us’ (Romans 5:5). Because in God’s story, disappointment – whether a missed goodbye or a saviour on a cross – is only momentary. The truth is that he’s putting this not-as-it-should-be world back together, as his kingdom comes, day by day. This is the hope of the gospel. And that kind of hope is good news for all of us, including students.

Tim Yearsley
Programme Leader – Emerging Generations.

This article was published by LICC

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Talaton Community Shop, Talaton, EX5 2RQ 01404 822084
www.talatonparishcouncil.co.uk