

22/10/2020

Letter to our church & community

Dear friends, sisters and brothers,

This is not where we would like to be but it is where we are. Autumn has arrived and we are continuing to build up our life as God's family, worshipping together and meeting where possible in person and also online. Reaching out in love and action into our community. Thank you EVERYONE.

Let's blossom where we have been planted, even though we may not like where we have been planted. Eugene Peterson summarises Jeremiah 27:7 like this:

The only place you have to be human, is where you are right now.

The only opportunity you will ever have to live by faith, is the circumstance you are provided with this very day:

This house you live in, this family you find yourself in.

This job you have been given, the weather conditions that prevail at this moment.

Jeremiah was speaking to those in exile where everything they knew and loved had been taken from them.

Please make sure you are looking after yourselves spiritually, physically and emotionally. Don't hesitate to phone any of the staff team if you would like to talk anything through, pray or work out where we can help connect you to God's family and to spiritual resources which can strengthen you in your situation.

Our worship continues in both churches, with the welcome addition of regular services of Holy Communion in both churches and also Zoom Happy Half Hours fortnightly 6-6.30pm *all welcome* (contact the parish office for details. 01924 259966)

PLEASE JOIN in WORSHIP safely in our CHURCHES on SUNDAYS

10am or 11am or 12noon in St Helen's

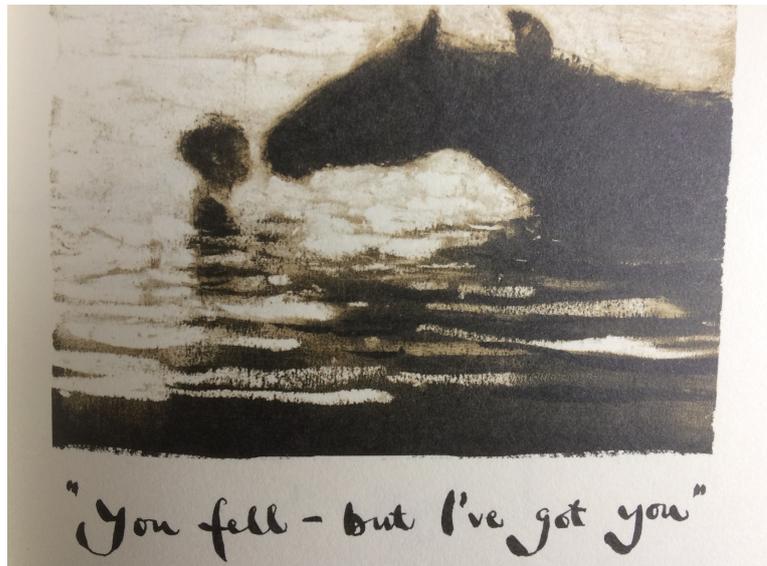
Sandal Magna Parish facebook page live stream every Sunday at 11am.

11am at St Pauls.

Mavis Easter has said she is really enjoying

"Daily Hope from Lambeth Palace"

If you phone this number for free 0800 804 8044 you can choose an option an enjoy some precious thoughts to encourage you in your faith.





We're all in this together

Love is....

Family is

Together we are....

Family @ Home on Zoom!!!!

Through October and November we are making small additions that we can sustain.

For those unable to get to church especially the 10.45 family, PLEASE do join in our NEW ZOOM **"HAPPY HALF HOUR"** every 2nd & 4th Sunday eve at 6.00pm.

Dates: October 25th, November 8th & 22nd, December 6th.

The thing we are missing is seeing each other and just sharing a bit about how we are, what needs prayer and a sense of families and friends together. We had a lovely time on the 11th beginning with a big **"HELLO!"** and it was so lovely to see each other. Jack at 1 was the youngest and Richard B was the oldest, and everyone in-between!! We shared a short scripture verse for us to hold onto. Then went into smaller groups to share, chat, be & pray together. Then back for a final prayer of blessing from different households.

It will not last longer than half an hour.

The shape of the time can vary and we would love creative thoughts, ideas and questions from you. **If you would like to tap in please e-mail me at sallymartinpcf@gmail.com** and I will send you the zoom number and password.

We have missed you all **SO** much and pray this will be a small but special way of re connecting as church family. Sally and Rupert xx

PS Advance notice: **December 20th City Wide Carol Service on line.**

**THIS YEAR, WE'RE INVITING YOU TO JOIN 24-7 PRAYER'S
FIRST EVER ONLINE CONFERENCE.**

In the midst of a global pandemic, our world has been shaken. Governments, communities and individuals are faced with difficult decisions and ongoing uncertainty.

But we believe that we are called for such a time as this - to intentionally gather as the people of God, in our homes and our churches, to seek the Lord, anticipating that He will move powerfully among us to renew our vision, restore our souls and compel us to pursue Jesus where we are.

Join us for **The Gathering Online: 30 – 31 OCTOBER 2020**

Some of us feel called to join this prayer opportunity on 30/31st October and would love you to join too. Please sign yourself on using the church or organisation represented as Sandal Magna Parish and then your details.

Please email sallymartinpcf@gmail.com if you have signed up and we can support one another before and after.

I have looked at the programme. It starts at 7.30pm on Friday eve and you can do as much or as little as you want to through Saturday and Sunday morning.



If you are looking for inspiration please do consider downloading the Lectio 365 prayer app. Many of us are being blessed everyday by this teaching and would recommend it to you all. 24-7 Prayer have produced this as well as the Prayer Course which some of you are doing in your groups.

APCM Report by Rupert

We had a good meeting on the 14th October, and were able to elect four Church wardens, **Craig Orr, Andrea North, Brian Pratt and Ed Brindley**, a strong team to take us forward. We also elected a new member of the PCC, **Anne Francos**, who is a volunteer in the Parish Office team.

Here is my talk which I was also able to broadcast on our facebook page.

We are living in a time of uncertainty. Many are struggling with work, home life, schooling, or in their personal walk with God. There are so many changes day by day that many are feeling 'transition fatigue'. We as a church are also having to work on many different fronts, and to deal with the loss of fellowship, singing, areas of ministry, and our social and relational life. We are also discovering new ways of being church in our worship and our community.

When everything is in flux, one image in the Bible comes to mind: the image of rock. Rock is dependable, rock resists erosion, rock protects us, and gives us a firm foundation. As a rock climber I have enjoyed exploring the crags of Yorkshire, and the Peak District. The rock I climb on is a particularly durable sandstone called Gritstone, which is sculpted by the elements into beautiful shapes that inspired the sculpture of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Gritstone was so durable it was used to make millstones for grinding. The stone is very grippy and you can be sure that if you place your feet carefully on this rock you will not slip. It's that kind of rock which is described in the Psalms, rock which reflects the enduring strength and stability of God:

*Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken. Psalm 62:5-6*

We can depend upon God at this time of shaking, in our community, our society and our world. This rock of our salvation we can trust for this season now and into eternity.

Rock is also an image used by Jesus in a parable at the end of the Sermon on the Mount to represent the solid foundation of his words, his teaching:
Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. Matthew 7:24-25

We can depend upon the living word of Jesus Christ to help us resist the flood of distressing events and negative news, the encroaching sadness at the losses we are facing, because on that rock the building of our lives, our hopes, our family, our faith will survive and flourish.

Rock is also seen as the source of something refreshing and nourishing. Moses strikes the rock in the desert and water flows out of it to quench the people's thirst. This is a wonderful metaphor for finding refreshment during the desert time we are experiencing. Paul takes this incident and connects it to Christ. *They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4*

During this time when we are distanced from family and friends, unable to meet for fellowship, we too can be filled and refreshed by the living water of the Spirit of Jesus.

How do we avail ourselves of this reassuring rock-like presence of God, and the refreshing water of the Spirit? We can trust God, read the nourishing Word of God, and go on being filled with the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit of Jesus so much more at this time when our human spirits may be flagging. As many of our social rhythms have been lost we need to establish daily and weekly spiritual rhythms. As we have lost some of our former worship patterns, we need to establish new rhythms of worship as well as the basic disciplines of discipleship, reading scripture, prayer and pastoral care.

We need to keep in touch with everyone we can by every means, except touch. We need to foster our relationships as best we can, to carry on making those phone calls, writing those letters and cards, calling by and chatting over the garden fence. Whatever we can do safely and legally let's carry on doing that.

The church, I want to emphasise, is still alive and active in our community. I want to commend the work of The Spring. Well done Cath! You and your teams of Staff and volunteers have done an immense work of kindness to help people through. The Spring is a wonderful source of refreshment, a much needed place of welcome.

I want to commend all those who have got our worship going and are working hard to sustain the variety of services in both churches. It's not easy to create services that are worshipful without our being able to join in with singing. We owe a lot to our musicians and preachers who have enhanced our worship. Thank you also to those who keep our buildings Covid-safe.

I want to commend those who keep the finances, the fabric and the administration of our church going. The planned giving has not dropped during this time, so thank you all and well done.

I want to commend those who work with young people and with older people to help keep their faith alive.

I want to thank those who continue to give generously in time, gifts and finance to sustain our mission which is more needed than ever, that with Jesus *the lost are found, the found grow and the lonely are enfolded.* Amen.

We took a moment to remember those we know who died last year, whose names are written in the Book of Life:

Phil Robinson, Nigel Smith, John Cutt, Martin Porritt, Annie Milner, Barry Lord, Betty Whitaker, Pat Clay, Derek Coombes, Joan Witts, Pat Barraclough.

Every year I thank a few individuals for their unique contribution to the life of our church and parish:

Richard Hughes for his beautiful and sensitive leading of worship in our contemporary services.

John Arnold for his conscientious and creative playing of the organ and looking after the Choir.

Bishop **Tom Butler** who preaches and celebrates Holy Communion at St Paul's regularly and is much loved and appreciated there.

Ed Brindley who is a key member of the Youth Leaders' Team and a worship leader. He also heads up the 20's & 30's group.

Joyce Bloomfield who serves at the Spring and is a member of our Staff team. She is a gifted preacher, evangelist and maker of disciples through our Fresh Start and Recovery Groups.

Cath Moxham who has worked tirelessly to get The Spring back on track and open to all, and led her teams with enthusiasm, love and conviction.

It's good to focus on these few folk as a way of saying thank you to everyone who serves our Lord Jesus Christ in the wide variety of ministries, including the vital ministry of prayer.

Rupert

Hampers of Hope

We are working with the school to continue to collect food that families will need and will be collecting for a small food bank which will be held in school through Mr Carter.

Please do continue to bring food on Sundays to either churches or drop things on the table near the back door of the vicarage during the week. Thank you so much.

Marmalade for African Connection

Rita Guard's lovely marmalade is still for sale in aid of African Connection. Available on Sundays in St Helen's.

With our love, appreciation and prayers for you all
Rupert & Sally xx

Parish Office: 01924 259966. Please leave a message if no-one is in, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Parish Administrator: **Ruth McCallum**, ruth.sandalmagna@gmail.com

Assistant Administrator: **Denise Chivers**, denise.sandalmagna@gmail.com
(Funerals and the Tree of Life enquiries)

Volunteer Administrator: **Anne Francos**, annef.sandalmagna@gmail.com
(Wedding enquiries.)

Let's believe that with God's Holy Spirit and by encouraging one another we can "Love our neighbour as ourselves" and blossom where we are planted this season.

