

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #7

29th April 2020

Dear Church Family,

I do hope that this letter finds you well and that you are surviving the current lockdown.

As you know, the Church of England counts the size of a church by its physical attendance at church services. By this means, we no longer exist! But our church hasn't shrunk during lockdown, it's actually grown. Through YouTube and Facebook, our online service last Sunday had over 180 views. Church has always been people, not buildings, and our purpose hasn't changed – to worship God, to make disciples and to reach out to the world around us with God's love. It's just the methods that have to adapt, and we've discovered in recent weeks that we are more adaptable, more open to change than we ever thought! It's lovely to see more views of our online services, new names 'liking' our Facebook page, and people who we haven't seen for a while join us.

Recording the service in advance was positive in that it enabled more of the church family to join us, and meant that others could contribute to the service. This week it's the turn of the Horgan family and will hopefully include some music. For those of you who aren't very confident using the Internet, here's how to find the service:

1. Type All Saints Cottenham into the search bar at the top of your Internet screen
2. Click on the search result – All Saints Cottenham. This brings you to the 'Home' page with a picture of the church in the middle
3. On the left hand side of the screen, click 'Sunday Services Online'
4. Half way down the page, click on the underlined purple title of Sunday's service – this will take you to YouTube
5. Click on the arrow in the middle of the screen and enjoy!

For the very few of you who aren't on the Internet, I hope that you're able to listen to a service on the radio or watch Songs of Praise on the television. The Church of England has just launched 'Daily Hope' – a free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers. The number is 0800 804 8044 and is for those who want to engage with church but who do not have the Internet. I do hope that you are also feeling 'in touch' through these weekly letters and regular telephone calls from the church family. If you want to ring me for a chat, please do. I'd love to hear from you.

Services and events happening this week are:

Fri 1st May at 2pm – Weekly Bible Study on 1 Corinthians led by Frances Horgan using Zoom. If you've downloaded Zoom and want to join, please let me know and I'll send you the link.

Sun 3rd May – online service available on Facebook and YouTube from early on Sunday morning. Watch at whatever time is convenient to you.

Sun 3rd May at 11am – coffee and chat after the service using Zoom. It was lovely to have over 30 join us last week including Paul and Dianne from Australia.

Sun 3rd May at 6pm – Evening Prayer led this week by Sarah Rossouw. If you want to join, please let Cheryl Lowe (cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk) know, and she'll send you a link to the service.

For your prayers, please could you remember the following:

- Those who are bereaved, particularly Janet Hudson
- Those unwell at this time, particularly Jean, John and Pat
- All those working in the NHS and care homes during the pandemic
- Parents juggling working from home with home-schooling and caring for their children, particularly those with very little ones
- Those caring for elderly relatives
- All of us missing contact with our families and friends, particular those living alone
- The government as they decide how to move forward in lifting restrictions.

If you are using the 'Prayer and Worship from Home' resource and saying Morning or Evening Prayer, you might like to know the Lectionary (set) readings for the week ahead:

Sat 2 nd May	Exodus 29: 1-9; Luke 2: 21-40
Sun 3 rd May	Acts 2: 42 to end; John 10: 1-10
Mon 4 th May	Exodus 32: 1-14; Luke 2: 41-end
Tues 5 th May	Exodus 32: 15-34; Luke 3: 1-14
Wed 6 th May	Exodus 33; Luke 3: 15-22
Thurs 7 th May	Exodus 34: 1-10, 27-end; Luke 4: 1-13
Fri 8 th May	Exodus 35: 20 to 36: 7; Luke 4: 14-30

It's interesting that the daily gospel readings for just after Easter take us to the start of Luke's gospel and the birth of Jesus. In today's (Wed's) reading, Mary comes to stay with Elizabeth. Pregnant in later years, Elizabeth had asked, 'Why has this happened to me?' and we can imagine endless talking about the strange ways of God that had led these two women into unfamiliar territory – one long-shamed for being childless, the other facing shame and worse when her pregnancy became known. They gave each other the gift of encouragement. Mary needed Elizabeth's wisdom about how to endure for the long haul of commitment to the God who was entrusting his Son to be born and raised by her in tempestuous times. We too need each other's encouragement so *do* continue to keep in touch with each another, offering prayer and support as needed. If you need assistance with anything, don't be afraid to ask.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes, Lynda.

Rector of All Saints Cottenham with Rampton

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