

Saturday 28 March 2020

Dear friends

As we approach a second Sunday where sadly we are not permitted to meet in our church buildings I was struck by something I heard on the radio, 'Church is not something you go to but something you belong to'. We may not be able to meet together at this time but we can still be church, keeping in touch with each other, looking out for one another and serving Christ by serving others. Even if we are stuck at home there are a number of things that we can do. These include

Worship

You will find on the Church of England website many resources to help you in this time of the coronavirus.

Study

For those in self-isolation or staying at home to try to help slow down the spread of the virus this may be an ideal time to spend a bit more time reading your Bible. Maybe consider reading through one of the gospels, a chapter or two a day, or tackle one of the Old Testament books that you are less familiar with. I always find it helpful to make a few notes when I do this and to ask the simple question 'what does this mean for my life in the 21st century?'. If you do decide to take this opportunity I should love to hear how you get on.

Pray

I had a text from a friend yesterday to say that her young daughter had had the virus and had been hospitalised, but thankfully just for a short time. I heard on the news that the virus is now in Syria and they fear that if it reaches the refugee camps it will spread rapidly and cause many deaths. They likened it to a 'tsunami' which will sweep through the camps. This is a scary disease on so many levels. We need to pray for people near and far, for those who will be affected, for those working to help, for governments, for scientists looking for a vaccine. The Church of England website has many prayer suggestions. Here is just one.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Give

One way we have been giving at Burghclere is by donating food to the local foodbank. The collection point was the church. As the church is now closed I want to encourage you to continue to give but in cash rather than in kind. You can find details of how to do this via the following link <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

You might also like to consider giving to one of the charities working with the Syrian refugees mentioned above. World Vision is one of these
<https://www.worldvision.org.uk/news-and-views/blog/2020-blogs/march/coronavirus-plans-unique-humanitarian-response/>

Yours in Christ
Anthony

Rev'd Anthony Smith

Priest in charge of Burghclere with Newtown and Ecchinswell with Sydmonton