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From the Vicarage

Friday 8 January

And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Mark 1.11

A beautiful line from scripture isn't it? And a line that is meant not just for Jesus but for all of us who do our best to follow him. That seems a difficult thing though, as I look out of my study window on a cold and grey day, amongst all of the uncertainty. Uncertainty characterised our life experience for most of 2020. That unpredictability, having to constantly adjust and react to an ever-changing situation, to abide by measures to keep people safe, to make sacrifices again, can be draining.

This morning, both myself and the PCC's met to consider how we should react to the latest national lockdown. The overriding concern was the safety of all of us and our communities at this time. And so we have passed a resolution to suspend worship in both of our buildings for the whole of January. We recognise this is disappointing news, especially given the christmas services that we and our wider communities were able to enjoy. But we are committed to resuming worship in our buildings when it is considered safe, and will risk assess and review the position prior to February.

In amongst all of our current uncertainty we must hold on to the hope of Advent, the hope and the joy of Christmas, the hope, joy and revelation of Epiphany, and now the hope, joy, revelation and invitation of the Baptism of Christ. I was struck again this christmas with that line from John's Gospel, '*the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.*' Perhaps this January we need to remember that in the darkness of the pandemic that is our calling, to be lights in the darkness. If we can do that then God will surely be able to say '*with you I am well pleased.*' And when it all gets too much remember that you are loved by God, a God who holds all of eternity in his hand, a God who called you and knows you, a God who is pleased with you and a God of light that shines in the darkness, a light that even when we struggle to see it absolutely no darkness can quench.

Sunday 10 December

Online Worship will be via Zoom @ 10.00 a.m using this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72337650077?pwd=bCtnbU4rWGdmRW45UUEvSms2UmRRUT09> (Meeting ID: 723 3765 0077 Password: 0Wg7Kw)

Please stay or join for virtual coffee after the service.

The Church of England's online service @ 9.00 a.m is a celebration of Plough Sunday. Led by Rev Lindsay Yates, the service comes from Octagon Parish in Chichester Diocese, and features a sermon from Rev Will Adam. The link is here: https://youtu.be/l7i8gvOM_Ck

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 is at 8.10 a.m. *Our Common Home*. Martin Palmer, CEO of FaithInvest, explores how faith can partner with conservation movements in protecting what Pope Francis calls "Our Common Home". The link is here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000r30w>

Worship and Prayer by telephone



A reminder of Daily Hope which is a telephone service offering music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. Sunday worship is available each week from 9.00 a.m. The line is free and available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**.

Compline

We continue to meet for Compline (Night Prayer) each friday. All are welcome to join us. Use this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73672170367?pwd=QnVKWTRpR3g5VWk0WUtCQ3hhNFRkQT09> (Meeting ID: 736 7217 0367 Password: 7YC29t)

A Prayer for our time

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.

May God bless you and keep you as we seek to follow Christ together.

Shaun