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From the Vicarage

Friday 12 February

‘Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain’

Mark 9.2

This Sunday we hear of the Transfiguration.

A carpenter and three fishermen, going up a mountain in a desert. It’s almost the start of a joke, isn’t it! But this was no joke, no Sunday afternoon stroll. We don’t have too many mountains around us here, but just imagine the effort it must have cost them all to get up there. How many times may they have stopped and asked “Why am I doing this?” Because every step they took was a step further away from what they knew, and what they were comfortable with. But Peter, James and John had made the decision to follow Jesus, and they stuck with it, no matter where he led them. Then, when they got to the top, of course, they were rewarded with a wonderful view and, shortly after, a wonderful vision.

Most Christians can identify moments in life when God has felt particularly close and treasure those moments. Maybe some even try to replicate those moments – arrange their lives around them so that they can experience again and again the closeness of God. Perhaps they revisit the place, or play the same music, or whatever it may be, hoping that God will once more draw them close. And yet, what those disciples discovered was that these moments of closeness to God, are simply moments on a journey – and not always a pleasurable journey. Jesus led Peter, James and John back down the mountain and turned his face to Jerusalem. The experience stayed with those disciples, but they left the mountain behind. And in doing so, they discovered, as we must also discover, that closeness to God is not a once in a lifetime opportunity, like the transfiguration. It is available for all time, if only we would choose to experience it.

The PCC's have again met to consider the return to our buildings. Together we have decided that the position will be reviewed after the Prime Ministers anticipated announcement on 22 February and the scheduled return of schools on 8 March. With the vaccination program making good progress and the number of infections falling we continue to pray for the safety of our communities, and a safe return to our buildings, when possible.

Sunday 12 February

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

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72337650077?pwd=bCtnbU4rWGdmRW45UUvSms2UmRRUT09> (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. Rev Helen Shannon leads a service from Church@Five to mark the Sunday next before Lent.

The link is here: <https://youtu.be/30ihbrxVRNE>

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 is at 8.10 a.m. The service 'Facets of Love' is led by Baptist Minister the Revd Richard Littledale and reflects on the words of John 'This is love'. The link is here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s84h>

Ash Wednesday and Lent

To mark Ash Wednesday on 17 February and the beginning of Lent, we shall have a service online @ 8.00 p.m. The link to join is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81582449448?pwd=OG44RmpiYld6dnU2TVNUMUtQZGR0Zz09> (Meeting ID: 815 8244 9448 Passcode: 642497)

I have a small amount of prepared ash if you would like some. Please let me know and I will arrange to deliver it this weekend.

There is a Lent group which will follow 'The Prayer Course' meeting at 2.00 p.m from Tuesday 23 February. If you would like to join this group and haven't already let me know please do contact me.

A further resource that you may like to use this Lent is the Church of Englands '**#LiveLent Reflections**' which are available in printed format, a downloadable app, or by email. A link is here:

<https://churchofengland.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=50eac70851c7245ce1ce00c45&id=78db0d8305&e=cf4b1d96e3>

Each day's reflection will also be paired with a hymn and available on the Daily Hope phone line (details below).

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**.

Tuesday Morning Prayer

We meet each Tuesday @ 9.00 a.m for Morning Prayer and to pray particularly for those in need of prayer at this time. Use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82310905515?pwd=eGszaTUvdW5jcWlNLTU5YXFBT0trQT09> (Meeting ID: 823 1090 5515 Passcode: 237323)

Virtual Wednesday Coffee morning

The virtual coffee mornings are now being held weekly on Wednesday between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m. Please do come along if you can. You don't have to stay for the whole hour, but many people are continuing to value the opportunity to see and speak with each other, even if virtually at this time. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82945268510?pwd=R0U4VFI4Z1J6Ri9xNWlET0dZem5ZQT09>

(Meeting ID: 829 4526 8510 Passcode: 855870)

Friday Compline

We meet for Compline (Night Prayer) each Friday @ 8.00 p.m. All are welcome to join us. Use this link:

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

Archbishops call to prayer during the pandemic

We are invited to set aside time every evening to pray throughout February, particularly at 6pm each day.

The following are links to some resources which you may find helpful:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/23011> and
<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/22353>

Finance

These have been challenging times in all sorts of ways, but particularly in terms of our money. Can I say thank you to everyone for the thought and sacrifice that they have made in terms of their giving throughout the pandemic. In that regard I also received a letter from Bishop Alan this week which is attached.

A Prayer

From the rising of the sun until its setting , thanks be to God.

For the heavens above and all the earth, thanks be to God.

In every day and through the night, thanks be to God.

For all these things, thanks be to God.

Amen.

May God bless you and keep you as we seek to follow and journey with Jesus this Lent.

Shaun