

Parish News in a Pandemic

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Facebook page *Little & Great Churches At Home*

<https://www.facebook.com/Little-Great-Churches-at-Home-110993963898881/>

Dear friends

I am thinking how much I miss being in church, miss hugging my children and grandchildren and seeing everyone. Like me, you must have felt many mixed emotions over these past weeks; concern, fear, a sense of being at sea and unsettled, love and blessed moments of hope. All these emotions can besiege us and sometimes overwhelm us.



We are living through a traumatic time which has felt like a rollercoaster. In fact the term 'Coronacoaster' has been coined to describe how we can feel buoyant one day and very low the next. We need to be kind to ourselves and acknowledge the difficulties and that normal ways of interacting with each other are for a season halted. It's okay not to be okay.

These are challenging times for us as individuals, society and Church. Remember the Bible was created from such experiences. It tells of people who endured great traumas yet rose to rebuild a new way and still sing praises to God, who never lets us go. The early disciples had to cling hard to God and their community of faith in order to move through each crisis. For us, Holy Week and Easter was celebrated very differently to usual and we have had to lean into the bare bones of our faith. We remembered those early followers, locked away in fear and despair, with no idea life was stirring in the darkness of the tomb. The empty tomb speaks of the power of love over fear, and that love never dies. So when we are in times of unwanted change or trauma, we can draw on the bible which encourages us to 'fear not'.

We love our churches! We miss each other and our buildings. But I'm so pleased that most of us have still been able to worship together regularly in the virtual world. However, those who have no access to the internet may be feeling very isolated and even feeling the church has stopped altogether! At home, you may find praying the psalms helpful, or reading a gospel from start to finish. There, you will find the deep springs of living water that refresh and restore us and keep us connected to the God who sustains us.

The Church is still very much open though the buildings may be closed. Local churches are offering mutual support, sharing resources and information for all parishes. Prayer and praise never stops. Our ministry team have embraced the challenge of sustaining collective worship and prayer. Worship is Live on Facebook Sundays 10.30am, Wednesday Compline 8pm and prayers and links to other services.

Details can be provided by our church administrator Alison. If you miss joining us for any services the videos stay online so you can catch up at any time that suits you. I can recommend Compline in bed to guarantee a good nights sleep!

Another challenge is the considerable lost income while our churches are closed to keep everyone safe. This means the absence of a Collection plate, no visitors and the necessary cancellation of weddings, church funerals and church premises hire. Thank you to those who normally give to our churches via the collection plate who have generously already converted to standing orders in recognition of this difficulty. We really appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity at this time. For details of how to donate please contact Alison.

My prayer for us all is that we will keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible during these exceptionally difficult times; that we will remember that God is our anchor and safe ground; and that we will come through this strengthened in faith and in our sense of both village and church community.

Until we can open church doors again, please join me in the worship online, and watch our websites and the Church Facebook pages. If you are not online Alison can post sermons and other materials out to you on a regular basis on request.

Stay safe.

“Stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high,” Luke 24:49

God bless you all and those you love
Rev Sandra