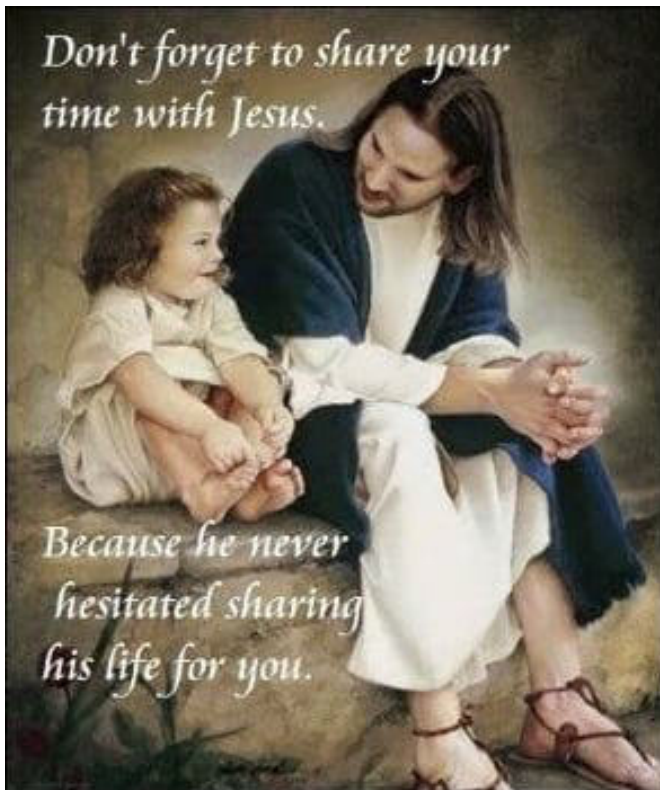


***St Mary and St Cuthbert's Church  
Chester-le-Street***

# **AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER**



## LOCKDOWN CONTINUES TO LOOSEN

Dear friends

Through July we started to have three Sunday services each week, with no singing and highly restricted numbers because of social distancing. It has been good for some of us to be able to meet and pray together.

We continue to also have a live 10.00 am service on our church Facebook page each Sunday.



We had a couple of small baptism services in July and in August we have two church weddings.

Following our PCC meeting on July 21, we agreed to try to open our **Parish Centre in September**. We will try to hire out “Cuthbert” (the largest hall) to groups and open the café with tables in “Mary” (the second largest hall). **The café can only open if we have two volunteers each day.**

Café volunteers would be waiters/waitresses – taking orders from tables (from a very restricted menu), collecting food and drinks, taking cash and then clearing and cleaning tables. You would need to be available 10.00 am – 1.00 pm, and if we can get 12 people, we should be able to cover the days if they can do a session most weeks. If you want to volunteer give your name and day(s) of the week you can help to Jan in the office (0191 3883295 or email [jrowland@clsparish1.plus.com](mailto:jrowland@clsparish1.plus.com) ). Please pray with me that God will stir people to serve in this way. If you are over 70, you can volunteer – but you will need to speak to me and sign a form.

If we are able to go ahead, we will be looking to also arrange a rota of “chaplains”, who will have a key role of welcoming people in the foyer and explaining the new procedures.

Cont. on page 3

Cont. from page 2

On Sunday **September 13** we will say goodbye to **Rev Jon**, before his retirement. We are going to have a **thanksgiving collection** for him. Any cash donations should be put in a clearly marked envelope on a collection plate in church or through the Parish Centre letterbox by Tuesday September 8

We do not have any immediate plans for restarting Thursday morning services, or the Area Services or Pelton Fell.

*Rev David Tully, Rector*

## **FROM OUR BISHOPS PAUL & SARAH**

**Dear friends,**

As a different rhythm emerges over the August holiday period, we wanted to say thank you. Thank you for all the work that has been done by clergy, churchwardens and PCCs in the whole process of deciding when to re-open our buildings, both worship and community ones, and then the 'how' work being done to enable this to happen safely. Thank you too for the work on developing 'hybrid' services for the coming months, continuing to care for those who cannot yet physically return to worship in our church buildings. We appreciate that this has been and remains a demanding time.

The majority of feedback we have received has affirmed the image of 'exile' as the one which has resonated most commonly with people during the time of this pandemic. It is the idea of being God's people living in a strange land, away from home and the Temple, compelled to re-imagine living, worshipping and praying in fresh ways, that has spoken most to people.

Cont. on page 4

Cont. from page 3

Our slow, careful return to the use of church buildings for prayer and worship has not ended our own experience of exile. Many continue to shield for their own protection, while some are naturally fearful of mixing with a number of people, even friends and fellow worshippers, and so are not yet ready to return. The feel and practice of our worship is strange and so it does not feel that we are fully back. We remain exiled from the cup, singing, close greeting, sharing refreshments and even friends. The journey ahead still looks long and slow. Patience is definitely required alongside carefully looking out for the needs and well-being of others. Yet thankfully we are learning to sing the Lord's song afresh in this strange land.

As we learn anew both the value of our church buildings and the limitations, they impose on us, at our core we have been reminded that it is the Lord who matters. It is the Lord God who is to be honoured in and through the use of our church buildings, including our church halls. We have been reminded starkly that the church is the people, not the building. It is as God's people that we are being built together. We have this enormous privilege of together being the holy priesthood who through our lives offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. For it is our service in and for the world that is equally our act of worship.

We are deeply mindful of children and young people who will need extra mentoring and support to help them make up for their missed schooling; of the expected increased unemployment and the potential demand for job clubs, welfare advice and the practical support of foodbanks. We know that there will be a need for sensitive pastoral support given the mental health needs that are emerging from bereavement, long-term sickness, and the lack of social engagement. So, we should expect to continue to be out serving others in these coming months even as we return to our buildings.

**+ Paul and + Sarah**

## **DAILY HOPE**

**DAILY HOPE, the free 24-hour worship phonenumber** launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby on 26 April. By the end of June, it had received more than 170,000 calls, totalling more than two million minutes of listen time.

One of their callers, Catherine, in her early fifties, tells her story. She is an Occupational Therapist in Chesterfield who lives alone, having been widowed 13 years ago.

With the “horrendous” experience of contracting the coronavirus herself, compounded by the shock of learning of the tragic deaths of several of her patients to COVID-19 on her return to work, she shares: “I was feeling that I needed some support” and “then I heard about DAILY HOPE.”

Calling DAILYHOPE soon “became a daily habit” for Catherine, explaining, it “strengthened me and prepared me for the day ahead” and would “focus my thoughts, even in the worst of my COVID fatigue on something eternal and greater.”

DAILY HOPE continues to be available 24 hours a day on: 0800 804 8044. Callers hear a greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from options including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19. The service continues to be updated with new material.

## **WORD for TODAY BIBLE READING NOTES**

These are available in church covering August, September and October. Please feel free to pick one up on a Sunday or Tuesday/Thursday 1pm – 3pm. They are free – but you can send UCB a donation or put it to one side for the future

## FROM THE JULY REGISTERS

### Funerals

- 2 Mary Marina McGourgh (85)  
3 Angela Joy Graham (70)  
17 Allan Greenwell (90)  
24 Jean Curry (93)

### Baptisms

- 19 Alina Beeby  
Ada Jean Westwood

## QUIET CORNER – John Hopper, Lay Reader

I suppose like many people of an older generation, I don't react very well to new ways of doing things, but I do admire those that can adapt more easily than myself.

Recently, I received a letter from Durham County Library Service telling me how I was to return the Library book I had been unable to return during “lockdown”. Not that it was out of date mind you, as I had learned a new skill during the lockdown period of continually renewing it on line.

Within a few days of the re-opening of the Library, the book was returned. I was so disappointed however, that I was not allowed to enter the premises to browse and choose another book. All that could be done I was informed by a very helpful Library Assistant on door duty, was to order future borrowings online. I would then be informed by email as to the date it would be delivered to the Library for collection. I could cope with that, but to be denied the opportunity to browse amongst the shelves and “smell” the books, seemed at the time, a step too far.

Cont. on page 7

Cont. from page 6

As you may have guessed by now, I don't read books online. I like to handle the "real deal" as they say. Not to be able to leisurely browse among the shelves and even to chat with other browsers, is no fun at all to me, but I can well understand why these new ways of doing things are necessary at present.

So far, I have not tried this brave new world of working, but it has been interesting to quietly ponder some verses from the Bible on new ways of working. For instance, from the Old Testament: *"I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it? I have put roads in deserts, streams in thirsty lands"* (Isaiah 43.19). *"I am creating new heavens and a new earth; everything of the past will be forgotten."* (Isaiah 65.17). Even the New Testament gets in on the act. Consider: *"Then the One sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new!"* (Rev.21.5). Most telling of all was recalling a verse from John's Gospel: *"But I am giving you a new Command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples."* (John 13.34,35).

I am truly surprised how many references there are in the Bible referring to doing things in new ways. However, what is truly amazing is that all these "new ways" are God inspired, and as they are from Him, then I had better try to mend my ways.

## **CHURCH AND FACEBOOK SERVICES**

There will continue to be a live service on our church Facebook page each Sunday at 10.00 am.– [St Mary and St Cuthbert Parish Church, Chester-le-Street.](#) Either streamed from the service in church or from a clergy house.

Please check this page also for other details with regard to our Church Services at 8.00 am, 10.00 am and 6.00 pm.

There are also video messages posted each week usually on Monday and Thursday.

Cont on page 8

There is usually a daily reflective photograph and prayer topics posted each day on our [St Mary and St Cuthbert Parish Church Congregations and Friends](#) Facebook page.

**Messy Church** is on our church Facebook page on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in the month with **Messy Mini Bytes** usually on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday.

Rev Simon continues to post on his Facebook page Contemplative Morning and Evening Prayer



The 9<sup>th</sup> of August is Mary Sumner Day – when we celebrate the life and work of the woman who founded the Mothers' Union.

Mary Sumner was passionate about transforming the lives of the families living in the parish where she lived; where her husband was Rector. She wanted to help women to support one another in raising their children. She started a group of the parish women and although it was very unusual for a woman at that time to speak in public, her husband encouraged her to speak from her heart. The meeting went so well that she found the courage to speak at other meetings. The meetings grew and included women old and young, rich and poor and as more women heard about the groups, they went on to start groups in their own areas.

As the movement continued to grow, Mary Sumner asked herself what its purpose was and what it should strive for. She reflected *a true home should be a lighthouse shedding its quiet beams far and wide*. Her interest in wider issues of social justice grew and she campaigned, with her members to stop children collecting alcohol from public houses for their families and for the age of marriage for girls to be raised from 12 to 16.

Cont on page 9



Cont from page 8

Despite resistance from members of the establishment, she was not afraid to speak out about difficult issues.

She could not have conceived how the seeds which she planted would grow into a movement 4 million strong today, of members in 83 countries putting their faith into action to nurture healthy relationships in families and communities and to fight for social justice.

### **Collect for Mary Sumner Day**

Faithful and loving God, who called Mary Sumner to strive for the renewal of family life: give us the gift of your Holy Spirit, that through word, prayer and deed your family may be strengthened and your people served; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

### **Mary Sumner's personal prayer**

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Amen

We are delighted that the Mary Sumner Day service will be taking place online (10th) and will be available on both our Facebook channel (<http://www.facebook.com/MothersUnion>) and YouTube.

## **PARISH OFFICE**

The Parish Office is still functioning with Jan Rowland working mostly from home at present. She can be contacted in the normal ways – on the phone 0191 388 3295 or [jrowland@clsparish1.plus.com](mailto:jrowland@clsparish1.plus.com).

## I WENT TO CHURCH

I went to church by booking, I've never done that before,  
I waited in line,  
Spaced outside the door,  
How I wish the weather had been fine.

It didn't quite rain, but a gusty wind blew,  
Sending our clothes all a-flutter,  
Dressed blew up, hair ruffled found,  
Causing us to quietly mutter.

A sad lot we seemed, even though the Rev. beamed,  
Some in masks, our hair straggly long,  
But as soon as we entered, At peace, we were centred,  
Eventually, we'll get spic and span.

We walked in like sheep being dipped and now clean,  
In regular intervals spaced.  
To sit mostly alone, our sins to atone,  
By reading the words on the screen.

No books yet, for us, Covid-19 made us adjust,  
To things we thought never to happen.  
When it's gone, we'll rejoice, And at last find a voice,  
Silent worship was our only option.

But, it's good to be back, At last, real contact,  
Despite all the distances and masks.  
One day it will seem, as strange as a dream,  
But for now, it is all that we ask.

***K.E.Brown © 6.7.20***

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