



Tuesday 24th March

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Following our Prime Minister's statement last night, our lives have become radically different today and we have all now got to adapt the way that we live and the way that we continue as 'Christ's Ambassadors'* in our community.

MARY LANGLEY

It was so sad that because of the restrictions Mary's funeral could not be attended by the many, many friends from her Church family and her Sundial Lodge family.

Her life was remembered and celebrated at the Crematorium this afternoon with her family as she was laid to rest.

We thank God for the incredible witness that both she and Gordon were as Christ's ambassadors to St Matthias for so many years and pray that her family will find peace in the knowledge that she is committed to God's care now.

CHURCH BUILDING

Because Boris Johnson has now instructed that Churches be closed along, with non-essential retail stores, libraries, gyms, play parks and campsites, St Matthias will now be closed for at least 3 weeks – which takes us past Easter. For many of us this is going to be incredibly difficult – a large number will have attended Church on Good Friday and Easter Sunday for as long as they have been Christians – or for some for their whole lives.

But, as has been pointed out by others, it is a timely reminder that the Church that Jesus established at Pentecost is built not of wood, stones, slates and tiles, but of individual people who follow Him. Throughout the last 2 millennia folk have had to worship God in isolation and fear – I am reminded that St John was in isolation on the island of Patmos when he wrote the Book of Revelation!

We need to explore and develop means of meeting 'together' as a family whilst 'apart' in physical space, and we are blessed to have the means to do so.

CHURCH SERVICES

Last Sunday John and I celebrated Holy Communion together and posted the video of it on YouTube (search for St Matthias Torquay) and we hope to be able to do something similar this Sunday with a copy of the Order of Service available to download so you can join with us.

Of course the Church of England and the Diocese of Exeter will be posting a service as well – you have a choice!

Lena Fearnley is looking at making something available for the youngsters using Godly Play.

There are going to be services on the Radio and on Television as well.

MEETINGS

The Standing and Finance Committee held a successful virtual meeting last evening using something called 'ZOOM'. We were able to see each other on our screen and talk to one another as if in the same room. Having found it so useful, we are planning to host the next PCC meeting on Monday on ZOOM – I will email a link out to all members.

The Annual Church Meeting has now been cancelled but we do still need to approve the accounts and have the annual report. We have been told that because we can't hold a meeting all offices and members will remain as they are until such time as we are able to hold a meeting.

HOUSE GROUPS

Can we encourage all of you who are in a House Group or other Church Group to keep in touch with one another regularly. Several groups have created what is called a 'WhatsApp' group – you do need a 'smart' phone, but it is a very simple way for a group of people to be communicating with each other – everyone in the group can see all the comments that are added – our street has just set one up so neighbours can be in touch!

Another idea – you might need someone technical to set it up – is to use ZOOM or HOUSEPARTY.

Norman and Lindsay Doidge are overseeing the housegroups and we hope that if there is anyone who needs support that you will be able to find it in the house group team.

VOLUNTEERS

It is great that a number of you have answered the call and offered your service – Tessa is co-ordinating things and we are in the process of calling people to check up and try to find out who does not have any family or suitable friends to shop for them.

Once this task is completed we can then put volunteers in touch with those who need support.

Thank you.

Rev Nathan was delighted to see those of you who helped him with the packing of groceries on Monday morning at St Cuthbert Mayne – thank you!

NEIGHBOURS

If you are aware of anyone who is NOT able to get emails or use the internet, please do let them know what is happening.



There are so many fantastic resources on line for those who can access them.

One we came across today is Sing In The Storm

(<https://www.singinthestorm.com/>)

A chance to sing with others from your own home!

Rev Nathan Kiyaga reminded me of another text from the Apostle Paul:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. *(2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*

In these difficult times always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you as a follower of Jesus.

Please stay at home and keep an eye on the website or Facebook for updates.

<https://st-matthias-church.org/about-us/covid-19-corona-virus/>

Yours in Christ,

Paul Barton

*'We are Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.' *(2 Corinthians 5:20)*

Here are some useful links:

Torbay Help Hub: <https://www.torbayhelphub.com/>

Health watch Torbay COVID-19 Advice:

<https://healthwatchtorbay.org.uk/information-advice-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Extra Provisions - through www.givingworld.org.uk