

# M St MARY'S CHURCH Newsletter



## Our purpose is to enable

### Hello Everyone,

Since the 23rd march when the 'lockdown' began I am sure many of you, like me, found themselves with some extra time on our hands, time in which you've probably done a fair amount of reflection. This is a common thing to do when we are faced with crisis type situations.

Recently, I received an email from James Bowen, one of our Christmas scratch choir, with a copy of his reflections of the lockdown which he has kindly agreed to share with us. It is a very honest look at his year so far and I hope that although the issues he raises are personal to him they might be an encouragement to us all at this time.

#### Reflections on Psalm 91 during the Coronavirus pandemic

Whilst the present Covid-19 crisis pandemic is principally a medical and public health emergency, it has highlighted crucial issues in contemporary society. For example, the adverse effects of materialism, attitudes towards the elderly and most vulnerable in society, the need for an appropriate work-life balance which allows for family time, an overcrowded transport network and the limitation of the design of homes for modern life.

Indeed, the lockdown restrictions have left us feeling anxious and isolated. Personally speaking, my Mum died on New Year's Day after a long-term illness with cancer. Since then we as a family have been adjusting to life. Several people have referred in conversation to the need for us to establish a "new normal", a term which has recently been applied to how we as a country have to adjust our way of life to live with Covid-19 until if and when a vaccine is developed. People have commented that at least Mum has not had to experience the current situation which we can appreciate. With a suppressed immune system from numerous chemotherapy treatments, she would have been in the vulnerable category. However, we would naturally prefer that she was here with us. We saw first hand the exceptional care which the doctors and nurses, who are now helping those with Covid-19, provided at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and greatly appreciated the support of Saint Mary's Church with the Service of Thanksgiving that celebrated her life. The current restrictions on funerals must be very hard for families who have lost loved ones. Similarly the daily Downing Street press conference reporting the latest death toll and frequent news broadcasts from hospitals can also be traumatic.

Our situation aside, I wondered what the Bible says about pandemics. Perhaps unsurprisingly the Bible does not specifically refer to Covid-19, but rather pestilence which is derived from the Greek word 'loymos' meaning plague, a fatal epidemic disease. In particular, I have been drawn to Psalm 91 and asked myself how does it speak to us during this pandemic? Whilst it is not attributed to an author in the Hebrew text of the psalm, Jewish tradition ascribes it to Moses, with David compiling it in his Book of Psalms. A Greek version of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament attributes it to David.

Interestingly it is also known as the Soldiers' Psalm as it is said that during the First World War some soldiers recited the psalm daily. Recently in the media it has been espoused that the country and the world more generally is engaged in a war against an invisible enemy, but how useful is this really? I am rather uncomfortable about the use of such militaristic rhetoric and the attributing of blame on particular countries, but this is not new. Historically when syphilis which affected Europe in 1495 it was variously referred to in Britain as the French pox, the Neapolitan pox and the Spanish pox. There were outbreaks of the English sweating sickness in 1485, 1502, 1507, 1528 and 1551; and of course the Spanish flu in 1918 with which comparisons are often made. Covid-19 is a truly global challenge.

Of course this psalm is perhaps best known for its first verse: 'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High and abides under the shadow of the Almighty' ('He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty'). Clearly it is highlighting that God provides divine protection and that nothing can overpower him with the shadow being a metaphor for his care, love and protection. These are reassuring words for believers of the Christian faith and in verses two and three the psalm goes on emphasising the need to put trust in the Lord ('My refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I put my trust') and that he will deliver us from the pestilence, words that ring true today as in Biblical times. It suggests that the Lord in whom we trust provides us with a refuge during such times of trouble and his loving kindness, power, and faithfulness. Central to this verse is the theme of trust ('my God, in whom I put my trust'). Questions I find myself asking are how is trust in God different from faith? The knowledge that God is protecting us is reassuring in such an anxious time and yet there remains much pain and suffering? How does God take care of us?

*Look out for Part 2 next week.*

## Regular Services

To join any of our regular Zoom services, click on the links below. If you need a copy of the liturgy for any of the services, please contact the Church Office.

### Sunday Morning 10.30am (Breaking Bread)

These services are alternating between a Breaking Bread service and a Morning Worship service.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85337124930?pwd=NFdMTzRMR2JXbXRoSctVRS9PSkZXdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 3712 4930 Password: 867888

The main reading for this Sunday is: Romans 12.1-8

**Wednesday Morning Prayer 10.00am**—a short informal service lasting about 30 minutes

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943278704?pwd=RytPQ3RmOG5yYlBpUWpoWWkxWGFZEZz09>

Meeting ID: 899 4327 8704 Password: 730701

### Thursday Evening Compline 7.00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78321229825?pwd=R2lUZUJJMDRnTGhINlFPejRLTW5Xdz09>

Meeting ID: 783 2122 9825 Password: 2KrMnH

If you would be willing to read or do the intercessions for our compline services do let Ian Macfarlane know.

You can join any of the above meetings by phone using any of the following numbers and the meeting IDs and passwords above:

0203 481 5237 / 0203 481 5240

0131 460 1196 / 0203 051 2874

## Men's Prayer Hour

Men, you are invited to join a men's prayer hour on Wednesday 17th June at 7.30pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83257768865>

Meeting ID: 832 5776 8865

One tap mobile

+442034815240,,83257768865# United Kingdom

+441314601196,,83257768865# United Kingdom

For more information please contact Justin Frankfort

## Staying in Touch

Our Church Office is not staffed at the moment, but e-mails and phone messages are being picked up regularly:

**Phone:** 01630 653505 **E-mail:** [stmarysmd@btinternet.com](mailto:stmarysmd@btinternet.com)

We will continue to post information to our website and Facebook page:

**Website:** [www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk)

**Facebook:** @StMarysMarketDrayton

**Vicar: Catherine McBride**

**E-mail:** [vicar@stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01630 656943

**If you do not wish to continue to receive these newsletters, please let us know.**

## St Mary's Values

We have started a sermon series exploring the values that we want to cultivate within St Mary's. These values form the important foundation for who we want to be as a church and all the things we might want to do. There will be some Bible study material to accompany the sermon series, which can be used in our homegroups and for private study. If you are not already in one of our homegroups, but would like to join a new discussion group for the duration of the series, as we explore these values and what they mean for St Mary's, then please let Catherine McBride know.

## Raising Awareness about Modern Slavery



If anyone is interested in learning more about modern slavery then please click on the link below to book on to one of the Awareness Raising courses, via Zoom.

Available dates are :

Monday 15th June 7.00pm

Thursday 25th June 1.00pm

<https://modern-slavery-awareness.eventbrite.co.uk>

## Foodbank Items Needed



### Stock Items urgently required

Toilet Rolls	Jam	Rice Pudding
Tinned Fruit	Sponge Puddings / Slab Cake	
Custard	Corned beef	Washing-up Liquid
Fabric Conditioner (small)		Shampoo
Men's Toiletries	Wet Dog & Cat Food	

Donations can be dropped off at the Parish Rooms on Tuesdays and Fridays 9-11am. If you are unable to bring donations to the Parish Rooms or to the drop-off points in our local supermarkets, please contact Catherine McBride

## Prayer Requests



Please pray for Fiona Pluse, whose father died recently, and for all those who have recently been bereaved, including the families and friends of William Harvey, Ronald Sweeting, Edna Allman and Yvonne Sutcliffe. Also, Jenny Wade and Jill Hurst would very much appreciate your prayers at this time.