

## NEWS AND NOTICES FOR SUNDAY 13th OF SEPTEMBER 2020

### RESUMING PUBLIC WORSHIP

We were so pleased to resume public worship on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of September. It was good to take this first step back, although we were of course sad that we could not make room for everybody.

Just to remind you of some practicalities: -

**FORMAT OF SERVICE** - Initially the service offered will be a Service of the Word (not Holy Communion), a slightly expanded version of the Service at Home we have been using during Lockdown. We shall continue to send out the weekly reflections, prayers and news so that we can feel connected, and very much still a part of the church and what we do. There will be no congregational singing, but we hope to have some music. We will have to maintain social distancing and we will be unable to offer refreshments afterwards. The service will be shorter than usual as well.

**GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES** - The inside of the church will be laid out in a different way in order to comply with the government guidelines for social distancing. There will be hand sanitiser at the door which everyone must use. It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn in places of worship. (There are some valid exemptions). We would therefore ask that you wear a face covering when you attend St Andrew's for worship. To help keep us all safe and reduce the spread of Covid-19, we need to support the NHS Test and Trace service. We will therefore be keeping a record of those who come along on a Sunday.

**BOOKING** - Numbers in the church will be limited at any one time. To try and ensure that we do not have to turn anyone away at the door we will be operating a booking system.

**Please phone the church mobile number 07548 940712 to book a place.**

Bookings can be made from the Monday before the Sunday in which the service is to take place. So for September the 20<sup>th</sup> booking opens on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September and so on. We will do our best to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to attend worship but our capacity in church is reduced so this will take time. People from the same household will be able to sit together but otherwise people will have to sit on their own block of chairs.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE BOURNE FAMILY

As you know, our intention was to hold a memorial service for Lynette at St Andrew's Church on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September. As church attendance is still limited we have cancelled the service on that day.

Many friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues and church members have expressed their wish to attend and we thank you all for your encouragement and support.

We shall review the situation later in the year and keep you advised of any other arrangements. Please ensure that church members, known to you, are aware of the changes. John, Duncan and Philippa.

**MEETING OF PCC**

The PCC will be meeting on 15 September via ZOOM. Please pray as they consider the church's possible plans for the weeks ahead and other matters.

**BRIAN**

Brian is now home from hospital, and has some new medication to treat an underlying health condition that seems to be working well. He is very grateful to everyone who has prayed for him.

**CELEBRATE**

Happy Birthday to John Doyle who is celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday today.



If you have any thoughts, ideas or news to share, do let us know.

**WITH LOVE AND PRAYERS FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

## **ROMANS 14: 1-12. A REFLECTION FROM JOHN**

Four weeks ago, I had the privilege of reading in St Andrew's Church, a great passage of scripture, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. It contains the most famous of all verses, 'and now faith, hope, and love abide, and the greatest of these is love'. The occasion was our son's wedding, that took place on the wettest of August days.

That passage was written by St Paul to a Church that was struggling to resolve the many diverse opinions that existed within its congregation. Reading those words for Katherine and Duncan reminded me what a great passage it is. It changes the whole tone of Paul's letter and resolves all other argument and discussion with just three words, faith, hope and love. I wonder how many times each of us has heard that passage?

Today's New Testament reading was also written by St Paul but this time to Christians in Rome, a fellowship he had never visited. The letter is a deep theological one, that is rarely read at weddings and contains verses to challenge the most informed of Bible scholars. I wonder how many times you have read Romans chapter 14? Perhaps not so many, yet it is a wonderful passage that emphasises Christian unity and our accountability to God alone. Its message sits very comfortably alongside that of 1 Corinthians 13.

St Paul knew that within a church there was diversity in experience, talent, ability and knowledge. He knew that issues that were of importance to one member of the congregation were not so for another. Paul knew that one individual's perception of God could differ from that experienced by those around. He also knew, that if God created the heaven and earth then He must be beyond the combined comprehension of us all. As Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, 'Now we see, but in a mirror dimly' (1 Cor 13:12).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul addresses his readers about the difficulties that arise when different experiences conflict within a church. He desires Christian Communities to develop into unified bodies under Christ. He knows the difficulties, but thankfully, he is a thoughtful man who provides positive teaching.

The difficulties of Paul's time are not necessarily those of today's church. There was conflict between Jews and Gentiles, about ritual food and even sacrifices offered to other Gods. Perhaps, these are not ours today.

However, we can waste time in disputes between catholic and liberal, evangelical and Pentecostal, young and old, high and low church, music groups and choral worship. It is all too easy to believe one's understanding is right whilst another is wrong.

It is on such matters that Paul comments. But note, it is not the actualities of the dispute that are addressed but the principles of resolution.

Let me read you just part of Paul's message.

*One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.*

*Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.*

*For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

Romans 14 is wonderful theology. Read it slowly and very carefully, you will find it contains underlying principles.

To Paul, theory is not principle, privileges are not rights and knowledge is not wisdom. The prerogative of the strong does not outweigh the church's need for unity or an individual's need for integrity. Further, each one of us should live before God with faith and before others with consideration.

All this and much more can be found in our wonderful passage for today yet summarised by those most familiar of all words. Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.



## **AND SO WE PRAY**

### **COLLECT FOR THE DAY**

Almighty God,  
whose only Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence:  
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
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 for ever.



### **THANKSGIVING;**

That as we have been forgiven, we may go out into the world, and share God's forgiving love to others.

### **FOR THE CHURCH;**

For the work of the Essex Clergy Charity Corporation.  
25 New Deacons being Ordained in Chelmsford Cathedral this weekend.  
For Life Church, City Centre-Pastors Phil Hannam, Tim Williams, and Team.

### **FOR ST ANDREWS;**

For us all, that we will grow strong in faith, in response to these challenging times.  
For thanksgiving for those within St Andrews, who have worked hard to keep our congregation together via post, FB, Zoom and phone call

### **FOR THE WORLD;**

For victims of forced labour, and for refugees fleeing from famine, poverty and war.  
For continuing prayers for the people of Beirut, after their explosion last month.

### **FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS;**

For those who live in Madeline Place, Mersey Way and Medway Close.  
For a blessing for all who are suffering from broken relationships, and unforgiving hearts.

### **FOR THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED**

For Christ's comfort, and peace for Daniella, Brian, Hazel, June and Tony, Sarah, Sandra, Chaz and family, and for those in hospitals, hospices and care homes

### **FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED;**

Remembering The Revd. Audrey Cozens, Sr Ann, and Geoff, may we, with them, share in Christ's love, and in life everlasting.

Lord, in Your mercy Hear our prayer