



St. Matthew's Church
the Parish of Edgeley & Cheadle Heath
belong + serve + tell + grow



The Revd. David Brewster
07548 716 512

Dear St. Matthew's Church Family,

Now that it looks like we'll be restricted in our social contacts for some time to come, we're moving into a long term, different way of doing things. We'll keep thinking about how best to support you as we move forwards, but please do let us know any of your ideas. We can't promise to implement them all, but they will enrich the conversation and help us to discern what we are able to undertake.

This morning, as I said Morning Prayer, a verse from the letter of James really jumped out at me.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

What has been for you the greatest frustration of this present trial? For some it is the sadness of loss, for others the worry of sickness. Whilst it might seem trivial, for many it is the lack of physical contact. A hug can communicate more on an emotional level than many words on the phone. A visit to the bedside of a sick friend brings healing to both, even when one will not survive. Loads that we would carry together with ease seem to grow heavier when we attempt to carry them alone. Contact for now is severely restricted, and that is hard to bear.

Whilst James wasn't thinking about the enforced isolation of a pandemic when he wrote these words, I believe the promise holds true for us today. Having persevered in living for the Lord in whatever trials we are called upon to face, we will receive fullness of life now and into eternity. So in these difficult days, stick close to Jesus and let us know how we can help you in that.

Enclosed with this letter is our next set of bible reflections on the Psalms, which will lead into our bible studies in the coming weeks. Also enclosed are some more ideas for prayer.

You may also like to access the Church of England's - *Dailey Hope*, a free telephone service (08008048044). When you call up you'll find the following menu options.

1. *Hymns we love* – short talks on well-loved hymns.
2. *Hymn Line* – recordings of different daily hymns on a loop.
3. *Prayer line* – relevant and specific to the coronavirus.
4. *More options* – once you've pressed 4 you'll be given the following options...
5. *The Church of England's Weekly Service*.



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6. *Traditional Morning and Evening Prayer.*

7. *The latest Government Advice on Coronavirus.*

I would also like to say how encouraged we have been by all those of you who have asked how you can continue to give to God's mission through St. Matthew's. I know that some of you will be finding this time financially difficult. As a church we are too. Although some of our costs are reduced, many have stayed the same. As we are at the moment unable to meet together, we are missing the regular giving from Sunday collections. Some of you will have to reduce your giving, and we understand. If you are able, I would encourage you to look at some of the alternative ways of giving. If you would like to set up a standing order or send a cheque, give me a call or contact us through our website. We also have a PayPal account that can be accessed on our website. If you are unable to give by any of these alternative means, I encourage you to save your weekly envelopes or gifts until we are finally able to meet again.

Whilst we are thinking about our giving through St. Matthew's, I want to keep you up to date with Barnabus, the charity we supported in our Lent Smartie Challenge. Though many homeless people were housed at the start of the lockdown, Barnabus have been called upon for advise and are still actively working with those in accommodation and those who have fallen through the net. I encourage you either to hold on to what you have already collected, or if you are able, to access their website and give a gift by credit card or PayPal.

We continue to record Sunday Worship each week and put it on our YouTube channel. Go to YouTube and type *St. Matthew's Church Edgeley* and our channel should be one of the first results. Please press the subscribe button as if we gain enough subscribers we can customise our channel more freely. Go to the playlists to find the service for each Sunday.

There are also links and other recourses on our website (<https://edgeleyandcheadleheath.org.uk/>) and FaceBook page.

If you have a particular need or just want a chat, please feel free to call me on the number above.

That is all for now. Take care and God bless.