



Abington Pastoral Letter No.10 29.04.2020

Dear Friends

A significant milestone

Earlier this week we held a minute of silence as we remember all those who have lost their lives working to save the lives of others in this COVID-19 pandemic. More than 100 of health workers, care workers, key workers, emergency service staff have lost their lives.

As we mourn for them and share the deep grief of all families who have lost their loved ones in this global pandemic, we think of those who are still working on various frontlines. We think of our friends who are working in our Northampton General Hospital, Care Homes and Prisons. We think of all the staff at St. Christopher's and Abington Park View, especially the managers there: Sarah Clarke and Misha. We think of all our friends working for the Police and our local authorities. We think of those who are still suffering from the virus and their families.

We are planning a dedicated service for all of them in the near future. We will also need to think about the right ways as a community to memorialise those who lost their lives and what has happened. But first, we must live fully through it. The right time will come. In the meantime, please may I ask you to spare a few minutes of your day to just pray for them, for their safety and for that they may receive the encouragement and comfort that they need as they carry this heavy responsibilities on their shoulders for all of us.

Thank you to all the staff, doctors and nurses of NGH, to all the staff at St. Christopher's and Abington Park View and to all staff of all forms of emergency services. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice. And most of all, thank you for that sharing of your love to us, to our friends and families when we are most vulnerable and weak.

It is the vaccine that might cure us from this disease. But it is through love that we can survive

this together. It is through love that we keep our integrity and humanity in the midst of tragedies of this pandemic.

In the midst of all the sad news, we do still get many good news. One of the good news came from our war veteran, Captain Tom Moore. People like Captain Tom have seen the horrors of war. He knows that the glory and real heroism has to do with endurance, loyalty and the daily struggles to keep our integrity and humanity in the midst of tragedies. He showed that to us then and he shows us again now through his action that is so simple and yet so profound, filled with compassion and love.

Jesus told us,

I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

(John 15.9-13)

Let us encourage each other to remain in that love and to continue to share that love with each other which is already given to us through the life, death and the resurrection of Christ.

Daily Hope

We have been very much enjoying our online worship. Last Sunday again another 100 or so people joined our service at the same time from all places. However we have been concerned of those who don't have access to the internet.

Here is a good news! The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free telephone line, Daily Hope, to give more people access to worship, prayer, and reflections while churches are closed.

Daily Hope has been available since last Sunday and runs for 24 hours a day. It provides Church of England prayers, hymns, and reflections for those who dial in. The number is 0800 8048044.

Within 48 hours of its launch, Daily Hope received more than 6000 calls — the equivalent of more than 50,000 minutes. Calls are reported to last for up to 50 minutes at a time.

Archbishop Welby said: "I want to urge people to spread the news about this service. If there is

someone you know who is particularly struggling, give them a call and let them know about the Daily Hope. I'm going to phone a friend; will you join me?"

Please if you haven't been able to join our worship then would you please give that number a ring? I have tried it and it is brilliant. Please share this news with your friends and neighbours.

Message from St. Christopher's

Sarah Clarke, the manager at St. Christopher's has sent us this message.

We have a really special 100th Birthday coming up on the 9th May and I wouldn't normally ask but I was wondering if you could all help us to make it extra special given the circumstances and send a card & or hand drawn children's picture for Thelma. We are thinking more about how we make her day as special as she is and are in talks with her family. Sarah

Please may I encourage everyone to join us in congratulating Thelma's 100th birthday? Please send your cards to Thelma to this address. : **Sarah Clarke, St. Christopher's Care Home, Abington Park Crescent, Northampton NN3 3AD**

The Online Service for Children

Alison is planning a short online service for children. She has sent us this message.

We are all missing Umbrella Church in the strange situation we find ourselves. Umbrella Church is a short fun and engaging service for all ages but especially with our youngest Christians in mind.

On Sunday the 3rd of May at 3pm I plan to 'Go live' on the church Facebook page to read a story from 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' The story is called 'Going home' It can be found in Matthew 28, Mark 16. Luke 24 and John 14.

After the story I will lead a short time of prayer aimed at families and children and finally demonstrate a colourful craft activity (Blue Peter style)

It would be lovely if you would like to join me for this virtual Umbrella Service and if you can indicate to me you are watching with a like or comment, your support will be welcomed.

Alison x

Alison and Cathy are also organizing delivering craft pack to children. If you know any family who might appreciate one. Please contact Cathy or Alison at cathytinsley18@gmail.com or alison.canfield@sky.com

Prayer Exercise

Liz Kelly, our Lay Pastoral Minister has shared with us another fun and creative prayer exercise, called Doodles and Scribbles. I have attached it to this email. Thank you Liz.

Keep singing during the Lockdown

Tim, our Director of Music has shared with us the RSCM online page which helps us to keep singing a new hymn each day. Thank you Tim. <https://www.rscm.org.uk/our-resources/hftd/>

Selfies and Family Photos

If you haven't sent your selfie or family photo, it is still not too late. Please send them to Sarah at sarah.may@rathlin.net

Online Eucharist

I have heard from several people about how much they miss receiving the communion and the Eucharist. I know some priests have been celebrating the Eucharist in their homes. I haven't been able to do that because of the lack of equipments and also because of the presence of a toddler who can destroy everything in a second. However I am studying ways of making this possible as I acknowledge the needs of many parishoners. It cannot be the same as the Eucharist we celebrate in the church. But it could be something creative and meaningful. There is something called, 'Spiritual Communion'. I am looking into ways of combining the elements of the Eucharist and the tradition of spiritual communion. I will be able to share more with you in the future.

That is all from me for this week. Please stay safe and God bless you all.

With love in Christ

Jun