

**23.01.2021**



Dear Friends

### **Congratulations to Prester and Liz**

It was a great joy to formally welcome Prester and Liz into the ministry at Abington Parish. A very warm congratulations to them. My apologies for the technical hiccup during the service. Apparently the internet went down around Peter's house and that area which caused the disruption of our live-streaming. It just reminds us that we cannot completely rely on technology. And yet many of our friends gathered again and came to the Zoom Service for Prester. Thank you so much for all those who joined to show their support and add their prayers.

### **Prester's Lockdown Musings: Hope dashed – then restored**

As the newly licensed Lay Reader at Abington, Prester continues to offer his reflections during this lockdown. Thank you Prester. His writing is the following.

*During lockdown, the conditions we have been living under have been the closest most of us will get to being in prison. But at least most prison sentences are for a definite period of time, with the possibility of parole for good behaviour. Life in the pandemic doesn't work like that. Many of us were looking forward to seeing loved ones over Christmas only to have arrangements restricted or dashed at the last minute. Parents were encouraged to send their children back to school one day, only for those who did to find that all schools were being closed the day after. Hopes that tier conditions could be relaxed early in the New Year were dashed when a new quick spreading version of the virus prompted a third national lockdown. Just when things had seemed to be getting better, they got worse. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12.)*

*The Old Testament gives us a fascinating story of a man, locked up because of a false allegation, who had hopes of release – only to find them dashed – for a while at least.*

*The life story of Joseph can be found in chapters 37 to 50 of the book of Genesis. It's worth reading the story in large chunks. It's what you might call a "good read": full of family feuds, interesting characters and plot twists. It has that most desirable of features for lockdown readers, a happy ending.*

*By the time we get to chapters 39 and 40, Joseph is imprisoned in the royal palace in Egypt. He'd been falsely accused of rape. He'd refused the persistent advances of his employer's wife, so she framed him. In prison Joseph's abilities were so apparent that the governor turned over the day to day running of the prison to him. Then the king's cupbearer and baker were imprisoned. One night both had dreams. Joseph was well known as a dreamer himself. In a culture which saw dreams as means of prophecy and guidance, he was skilled in interpreting them. He said the baker's dream meant he would be killed by Pharaoh. The cupbearer's dream meant that he would be reinstated. "But remember me when it is well with you...make mention of me to Pharaoh and so get me out of this place."(Genesis 40:14.)*

*His predictions came to pass. The baker was killed, the cupbearer reinstated. Joseph must have had every hope that he would be released. But the cupbearer forgot all about Joseph. The days went by. Joseph came to realise that his longed for release was not going to happen. Two years passed, learning to live with dashed hopes.*

*There is more to be said about the story of Joseph. What interests me for the moment is the idea of dashed hopes being restored. After recent weeks we may feel we know all about hopes being dashed – just as Joseph did, languishing those two extra years in prison. The evidence suggests that Joseph put the past behind him and knuckled down to his daily task of running the king's prison.*

*Then one day things change dramatically. Pharaoh's advisers fail to interpret his dreams. The cupbearer finally remembers Joseph, who is summoned. Not only does he interpret the dreams, he gives sound advice on running the country. He is released and promoted. We can perhaps look at the details of this, and the rest of his story, another time. For now, let's take comfort from the fact that the scriptures give us examples of people who have had their hopes dashed – only to find things working out better than they might have expected. Joseph would not have expected to become Pharaoh's right hand man.*

*In the New Testament, Jesus' disciples were distraught after his crucifixion. Hopes of the new kingdom he said he came to inaugurate seemed dashed. But then came Easter Sunday...As St Paul says, God is "able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine."*

*(Ephesians 3:20.)*

*Let's learn to hold on to that hope. Lockdown will not last forever.*

### **Invitation to our Lent Groups**

This year, we are offering Lent Groups on Zoom. We shall be using Tom Wright's book, 'God and the Pandemic' to try to make some sense of what has happened over the last year. It will be more about us sharing our own experiences and stories in these extra ordinary times, asking for the guidance from the Holy Spirit, rather than studying the book.

You do not need internet access or a smart phone, a standard landline will do. There will be five one hour sessions and you will need a copy of the book.

-Bob Purser will offer a group on Mondays at 7.30pm starting 22 Feb

-Alison Barnes will offer a group on Tuesdays at 7.30pm starting 23 Feb

-Liz Kelly will offer a group on Wednesdays at 10.00am starting 24 Feb

Please let us know if you wish to take part by emailing Liz Kelly at [lizmk@outlook.com](mailto:lizmk@outlook.com) or telephoning Dianne Ward on 01604 281264 and telling us which group you want to join and whether you need us to order a copy of the book for you. If you wish to buy it for yourself, it is available in paperback on Amazon, from Eden Christian Bookshop online, or on Kindle, and costs between £6.25 - £7.99.

We would love you to join us.

If you are unable to join then you might want to consider a course for Lent provided by Bishop Donald focusing on the Letter to the Hebrews. The Link is [Here](#).

### **Invitation to Coffee and Catch-up Session on Zoom**

Bob, our lay-chair is inviting everyone to come to Coffee and Catch-up on Zoom. Here is what Bob said.

*It was good to see many people for Prester Coleman's licensing last Sunday on Zoom. Due to the success of this we would like to start an informal coffee and catch-up session after our Sunday Service for about half an hour using Zoom. Those with laptops and tablets or mobile phones can easily link and those with landlines can join by phone.*

*We will start with a one-off session and if it is popular it can become a regular event. The first event will take place after the Candlemas Sunday Service on Sunday 31st January, so that will be at about 10.55. Please take the time after the service to make your hot beverage of choice to bring to the meeting, we will wait for you!*

*Please see details below of how to join:*

*Topic: St Peter and St Paul, Abington: Coffee and Catch-up*

*Time: Jan 31, 2021 10:55 AM London*

*Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86378391972?pwd=MllwVVh6WFFCUFJEMFo1TEl0RERHZz09>*

*Meeting ID: 863 7839 1972*

*Passcode: 355688*

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*+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom*

*+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom*

*+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom*

*+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom*

*Meeting ID: 863 7839 1972*

*Passcode: 355688*

*Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcYkiPeUNF>*

## **Funerals of Margaret, Linda and Betty**

We are deeply saddened that our friends, Margaret Harris, Linda Edwards and Betty Dolan departed from this earthly life. However we are confident that they are now embraced by their

heavenly Father, reunited with their loved ones. Their Funerals will take place on the following dates at the parish church. Please remember them and their families in your prayers. May they rest in peace and rise in Glory. May God's comfort and love surround all those who mourn for them.

Funeral of Margaret Harris: Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 1pm

Funeral of Linda Edwards: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 2.30 pm

Funeral of Betty Dolan: Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February at 11.30 am

### **Keep Praying for St. Christopher's and Abington Park View**

We gathered on Zoom last Saturday and prayed for all our friends at St. Christopher's. The situation continues to be serious. There are now 33 cases within the home. Thankfully, none of them are showing signs of sever symptoms. Please continue to keep the residents and staff of St. Christopher's in your prayers. Sarah, the manager, said that they are truly grateful for the love, support and prayers they receive. As we remember our friends at St. Christopher's, we remember our friends at Abington Park View in our prayers. May God's protection and mercy will be upon them all.

Friends, it appears that we are now going through the peak of this pandemic. The numbers of cases and deaths are very high. Outbreaks are occurring in care homes and communities. I am told that there is now a serious outbreak at St. John's Home in Weston Favell Parish as well. Please keep safe, keep praying and keep going as we keep our eyes focused on Christ who comes to us in the midst of storms of life.

May God bless you and all those whom you love. May he give you faith, strength and hope as you continue to walk with him in this storm.

With love in Christ

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