

St Sampson's Church

News in coronavirus time

Upper Thames Group of Churches website

<http://www.upperthames.org.uk/>



St Sampson's Church: one of the Upper Thames Group of Parishes

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Dear friends,

This is such a difficult time for everyone. We are self isolating or only going out for real necessities or for daily exercise and many are suffering from job uncertainties or losses, lack of income as well as anxiety and stress whether it be because children are home or wondering what will happen if I become ill.

Love of our neighbour is really coming to the fore and our Cricklade community is full of people who want to help. Here and across our country many are showing the Christian values of compassion and kindness. But it's so sad to hear about or read of people being abusive towards NHS staff or staff in shops or businesses, many of whom are putting their lives on the line to serve the needs of others. "Perfect love casts out fear" – we can only pray for those who are angry because of fear and show them love as we can.

As people of faith, we are shocked to the core that churches are locked but there are ways we can come together, united in Christ; instead of GOING TO church, we are now BEING church. The nature of church is changing to cope with these coronavirus times.

The one thing we CAN ALL do is pray; you may have read how NHS staff are praying before they go on shift. There is immense power in praying and it helps us to trust God with our lives. *Revd Shirley*

So how can we connect with each other and come together?

Listen to or watch a service. C of E have a radio broadcast Sunday and daily service, Songs of Praise is on TV (the broadcast time does vary). If you have the internet, many churches are live streaming worships eg Malmesbury, Archbishop of York.

Sundays at 10 am in Upper Thames will still have Holy Communion at home which (we hope) will be videoed and put up on our Upper Thames Group youtube channel

<https://youtu.be/bKQo3sQeWaQ>

And facebook pages for Holy Cross Ashton Keynes and St Sampsons Church Cricklade.

Morning Prayers – are said by one person on behalf of community in Ashton Keynes 9am, Cricklade 9 am and Latton. Please do join in with the words at home and "in prayer and supplication (we can all) make our requests known to God".

Again look for Holy Cross Ashton Keynes and St Sampsons Church Cricklade facebook pages; Pauline and Alison from AK have uploaded videos of morning prayer.

Put a sign of hope in your window – many children and families are displaying a rainbow (a sign of God's covenant with Noah from earliest Biblical times) and on Sunday let's put a lighted candle in our windows as many did last Sunday.

Look for the wow moments and blessings

Many people are saying they have the time and the opportunity to notice what is all around us. And the pollution levels have dropped. Maybe God is telling us to "be in the present" and to

notice what is happening in creation, be it the beauty or our lack of care for it.

What is happening in our parishes?

Phone networking

In AK and Cricklade we are aiming to set up a phone network so that someone from the church can ring each week just to chat, as well as to see if you could do with any help and to ask if you have a prayer request.

Mothering Sunday posies (before the lockdown) were made by half a dozen ladies in AK and taken round to many who live on their own, are elderly, had been unwell or had tough times.

Many are joining in with the **community help** scheme in Cricklade and the Link line in AK. God's kingdom is happening all around us.

Bible verses for each day

Sunday: You, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; leave us not, O Lord our God. *Jeremiah 14.9*

Monday: Thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. *Isaiah 30.15*

Tuesday: Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matt 11.28-end*

Wednesday: Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. *1 Peter 5.6,7*

Thursday: Jesus said, 'I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!' *John 16.33*

Friday: God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. *1 Thessalonians 5.9,10*

Saturday: Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' *John 8.12*

Prayers you might like to use this week

Prayers from the Corrymeela Community

God of the home and God of the pilgrim, we dig in for an uncertain season, and embark on a journey together; this is a path we haven't been on.

Yet we know in each step you are there alongside us: a guide, a protector, a friend. May each day on the road bring us closer together, closer to a land of grateful reunion, closer to the place you call home. Amen.

Collect: Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

And Finally: I met with one of my daughters last weekend for a walk (socially distanced meetings in fields were OK then) but, distracted, I set off by car in completely the wrong direction. It meant changing route and taking a road I'd not travelled along before. It was a lovely road to drive along and I noticed spring was here and it was stunning. A wow moment and surely a metaphor for these Coronavirus times. Church is changing direction and taking a road not travelled before. We can trust God in this, and we will indeed see beauty along the way.

May God continue to bless you and watch over you and give you his peace. Amen