

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #3

25th March 2020

Dear Church Family,

As Paul frequently began his letters: *'Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'*

I hope that most of you were able to worship in some way on Sunday, whether that was through watching or listening to the service recorded by the Archbishop of Canterbury, tuning into Songs of Praise at 1.15pm, or something else. There really is a lot of choice out there and you can find details of online services at <https://ukchurch.online/>

For those who prefer to pray on their own, or as a family, I am attaching a 'Prayer and Worship from Home' booklet that you can use for Morning and Evening Prayer. I know that those of you who decided to take up daily prayer as part of last year's Year of Discipleship found it helpful, so I'm hoping that others will too. I especially love the discipline of Morning Prayer, committing to the Lord each day, whatever it may bring.

When I wrote to you last week I had grand plans to record a service in church for this Sunday and transmit it online. How so much has changed in just a few days as the government and the Church of England have now closed all churches and asked us not to livestream or record any services in churches going forward. I will however continue to write a Sunday Sermon which will be put on the Church website www.allsaintscottenham.org.uk (also linked from Rampton's) which, when used with the Prayer and Worship booklet, will enable you to enjoy your own service each week if you wish.

During Holy Week, I hope to embrace Zoom and invite as many of you as are able to join me in Evening Reflections using the Stephen Cottrell material as planned. I will produce and send material out to those who do not have access to a computer.

Please can you continue to remember in prayer those who are unwell at this time: Jean Wilmshurst, Pat and John Easterling, Martin Hudson, Rona Gardner and Brenda Morphet. Rona and Brenda are recovering from surgery; both are home and doing well. Please also remember the family of John Smith whose funeral is on 26th March.

I don't know about you, but I'm finding lots of encouragement in Scripture and daily readings at the moment. On Monday of this week during Morning Prayer I read a piece of writing by Thomas Merton which says:

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end ...

Therefore will I trust you always,
though I may seem to be lost ...
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and will never leave me
to face my perils alone.

And then on Tuesday, I was guided to Isaiah 43: 1-3, a passage I've found helpful at many times in my life when facing difficulty. From The Message translation:

'Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
I've called you by name. You're mine.
When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end –
Because I am your God, your personal God.
The Holy of Israel, your Saviour.'

None of us is alone. We have our Heavenly Father and we have each other. Hopefully most of you will have been contacted by now by either myself or a member of the Church Leadership Team to ask if you are OK and offer any support you may need. As I've said before, please don't be afraid of asking for help – we are a Church family and want to support and encourage one another even if we cannot see one another for a while. I have been very touched by the messages of support that I have received, so thank you for being so lovely, both to me and one another.

With love and best wishes,

Lynda

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