

## All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



### Pastoral Letter #43

13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Church Family,

As we enter the second week of lockdown, I've been reminded of the importance of prayer.

I read a piece last week inviting us to imagine our soul as being like the Dartford Crossing (the bridge, not the tunnel). As those who have ever used the crossing will know, there are busy times and quiet times. The job of the bridge is not to ask what is in the cars or lorries but simply to bear their weight for a few minutes and then allow them to go on their way. Everything is fine whilst the traffic remains even and keeps moving, but when breakdowns and traffic jams occur, the frustration and impatience begin. The article described how our souls too have to take the weight of our daily experiences – the stresses and strains of ordinary (and extraordinary) living – and then let it go. Our suffering or distress only becomes prolonged when we don't acknowledge its existence and let it pass on.

The time to repair a busy crossing or bridge is in the night when the traffic is light. We know this all too well with the regular night closures of the A14 (hopefully now a thing of the past)! Our prayer in quiet times gives us the strength to cope with the heavy, busy days. Just like a road, we dig, patch and repair in the night – in the quiet time - so that we can get through the day without congestion. I rather like this analogy and it's a good reminder of the need to continue to set aside a time in our day – whether at the start, middle or end – where we share with God all that is on our minds and in our hearts, and begin the process of letting things go.

There is much to pray about at the moment. I'm aware of three people in Cottenham who are currently in Addenbrookes suffering from Covid-19: Rex Collinson, Dee White and our very own Dave Woodcroft. Please pray for each of them and their families as they wait at home praying for their recovery. Please also pray for Peter Tilbury who has gone back into hospital; Jean Wilmshurst recovering from surgery; Rona Gardner, currently in hospital; Bob Ward; and Janet Johnstone. Other needs for prayer include:

- The families of Gladys Bransom, Sean Fuller, Kay Wilson and Richard Gautrey who have recently died
- All those working for the NHS and in research and the pharmaceutical industry
- All those who cannot work from home and have no choice but to be at risk of becoming infected and infectious
- Those in severe economic need and those relying on Foodbanks
- Those struggling with mental health in this third lockdown
- Local teachers and teaching staff who are providing education for children of key workers/vulnerable children as well as teaching online
- Parents who are juggling work with home-schooling

- Those with little contact with family who are feeling lonely
- The people of those countries who are a long way away from obtaining a vaccine
- All those with responsibility of leadership during this pandemic, locally, nationally and across the world
- The US as they prepare to swear in a new President, for a calm and orderly transfer of power.

Thank you to those who have already let me know that they'd like a copy of Jeff Lucas' book '*Singing in Babylon: Finding Purpose in Life's Second Choices*'. As I said last week, it's a good book that helps us, through the story of Daniel, to discover how we live through situations that are not our first choice. If you'd like me to order you a copy of the book to read during Lent (which begins on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb), do get in touch.

Some of you have been asking about the Church Diaries that are usually delivered in early January. They have now arrived and are on the table in both churches for anyone who would like one. Just pop by to collect one; both churches remain open for private prayer.

In addition to the weekly online service, a reminder that Evening Prayer continues at 6pm on Sundays through Zoom (contact Cheryl Lowe for the link). Bible Study has resumed on Tuesdays at 7.30pm alternating with Compline (contact Cheryl for the link), and on Fridays at 3pm with Frances Horgan leading us through some books of the Old Testament (contact me for the link). If you've not tried Bible study before, why not have a go? There's no pressure to commit, but you never know what you'll find useful until you try. It would be great to see you! Both groups are very friendly and relaxed.

For those without Internet access, a reminder of the national telephone line – 'Daily Hope' on 0800 804 8044 – where you can access prayer, readings and services. With Lent approaching, I will produce a daily prayer resource for Morning and Evening Prayer, which will be available both on the website and in paper form for those without the Internet. If there's anything else that you need, please let me know.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes,

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