

## All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



### Pastoral Letter #45

27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Church Family,

On Monday this week, the Anglican Church remembered the 'Conversion of Paul'. You can read the story in Acts 9. Whether or not you're a fan of Paul, he did write some amazing Scripture which has helped us understand better the nature of God and how we should live as Christians. I love these words from Philippians 4:

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ... Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

This rather sounds like 'contentment', and living through a pandemic is certainly an interesting time to be thinking about contentment. Paul seems to imply that we can *choose* to be content. A few verses on in Philippians 4:12, he writes '*I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation ... whether living in plenty or in want.*' He doesn't explicitly tell us what the secret is – but it seems to be something we can learn, something we can actively pursue. In the rest of his letter to the Philippians, a letter we studied in church last September, it appears that we do this by choosing to seek Christ's glory over our own, to emulate his life of grumble-free humility, and to learn from others how to press on towards the goal of becoming more like him. And we do it by choosing to rejoice.

It's important to remember that Paul doesn't say '*Rejoice in the Lord when things work out*', or '*Hang in there; we'll be able to rejoice one day*'. No, he commands us to rejoice in the Lord *always*. God is always good. And, when days are hard, it's important to remember this truth. There are always things to praise him for, in our plenty and in our want, in promotion or demotion, on a luxury holiday and in a long, lonely lockdown. But, this doesn't mean denying the reality of our situation. We can and should '*present [our] requests to God*', we just do it in an attitude of thankfulness not anxiousness. And as we play our part, God will respond by giving us something greater than what we have asked for – he'll give us his peace, '*which transcends all understanding, [to] guard [our] hearts and [our] minds*'.

It's lovely to hear that so many of you are receiving your first Covid vaccine – something for which to be truly thankful. We look forward to the day when most of us are vaccinated and transmission rates have drastically reduced. Please continue to pray for all those with responsibility of leadership during this pandemic, locally, nationally and across the world.

Other needs for prayer include:

- Those who are unwell, including David Woodcroft, Peter Tilbury, Rona Gardner, Bob Ward, Janet Johnston, Pam Lumsden and Clare Campbell

- The families of Richard Gautrey and William Hornett who have recently died
- All those working for the NHS; and those rolling out the vaccine
- 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 continue to juggle work with home-schooling, not knowing how long for
- Those with little contact with family who are feeling lonely, particularly those in our local care homes.

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*', the theme of Lent this year. I'll be making the order this Friday (29<sup>th</sup>), so please let me know as soon as possible if you want a copy. The cost is £9.99.

A reminder that Evening Prayer continues at 6pm on Sundays through Zoom (contact Cheryl Lowe for the link). We rejoice that it's a service that continues to grow – 20 last week - but there's always room for more. It was also lovely to see many of you at Coffee and Chat on Sunday at 11am, again through Zoom. It's a great way to reconnect with the church family so do try to come along if you can. There's always a warm welcome.

If you need any help with anything or just fancy a chat, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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,

Revd Lynda Davies

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