

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #53

24th March 2021

Dear Church Family,

The National Day of Reflection on Tuesday gave us much to think about as we thought over the events of the last year, and the many, many lives lost to Covid-19, both here in the UK and across the world.

Throughout the pandemic at regular intervals, I've been fortunate to join church leaders online to share our experiences and to plan ahead. Led by the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), we've been encouraged to '*plan short-term, prepare medium-term and think long-term*'. This has felt like good advice. We've also been introduced to the work of a chap called Simon Barrington who, in describing what happens after a crisis, has supported us to think about three stages: the '*response*' stage – what needs doing urgently; the '*recovery*' stage – making sure people are looked after well; and the '*reconstruction*' stage – thinking about what life might look like going forwards.

In applying this to church life, over the last 12 months we've been responding to the pandemic by ensuring we follow Government Guidance, by moving worship online, putting in place effective methods of communication, such as the Pastoral Letter, and establishing good pastoral support for those most vulnerable. As the restrictions are lifted and services return to the building, we enter the '*recovery*' stage. Over this next six months, we will create opportunities for those who wish to, to have honest conversations about what it's personally been like to live through a pandemic, what has been lost and gained, and what might be useful to take forward into the future. As a church, we won't be rushing back to *every* activity that was in place pre-Covid, but will be taking time ('reconstruction' stage) to think about what the needs of the church and village are; in what ways these have changed; what has worked well online and what we might therefore like to continue; and how we want to continue to grow as a church, reaching others with the good news of Jesus.

The 'My Pandemic Experience' resource sent out last week is the first step in helping folk to think through the last year, and the 'Returning to Church' questionnaire also helps us to begin to plan for the future, both medium and longer term. If you haven't yet completed it, please can I encourage you to do so. It's really helpful to hear from as many of you as possible.

Palm Sunday this weekend heralds the start of Holy Week. There's lots on offer to help you journey through this most holy of weeks. You can choose from any or all of the following:

- An All-Age Holy Week Pilgrimage (in the local area) – attached to the church email
- Ribbons and tree reflections in the Churchyard
- Constructing an Easter Garden (contact Ken Hewitt) and/or contributing to it with a pot plant

- Holy Week Reflections on Zoom on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7pm
- Maundy Thursday Service on Zoom at 7pm (same link as Mon-Wed)
- Service on Good Friday in both churches at midday
- Online recorded service for Good Friday.

We look forward to being back in both churches for Easter. Services on Easter Day at Cottenham take place at 8.30am and 10.30am, and at Rampton at 4pm. With many of you having had your first vaccination and safety measures remaining in place, it would be lovely to see you. There will be an online service for those unable to come.

Please can you pray for:

- Those who are unwell, including Peter Tilbury, Rona Gardner, Bob Ward (currently in hospital), Janet Johnston, Pam Lumsden and Pat Labistour (now home from hospital)
- The families of Mary and Cyril Waldock, Joan Marsh, Doreen Davies, Jean Rogers and Sybil Coupland who have recently died
- Those struggling with mental health as the restrictions continue
- All those working for the NHS and in our care homes at this difficult time
- Those in severe economic need and those relying on Foodbanks
- For our local schools as they take a much needed break for Easter.

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

Don't forget to put your clock forward on Saturday night/Sunday morning.

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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