

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #55

14th April 2021

Dear Church Family,

As we continue through the season of Easter – a very Happy Easter to you all!

It was so lovely to be able to open the church for services on Good Friday and Easter Day and to see so many of you. We are blessed to have such a large building that enables us to maintain good social distancing so, if you've been thinking of returning but haven't been sure, please do not worry. There is enough room for us all to worship together safely and it's lovely that we have the choir to sing on behalf of us all.

Thank you to those who cleaned both churches in advance of Easter, and for the beautiful flower arrangements. Both churches looked amazing! If you haven't yet been to look at the Easter Garden at All Saints', Cottenham, please do. It's a wonderful reminder of all that Jesus achieved on the cross.

Thank you to those who completed the most recent 'Returning to Church' Questionnaire. 70% of those who replied said that they would return at Easter, with 23% planning to wait until the limits on social contact end as hoped on 21st June. Many of you commented on having missed worshipping and meeting together, sharing communion and singing. Hopefully, it won't be long before we are all back together. It was heartening to read the positive comments people made about the online services, both the recorded service and Evening Prayer by Zoom. Over the next few months, the PCC will be looking at what is working particularly well online (not just worship) and asking the question: 'Should it continue?' Thank you all for your contributions so far – if you missed the questionnaire and have something to say, please email me or give me a ring.

As the Pastoral Letter is also very popular, this will continue but will become a *fortnightly* publication. For those who receive the letter in paper form, it is difficult to know whether you also find receiving the written sermon helpful. Either way, please could you let us know (tell whoever delivers it or ring Matt in the office - 252298) and we will continue to get it to those who want to carry on receiving it.

The weekly pre-recorded service will continue but will need to be slimmed down for it to be sustainable in the longer-term. For the time being, it will always include a Bible reading, sermon and prayers. Due to quality issues, there are no plans to livestream or record the Sunday morning service from the building.

I'm sure that all of our thoughts have been with HRH The Queen over the last few days following the death of her beloved husband of 73 years. Over the weekend I listened to an interview with a previous Residentiary Canon of Windsor Chapel who knew HRH Prince Philip well. He described three 'P's that the Duke demonstrated well:

- Presence – throughout his life he always attended services regularly. Worship – being present in church - was a key part of his Christian witness
- Participation – he didn't just 'attend' church, but was an active participant. He read widely, prayed daily and loved to debate theology. It is said that he took notes during sermons and would discuss his thoughts with the minister afterwards!
- Practice it - how we practice our faith says a lot about us, what kind of people we are as Christians. The Canon concluded that HRH Prince Philip was 'the model of Christianity in discipleship and service.'

As we consider what we might like to 'take up' during the Easter season (see Easter Day sermon), I commend the three Ps to you as a means to reflect on your own Christian faith. Why not turn them into questions to ask of yourself?

To mark the death of HRH Prince Philip and to pray for HRH The Queen and the Royal Family, there will be a service at All Saints', Cottenham this Friday at 6pm. The Church of England is encouraging all parish churches to gather at this time if they are able. This will be an ecumenical service with contributions from the Baptist and Salvation Army ministers.

As the lockdown restrictions ease with garden visits (and soon indoor visits) permitted, please do let me know if you'd like me to pop in for a cuppa. There's limited time to catch up with folk on the church path after services, but I'm always happy to meet for a tea/coffee or to go for a walk. Just let me know.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be on Thursday 27th May at 7.30pm in the church. We do need to appoint a second Churchwarden as Graham Appleby must step down this year. If this is a role you are thinking about, do please speak to either myself or one of the existing wardens ASAP. We also would benefit from some more PCC members (meets 6 times a year), particularly a representative from the village of Rampton. Again, get in touch to find out more.

If you've joined the church over the last year and/or are not yet on the Electoral Roll, forms will be available at both churches over the next few weeks.

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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