

# ST DENYS

STANFORD IN THE VALE



## Friday Fellowship News No 37, 8 January 2021

### **A VERY JOYFUL NEW YEAR!**

MAY I start by wishing you all a very Joyful and Peace-filled New Year.

I choose my words very carefully as, in the current climate, 'happy' is not a word that addresses the reality of the severity of the situation, but neither does it reflect the truths we have as Christians that whatever we go through, God has promised to be there with us 'in the fire' and in the 'valley of the shadow' etc.

And so, despite the trials of 2020, the tragic deaths and the lack of human contact we all crave, my prayer for you is that in every day of 2021, you might know something of an inner joy, an inner contentment, an inner peace knowing that ultimately God *is in control*, He wants the best for you and that He will be faithful and is always only a prayer away.

A prayer for the coming year:

***"Lord Jesus help me  
To know myself and know you  
To desire nothing if not you  
To forget myself and love you  
To do everything because of you.***

***Look upon me that I may love you  
Call me that I may see you  
And in eternity may I delight in you. Amen. St  
Augustine of Hippo.***

### **BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES/NEWS**

IF you have a Birthday, or an anniversary coming up, or some news to share with the wider church family, please email me at [vicar@stdenys.org](mailto:vicar@stdenys.org) so that we can include it in Friday Fellowship News.

### **THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT**

FOLLOWING Monday's statement by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, detailing new restrictions in England to control the spread of Covid-19, The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of

England's Covid Recovery Group, said: "The Prime Minister's words tonight underline the severity of the situation for the country, as the virus continues to spread rapidly. At a time like this, the Church is here to offer comfort and spiritual support to everyone. We have a duty to care for each other, but particularly those who are vulnerable or who may be most at risk.



"The Government has chosen not to suspend public worship in England at this time and we will continue to follow the guidance and ensure that churches remain as safe as possible. The Government guidance on the safe use of places of worship makes clear that those attending a place of worship must not mingle with anyone outside their household or support bubble.

"However, some may feel that it is currently better not to attend in person, and there will be parishes which decide to offer only digital services for the time-being. Clergy who have concerns, and others who are shielding, should take particular care and stay at home.

"I would urge everyone in our churches to pray for those on the front line in our public services - the NHS and those working in social care, for schools and many others on whom

we depend; and for parents and carers of children at this anxious and stressful time.

*“There is hope. The vaccination programme is underway and, as Christians, we have a deeper hope in God that comforts us beyond fear itself. As we have been remembering this Christmas Season, even in the midst of our darkest fears, that hope brings light.”*

At present, it seems as though the Government is content for churches to remain open, due to the Covid-safe measures we have. The Revd Nigel Knight-Johnson is happy to continue to come and help with leading/preaching etc and so, at present, **we shall continue with the weekly 1015am service but, the PCC shall obviously keep this under close review.**

Please note that whilst it is incredibly tempting to linger and talk to people – even outside of church after – ANY close contact with people poses a potential risk, and we have tried our hardest to ensure services are as safe as possible, so please do all you can to avoid the temptation and if necessary, go home and telephone the person you wanted to speak to. Sorry, but at present we are having to be as strict as we can – for the sake of all.

The sermons each Sunday will be followed up with Questions which you might want to use for either personal reflection and/or group use. This could be within a Home Group or, you might want to link up with one or two others in the church family over zoom and share our reflections with each other?

The next 6 weeks or so will be hard, but I am confident that as a church family we shall continue to look out for each other and maintain contact – especially with those who are isolated. If you have a specific prayer need, or are finding things particularly tough, please do give me a call 710267.

## **BIBLE READINGS FOR SUNDAY**

THE Bible readings are Psalm 121, Philippians 4: 4-9 and Mark 1: 4-11, the Baptism of Christ Sunday, though my New Year Sermon will be on living 2021 without worry, but in faith and hope, A hard copy of my sermon will be emailed on Sunday to all on the FFNews circulation list, complete with personal/group questions that you may wish to use in the coming week.

## **PRAYER TOPICS**

Saturday – our local NHS staff

Sunday – local churches, worshipping today

Monday – Stanford Primary School

Tuesday – all facing financial hardship

Wednesday – thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness

Thursday – the isolated members of our church

Friday – Gavin Collins as he prepares to come to the diocese and become the new Bishop of Dorchester

## **THANK YOU**

A HUGE thank you to Margaret and Nigel, and to Peter and Roger (churchyard/floodlights) for all their hardwork ensuring that all services are currently run so well, and so safe for the good of all. Thanks too to all on the Covid-19 Task Group, to Yvette Upton for her work with young families and to all of you who work so quietly behind the scenes, making our church family the supportive place it is. Thank you.

## **BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

EVERY Sunday, at 9am, several members of our Book of Common Prayer congregation read the service in their own homes. Whilst they are doing it individually, knowing other members of the 9am BCP Congregation are also reading the service, at the same time, reading the Bible passages given in FFNews, and saying the Creed, unites them in fellowship.

I am attaching with this edition of FFNews the BCP Holy Communion and Evening Prayer Service that we use so if this is of any help, you may join them. If you do, please let me know so I can tell the others for their encouragement.

## **PRAYERS**

O Lord of Grace, a new year is before me and in my weakness I look to You for strength. If I venture forth alone I will stumble and fall, but on my Beloved's arms I am as firm as the eternal hills. If left to the treachery of my own heart I will shame your name, but if enlightened, guided, upheld by your Spirit I will bring You glory.

Be my arm to support, my strength to stand, my light to see, my feet to run, my shield to protect, my sword to repel, my sun to warm.

I accept your faithfulness for my unworthiness, your purity for my uncleanness, your meekness for my pride, your constancy for my backslidings, your fullness for my emptiness, your obedience for my lawlessness, your glory for my shame, your righteousness for my dead works, and your death for my life.

AMEN

## **ST DENYS KIDS**

ST Denys Kids, whilst currently unable to meet in person, is running virtually each Sunday, led by Yvette Upton. At 10.15am 6 families that normally come will gather online (Except for Sunday 17th Jan and 14th Feb - where it will be a wider Denys Kids/Messy Church catch up at 4pm on zoom). Please pray for these families.

**Revd Paul Eddy, Vicar.**

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**www.stdenys.org**