



Letter #45 Church Family email 05/11/2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” [Joel 2:12,13]

As we enter the new lockdown the Archbishops have sent out a letter to all the clergy encouraging our churches to make November a month of prayer and to fast on Thursdays. Many of us may be unfamiliar with the practice of fasting and so Matt and I have put together a short conversation on Zoom which [you can access here](#). Also, there is a printed summary that you can [download here](#) which also includes suggestions for prayer. Linking in with dedicating Thursdays as a day of prayer and fasting we are opening the church building for private prayer 10am-2pm Thursdays. Above all, let us use the above words in Joel 2:12,13 as a reminder to return to the Lord ourselves and as an encouragement to pray that as a nation we turn back to Christ.

During this time of national lockdown, the church office will be closed **EXCEPT** for Thursdays between 10am and 2pm. Access will be available via the office into the church for private prayer and to collect any books, cards or Bible reading notes which have been pre-ordered from [Peter in the book shop](#).

Joining us on Sunday online:

With the new lockdown measures now in force our buildings are closed on Sundays and we resume an exclusive focus on online services:

- St Nicholas Sunday morning livestream – at **10am**
- St Nicholas @ Lady Boswell’s morning livestream – at **10am**
- St Nicholas Sunday evening Zoom service – at **6:30pm**

To access all our Sunday services, go to the website [here](#).

After the morning online gatherings there will be the opportunity to catch up with friends through Zoom Coffee. See the [website here](#) for all details.

Praying for this Sunday

- Pray for our main morning services and for the tech teams as they prepare during this week and especially on Sunday morning. Pray for Matt preaching on John 15:13 ‘Greater love has no man ...’ and for me preaching on Mark 7 at the online Lady Boswell’s service and at the



evening service on Zoom. Let us remember 2 Timothy 2:9 that ‘God’s word is not chained’ and that even in lockdown the Lord is well able to work effectively through his word.

- Please pray for me on Remembrance Sunday morning 8 November. Subject to any late changes in the guidelines, I will be leading a small open air gathering on behalf of the Town Council at the War Memorial on the Vine at 10:55am. To conform to Covid guidelines it has been planned as a very small affair with just a handful of poppy wreaths being laid by the Mayor, our MP, Laura Trott and the British Legion. The [event is going to be livestreamed](#). Please pray that it would be a fitting and appropriate event which points people to the Lord Jesus.
- Especially in this new lockdown let us remember those who are on their own, both within the church family and the wider community, and let us pray that as a church we would be eager to demonstrate the Lord’s compassion in word and deed.

Knowing Life

This resource continues to grow. There are now three videos posted in our YouTube Channel in the Knowing Life series. Each short video examines an aspect of the theme of ‘Life’ from John’s Gospel. Another session will be added next Monday at 8pm. Now that we are in lockdown why not send one on to a friend? [Click here](#).

Lockdown Prayer Gatherings

The Archbishops are encouraging us to prioritise prayer during the November lockdown. You may well wish to gather with family, friends or Home Group members on a regular basis in the coming weeks. In addition to these personal initiatives we will also hold a few 15 minute prayer opportunities on Zoom each week. To access these prayer times, [go to the website here](#):

- Monday evenings at 8pm
- Thursday mornings at 8am

Tearfund Quiz on Zoom – Saturday 14 November 6.30 - 8pm

The devastating impact of the pandemic on the world’s poorest has made this year one of Tearfund’s most challenging yet. As we find ourselves staying at home once again during lockdown, Tearfund’s Big Quiz Night is a fun way for us to get together as a compassionate Christian community and to show our support and thanks for Tearfund’s life-changing work. I warmly encourage everyone – families, friends, home groups or just by yourself – to take up the challenge! To help the organisers it is important to sign up as a team or individually beforehand - [please email Martin](#). Please also see [this video for more details](#) (it’s worth a watch!). Recommended donation is £5 per person.

Samaritan’s Purse: Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal

We have a final opportunity to get involved in the Shoebox appeal. It took me only a few minutes to follow [the link here to donate](#) a pre-packed shoebox together with a gospel booklet which will be sent out to a child in need at Christmas. This year we have a special message from an ‘Angel’ ... the name of the person who was going to visit the church but whose [video message can be found here](#). Donating a filled shoebox online is the only practical way forwards to support this ministry now that we are in lockdown, to enable children in need to know the love of Christ.



Christmas Choir

Please forgive me for getting dates and days confused last week! With Christmas in mind if you would like to take part in the virtual choir for one or two well-known Christmas carols then please note that Graham Cassford is kindly organising a Zoom call **Thursday 12 November at 3pm** to sing 'O come all ye faithful' and a week later on **Thursday 19 November at 3pm** to sing 'Hark the Herald'. If you want to get involved [please contact Graham](#)

Caring for Creation

A number will be praying for God's creation and particularly for action on climate change in the run up to the summit being held in Glasgow next year. The aim is to meet monthly via Zoom beginning on Wednesday November 11th at 9.15 am. Please contact Paul Williams [by email](#) or on 01732 459129 if you would like to be involved.

Finally, a song and a prayer linking in with Remembrance Sunday themes

The song is '[Abide with me](#)' sung by King's College, Cambridge

The prayer is the Collect for the third Sunday before Advent:

Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority, and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Warmly in Christ,

Angus MacLeay

To access the links in today's letter, please use the details below:

Click here	To watch the video on fasting
Click here	To download Prayer & Fasting summary
Click here	To contact Peter in the book shop
Click here	For online services details
Click here	For details of the Zoom Coffees
Click here	To watch the Remembrance Sunday service from the Vine
Click here	For the 'Knowing Life' course videos
Click here	Details of the Lockdown Prayer Gatherings
Click here	Tearfund Quiz info video
Click here	To contact Martin Laing about the Tearfund Quiz
Click here	To donate a pre-packed shoebox for Samaritan's Purse
Click here	To watch a special message from Angel (Samaritan's purse)
Click here	To contact Graham Cassford about the Christmas Choir
Click here	To contact Paul Williams about Caring for Creation
Click here	To listen to 'Abide with me'