



Letter #12 Church Family 21/04/2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*“But I trust in you, Lord;
I say, “You are my God.”
¹⁵My times are in your hands;
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.” Psalm 31:14,15*

In this Psalm David feels completely forgotten in a context where there is ‘terror on every side’ (see Psalm 31:12,13). Perhaps some of us feel the same as we struggle on in lockdown, aware of the rising figures of Covid-19 related deaths in hospitals and care homes. But notice David’s response in the verses quoted above. Isn’t it an encouragement to know that our times are indeed in the Lord’s hands?

1. Encouragement from God’s Word

- i. I have not included a video message today, as I will be speaking live on Psalm 46 this evening at 7:30pm (see below for further details).
- ii. However, my latest talk on the Book of Ruth ‘What is the Lord doing when life tastes bitter?’ is now available (audio only) [click here](#).

2. Prayer

- i. Our dependence on the Lord is most evident in our commitment to pray. I know that many are seeking to pray regularly at 7:30pm each evening. I’ve also heard of a number of people joining together on Zoom or on the phone to pray briefly together at this point in the day.
- ii. This evening, Tuesday 21 April we should have been holding our Annual Meeting. As this has had to be postponed, we are going to hold a short meeting at 7:30pm open to anyone across our six congregations. I will give a brief word on Psalm 46 and then we will pray in breakout groups for the nation. Then the plan is, internet permitting, to hear from Jane Oden in Naples, before finishing our short time together in groups praying for the Odens and for each other, ending promptly at 8pm.

3. Supporting each other

- i. We realise that not everybody has access to the internet. Though we have been in touch by letter and phone with these individuals we recognise that it would be great if we could find a way for them to link into the services. Sue Stimson has kindly organised a system to enable this to happen, explained [here](#), and so if you are in touch with someone in this situation I would be very grateful if you could find a way to enable them to access our services by phone.
- ii. The Bishop of Maidstone has written to all the churches who come under his oversight to encourage us. He was due to join us for our Confirmation service in May which has also had to be postponed. You can access his letter by [clicking here](#).



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- iii. You will also be aware that John Truscott was commissioned to produce a Report about how we might address some of the financial and other challenges we face as a church family. He has produced a full and thorough report for the PCC to help us think through some key issues, such as our Vision, our structures and our staffing and, in addition, has kindly produced a short synopsis for church members. Please pray for the PCC and an Implementation Group, chaired by Ben Stone, as we get to grips with some of the challenges! To access the synopsis, [click here](#).

As always, we finish with a song and a prayer.

The song is '[His mercy is more](#)'. We have sung it several times over the last year. What a great reminder of God's mercy and love!

The prayer has been written by the Director of the Church Society, Lee Gatiss, which he has entitled the 'corona collect':

Heavenly Father, our ever-present help in trouble, our fortress and our God: calm the anxious fears of all who turn to you; give strength and healing to those who are sick, and courage and skill to those who care for them; grant wisdom and clarity to those in authority; and humble us all to call upon you that we may be saved not only in this life, but also for that which is to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Warmly in Christ,
Angus MacLeay

To access the articles / items referred to in the letter, use the links below:

[Click here](#)

Audio message from Ruth 1

[Click here](#)

Telephone access instructions to Sunday services

[Click here](#)

To read the Bishop of Maidstone's letter

[Click here](#)

To read the Synopsis of the John Truscott report

[Click here](#)

To listen to His mercy is more

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The MyChurchSuite App is available for both [Android](#) and [iPhone/iPad](#) and is easy to download and use. We recommend that you use it to stay up to date with church communications especially at this time of uncertainty.

Contact the office if you need help with any of this (office@stnicholas-sevenoaks.org)