

Christ Church, Dalbeattie & St. Ninian's Castle, Douglas
SC010918 & SC011079
Newsletter No. 2

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore;²⁴ and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Genesis 37: 23,24

Life for some of us has been reduced to just the walls of our homes. This will be easier to bear for some of us than others. In some respects being in isolation is giving us the time to do things that we may only have dared dreamed of (for me having a vegetable patch), but for others, the involuntary clipping of our wings will seem like solitary confinement – even if it is for our own good, and the safety of others. I am reminded of the hopeless situation of Joseph when he was flung into the pit by his brothers, and the other seemingly hopeless situation in Genesis when Hagar flung Ishmael under a bush in the wilderness, when the animal skin holding the water ran out¹. Both situations looked hopeless, but God had the last word. All was well! This truly has become the time when we ‘drink from our own wells’. Though our daily routines have been changed, perhaps beyond recognition, and the joy of socialising and the norms of meeting and greeting have radically altered – God is still with us!

I cannot help thinking that this is a real Lent, and we have entered a desperate ‘wilderness’. Yet, we are not alone. God is with us, as He was with Joseph, and Hagar & Ishmael. It is a time for keeping Faith. Church is not just about buildings, we are learning through this crisis to be church in different ways. You may have joined the Primus last Sunday for a Eucharist in Bp. Mark’s private chapel, at Arpafeelie www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship. (I understand it has been watched 3,200 times!) You will see, elsewhere in this newsletter, that there is a ‘Service of Spiritual Communion’ in which you may like to participate. There is also an opportunity to join a Christ Church and St. Ninian’s Prayer Chain. We can and are being ‘church in new ways!’ The important thing is to pray together even if we are separated. If possible pray, however briefly, on a Sunday, at the service times when we would usually make Eucharist. (You may like to phone someone who would attend the service and pass the ‘Peace’ verbally or by text). Also you may join me in prayer at 9am each day, as I celebrate the Eucharist. It could be a short simple prayer or half an hour in prayer or meditation or using short Order of Service of Spiritual Communion on p.5 of this letter. (Please do not hesitate to let me know anyone, or situation, for which you would like prayers.)

¹ Gen 21: 15

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In embracing our seemingly hopeless pit, as Joseph must have had to do, or being in despair, like Hagar. Let us embrace our metaphorical desert this Lent, as it excludes us from our normal everyday lives. May this be a time of renewal led by the Spirit that resides in you and me through baptism, and may we be open to the Spirit and the changes it will inevitably bring. If you read the story of Joseph or Hagar, in the book of Genesis, you will hear how God rescued them. Just as He will rescue us. If you are feeling lonely and would like to talk please do not hesitate to phone me Christopher 01556 505894, Helen 01556 504007 or Christine 01556 670275.

I found this quote that you may find useful

“Prayer can turn a kitchen into an altar, a quarantine into a Lenten pilgrimage, a hospital room into an Upper Room, and an ordinary person into a witness. The Word who is Christ remains in the voice of his witness”²

May God continue to bless and protect you and keep you safe.

Yours in Christ

Christopher
Rector

PRAYER CHAIN

During this difficult time we are all moved to prayer, but we can't come together to pray. A prayer chain enables us to support each other in our prayer intentions and to pray on behalf of others who find it difficult to pray themselves.

This is how it works: one person (person A) is the point of contact. Anyone may get in touch to ask for prayer, naming the person or intention to be prayed for and, if desired, briefly describing why prayer is needed. The contact person keeps a record of all requests for prayer. On a given day of the week, at a given time, (e.g. every Monday morning at 10am), person A

² Church Times 27th March 2020 p.13

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phones the next person in the chain, person B, and tells him all the prayer requests. Person B then calls the next contact, person C, and passes on the information, and so on until every person in the chain is informed. Each member of the chain will pray daily for the prayer requests. Of course, details are strictly confidential to those in the group. Ideally, every member of the chain would pray at the same time each day, but this probably isn't practical. Hopefully it will be possible to arrange at least one day in the week when everyone can pray at the same time

You may wonder why this can't be done more simply by email. It can, but at this time a telephone call brings people together in fellowship. However, email is not banned!

Sandra Walsh is willing to facilitate a group and to be the contact person. If you would like to take part, please call 01557 331596 or email sandrawalshkbt@yahoo.com

Sunday Worship, broadcast every Sunday on Radio 4 after the 8 am news. The form and style of the service varies, depending on the denomination hosting the broadcast. This results in a varied and enriching experience of worship. St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, participates regularly. Last Sunday, the first of our isolation, the Archbishop of Canterbury and his Chaplain led a meditation from his private chapel at Lambeth Palace, supported by four singers performing in their own church of St. Martin in the Fields. This was an innovative and moving worship experience. The Easter broadcasts promise to be interesting in the present circumstances. Why not try it?

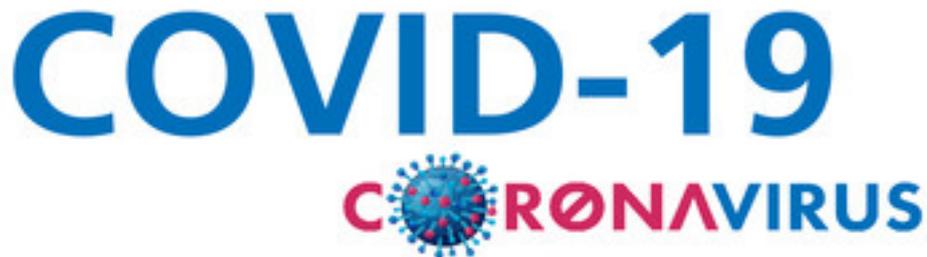
Food Bank 'New Life' Castle Douglas

You will be aware of the acute shortage of tinned food etc in the shops which is causing great difficulties for our local food bank in keeping impoverished families fed. The New Life Food Bank would be grateful for continued donations of food or money and cheque donations into their office payable to 'New Life Community Church' for the attention of the foodbank at Blackpark Road, Castle Douglas, DG7 1DJ. This foodbank supports the needy in Castle Douglas & Dalbeattie.

Meditation in this Age of Anxiety

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Meditation is a wonderful way of deepening our relationship with God. It is also proven to lower blood pressure and anxiety which maybe a helpful side effect in these difficult days. There are many resources on line <https://www.wccm.org> & <https://www.onlinemeditationwccm.org>



Sign Up to Receive Email Alerts from the Council

We are sending this to all email topic subscribers. If you wish to receive updates from the Council, which will include a wide range of information about how public services and local communities are responding to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, please click on the link below and sign up for the Council News topic.

[Click here to sign up to receive Council News](#)

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDGC/subscriber/new>

Holy Week Retreat at Home 5th (Palm Sunday) to 12th (Easter Sunday) April

This year Holy Week and Easter will be very different. To make it memorable there will be the opportunity to walk together from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) to the Resurrection (Easter Sunday). We will make available by email and our website <https://dcdchurches.org.uk/> (and will attempt by post) to send a meditation or a thought each day with a short service. If you would like to join in this Retreat and walk together as 'Christ's body' please let me know by email cg.ketley@zen.co.uk or tel. 01556 505894. I am also exploring the possibility of posting communion, in one kind, for Easter Sunday so that we might make our communion together.

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A Service of Spiritual Communion

The Anglican Communion has a short Order of Service of Spiritual Communion that you may like to follow:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/Guidance%20on%20Spiritual%20Communion%20and%20Coronavirus.pdf>

The eucharist is at once the sacrament of the Upper Room, Calvary, and the empty tomb. It is both a meal and an offering. Within the eucharist we encounter the Risen Christ as our sacrifice and food. During these difficult days I will be offering up the Eucharist on our behalf and you may like to join me at 9am daily in your home in prayer. These are indeed strange days. It feels unnatural for priests to be separated from people at times such as this. In *The Plague* by Albert Camus, priest and people could meet together, and receive the Sacraments. How different is our situation today? A former Archbishop once wrote at the heart of the work of a priest is "being with God with the people on your heart." This is how (as I always do) I will be praying for you and our situation as I preside each day at the Eucharist. Please join me in prayer, and perhaps use this brief liturgy. The gospel readings and prayer themes I will be using are below:

Gospel Readings for Wc 29th March

Passion Sunday:	John 11: 1-45
Monday	John 8: 12-20
Tuesday	John 8: 21-30
Wednesday	John 8: 31-42
Thursday	John 8: 51-59
Friday	John 10: 31-42
Saturday	John 11: 45-56

Prayer Themes for Wc. 29th March

Passion Sunday:	Our Church Community, Diocese, and Province
Monday:	The NHS, our local surgeries, and all at DGRI
Tuesday:	For those affected by the Coronavirus
Wednesday:	Our local community
Thursday:	The Government and all in authority
Friday:	Refugees throughout the world especially in Syria
Saturday:	Guidance of the Holy Spirit, and ourselves

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You may also like to consider this poem which is appropriate for this moment.
It was brought to my attention by Mary Collins:

Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent

*When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."*

John Milton

A prayer for this part of our journey:

Unseen God, Creator of all things, open our eyes to discover what is now hidden from our sight. Teach us how to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at your right hand. We ask this in His name. Amen³

³ Prayer by Fr Michael Casey O.S.B.