



ST. PANCRAS CHURCH

## ST PANCRAS NEWSLETTER – 24 JUNE 2020

### GOOD NEWS FOR OUR CITY

The prime minister yesterday today that lockdown will be significantly eased from 4<sup>th</sup> July. This is welcome news for our community, our city, and our nation. Even as we celebrate, let's continue to remember in prayer the many people that are still being severely impacted by COVID-19 and those who remain particularly vulnerable in our communities. Nevertheless, yesterday's announcement is encouraging news for families, businesses, communities and churches across Plymouth.

The easing of lockdown also means that we can continue toward the phased reopening of St Pancras Church. We will be able to start meeting again face-to-face rather than on computer screens. Hurray! That will be a great relief for many of us, especially those of us who have not been able to join online. Church services, however, will remain markedly different for some time to come. We will not be allowed to sing together indoors or play any brass instruments (!) or share a hug during the peace. Details remain sketchy as I write, and we will continue to abide by advice from the government and from the diocese as we assess the risks involved and plan accordingly. I will be consulting with the church wardens and the Church Council and we will confirm more details with you in due course. In the meantime, the church continues to be open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons and at other times by appointment.



One of the challenges of church life is not to allow it to consume all our time and all our love. Instead churches are supposed to exist as much for their non-members as for their members. That's one of the reasons why we've been reading through the book of Jonah on Sundays. All of us will immediately connect Jonah and the whale. But the book of Jonah is much more than a Sunday school story. You might like to read it as a back-and-forth conversation between God and the increasingly grumpy Jonah. At the end of the book, God gives Jonah a final challenge: 'Should I not be concerned about the great city?' (Jonah 4.10 )

We too need to share God's concern for our great city. As Christians we are called to be witnesses to God's love and authority. That's why you'll find some notices about some of the things that Christians are doing across the city, from the Food Bank and St Luke's to our own work with emergency food provision. Let's continue to seek the good of Plymouth, the peace and prosperity of the people who make it home, and to share eternally good news: the Christian gospel.

Every blessing in Jesus Christ,

Lawrence

## CHURCH NOTICES

We were saddened this week with the news that **George and Yvonne's little granddaughter Evie passed away** on Tuesday morning (her death was not COVID related). Evie's short life, despite being marked by difficulty, brought great joy and laughter to many people, especially her family. Yvonne and George have asked that we pray for the family at this sad time.

**Kevin and Sue Elliston have made their farewells** to Plymouth and are moving this week up to be nearer Sue's parents in Norfolk. Having been at St Pancras for 38 years, Sue and Kevin have contributed to church life in countless ways and will leave a big space as they go. We look forward to hearing how God will bless others through them as they settle into a new home and new church.

If you would like to get in touch with them, please contact [lawrence.braschi@stps.org.uk](mailto:lawrence.braschi@stps.org.uk)

Together with Provide Devon and funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) we are **expanding the provision of emergency food to our community** in Pennycross and Honicknowle. The food is going to help 45-50 families each week who have been identified as being at risk by local schools and social workers. If you are able to help on a Wednesday afternoon to sort food and put it into bags, or to help deliver food to vulnerable families, please do speak to Lawrence or Mariska. Please keep your spare egg boxes and let us have them when you can.

The **next Bridging the Gap will be on Monday 13 July**. David Curry will be speaking to us about caring for our living churchyard, including being a safe place for wildlife and an inviting place for prayer and reflection. David is the Diocesan Environmental Officer and a former member of St Pancras. The meeting will be on Zoom beginning at 7.15 and open to everyone.

If you would like to join any of our Zoom services please contact [lawrence.braschi@stps.org.uk](mailto:lawrence.braschi@stps.org.uk)

The Prayer Ministry team are offering a prayer ministry service over the phone. If you would like to pray with someone in confidence then please do contact Derek Gribble \_\_\_\_\_

## ST P'S CAKE BAKE SATURDAY

What do you do on a Saturday in June during the lockdown. It's obvious, you bake cakes!!

Last Saturday we launched into the St P's Cake Bake day where several folk met up at 09:30 on Zoom for the official start. The rules of engagement were as follows:

## Rules of Engagement

- *Must be fun*
- *It's not a competition*
- *The theme can be anything*
- *It can be as simple or complicated as you want*
- *Disasters are allowed*
- *Send in pics of your creation*
- *Meet up at 5:00 pm to eat cake and drink tea.*

We all left the Zoom meeting and ventured out into the world of cake baking. I think it was fair to say we didn't realise what fun we were going to have. When we met back on Zoom at 17:00 we were able to share pictures of our cakes, drink tea and, of course, eat cake.

Here are some picture of the amazing cake creations.

<p>The Barnes Family Welsh Cake</p> 	<p>Chris and Phil's rich fruit Cake</p> 	<p>Vanessa and Colin's Black Forest Gateau</p> 
<p>Tricia and Derek's Caravan Cake</p> 	<p>Derek's Men's Breakfast Cake</p> 	<p>Kerrie's beautiful Flower Cake</p> 
<p>The Vicarage Jonah and the Whale Cake</p> 	<p>The Walker Family's Birthday Cake for Jack</p> 	<p>The Sharland Family's Beach Party Cake</p> 

[Thanks to Derek Gribble for organising the day and providing this summary]

## **PLYMOUTH FOOD BANK AND COVID-19**

Since the COVID outbreak and the subsequent lockdown in the middle of March we have seen significant increases in the number of people requiring our help. To put this into perspective in the last two weeks of March alone, we saw an increase of over 200%. Overall across the country Foodbanks saw an increase of around 130%, thus making the Plymouth centre one of the busiest in the UK after London. The reasons for referral were many and varied and not just the usual issues of low income, debt and benefit delays, although these were still predominantly the primary reasons. I have put together some statistics below which I hope you may find useful where comparisons year on year can be made:

March 2019 :

Processed 354 vouchers, feeding 671 people. (Average of 55 people per FB session).

Distributing 5,988 Kg of food.

April 2019 :

Processed 327 vouchers, feeding 626 people. (Average of 52 people per FB session).

Distributing 6,114 Kg of food.

March 2020 :

Processed 514 vouchers, feeding 1,201 people. (Average of 100 people per FB session).

Distributing 9,600 Kg of food.

April 2020:

Processed 507 vouchers, feeding 1,071 people. (Average of 90 people per FB session).

Distributing 10,303 Kg of food.

There have been single daily sessions over recent weeks when we were providing food to over 160 people.

This has of course made each Foodbank session more challenging than ever, not just through the increase in numbers requiring our help, but also the strict need to apply social distancing and provide PPE for all our wonderful volunteers and staff. We have also had to close the centre as a cafe and more importantly as a place of social welfare and educational learning and support, which was so key, particularly to the local community. We are only operating the Foodbank out of the centre at this time but look forward to restarting our wider support again once everything gets back to normal.

So far I have only touched on the more concerning and difficult issues, however the most overriding and positive thing to come from this difficult time is the amazing love, help and support that has been shown to the Foodbank as we seek to serve those in need. People have responded in so many inspiring and wonderful ways with donations of food on a smaller personal level, to larger organisations and supermarkets. In the same way that the number of people needing the Foodbank has increased, so have we been hugely blessed by a significant increase in donations of food.

We now have regular weekly deliveries of food donations from the major supermarkets including Morrisons and Tesco after they pledged to nationally support UK Foodbanks,

alongside British Gas, who working with the Trussell Trust, provide furloughed engineers to assist us with food collection and deliveries to those who are unable to collect their food parcel owing to illness, shielding at home etc. We have also been truly touched and overwhelmed by the generosity of individuals, families, local organisations, groups and churches who have so graciously supported us in many incredible ways.

Thank you so much for all the kindness, love and blessed support you all continue to give the Plymouth Foodbank. Please hold us in your prayers, praying for the volunteers and staff as we seek to serve and glorify God in this way, but especially for all those who are in desperate need at this time and look to the Foodbank to find hope and support.

God bless you and thank you again.

Andrew Denham (Plymouth Foodbank Project Coordinator)

## ST LUKE'S HOSPICE AND COVID-19



Throughout the pandemic St Lukes has continued to provide terminally ill people and their families with first class care, whether at home, in hospital or at the Hospice. However, many changes have had to be made.

Probably the hardest change of all was that since visiting at Derriford and the Hospice at

Turnchapel had to be stopped, families could no longer be with their loved ones in their most vulnerable time. During this time the medical teams and other staff have continually supported in every way possible their patients. All the shops had to close, and charity and fundraising events have had to be postponed. Most of the volunteers of which there are many, myself included, have been asked to stay at home and stay safe and many of the employed staff from the retail section have taken on these roles.

This week as lockdown is beginning to ease, St Lukes is making tentative steps to open things up. Very limited visiting at the Hospice is now being allowed, with stringent safety procedures in place.

One of the shops, where Toys R Us used to be, is opening as this is their largest shop and social distancing is possible. It is hoped that other shops will be able to open up later.

A limited number of volunteers are being invited back to return if they wish.

Throughout it all staff, whether medical, admin, maintenance, cooks, healthcare assistants etc have worked tirelessly to maintain the highest level of care possible and will always strive to do so.

Maggie Dyson

## PRAYING THE PSALMS – PSALM 1

[You can read Psalm 1 [here](#)]

Psalm 1 is the first in the collection of psalms or poems. It clearly compares between two ways of being. There is the way of the righteous and the way of the sinner. It describes both ways and it tells of the outcomes of each. The reader is granted a choice of the way to be.

It is no accident that it is placed as the first since it describes the position or mindset of those who would be godly, those who would have their prayers heard by a just God. As the first one it has an overarching theme for the rest of the psalms.

The reader is drawn to make comparison: one way leads to destruction, the other to flourishing. It exhorts the reader to make the choice of righteousness. There are only these two paths. This is the only differentiator. The paths are not marked by gender, wealth, race or profession. The description is of the character of the person; the consequence is the condition of the person.

The way of the righteous is to delight in the law of the Lord, and not only to delight in it, but to meditate on it throughout the day and the night. It is constantly on the mind of the person who is righteous. What does that mean practically? Does the person sit poring over the law without ceasing? That would be difficult in a literal sense. It is the general sense that the law is never far from their thoughts. One who meditates on a particular theme will begin to imbibe it and it will become a place where the thoughts will return again and again. If you have ever read a novel or watched a drama on television and been caught up in the story you are likely to have found yourself returning to the plot whilst doing something else. We all have things which occupy our attention in moments of abstraction. Those who find themselves remembering back towards walking with God are termed 'righteous.'

The righteous follow the law of the Lord as it is a just and holy law and can be freely consented to. It is something which can be mulled over, meditated on and happiness can be found in it. As we know that God provided the law, we know that the law is good. We need not dwell with those who scoff about the godly way. It is all too easy to find those people around. We are exhorted not to walk in the ways of the wicked.

Where will you find your direction? Will you sit with the scoffers and their wisdom or will you sit with the Lord and receive his true wisdom? Reflect on the psalm. Take it as a guide to explore the other psalms: and you will be blessed (happy), like a tree producing much fruit and keeping its leaves, and you will not wither but be prosperous. God watches over (or knows) your way.

Sarah Sharland