

Virus Update

Maundy Thursday, 9th April 2020

Dear friends,

This is a very strange Easter indeed- a Bank Holiday when people are on lock-down, no family get-togethers, no Easter Egg hunts, no church services. For Christians it means not being able to meet together for public worship and fellowship. That is hard and unsettling, but it does give us the opportunity to express our Christian faith in different ways. Many of us have embraced (wrestled?) new technology to



watch online services via our computers, iPads and phones. Others have invested the time wisely in reading and prayer. Others have lived out their faith in practical concern and care. Many have begun to sense a new community, a new sense of fellowship as we meet together in our own homes and at the same time watch online, singing along, following the readings, echoing in our hearts the prayers. Maybe we can 'be together', not defined physically, but spiritually. When Paul the Apostle talks about 'the Body of Christ' (1 Cor 12 and elsewhere), maybe we are grasping that great truth in new, refreshing ways. When

one part hurts, the whole Body suffers. During these unsettling times we need to be open to God showing us new things in new ways. When this present crisis ends, and it will end, will the Church be all the stronger? I pray that it will, and we will all have learned important new lessons.

Easter Services

Please do persevere in looking at our video content on the church Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/stlawrencelechlade/videos

You do not need to start a Facebook account to access them! I know some of you have had trouble viewing, so please do get in contact if we can help.

Good Friday Video

You can see our Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday recordings and also view our new 35min devotional video for Good Friday, which features narration by Kathy Druce, reflections by me, and images from Gethsemane on our recent trip to Israel and scenes from our own churchyard. Many thanks to Tom Emmerson for editing. None of us are professionals, but we all wanted to produce something to help folks think more about the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and what it means for us today.



Small Groups

Many of you had signed up for Lent Groups this year, but sadly these had to be curtailed because of the recent restrictions on movement. We would love to put on some online groups for prayer and Bible study, probably using the Zoom video conferencing software. (This is easy to use- you simply click on the ID link provided by an email. You may be asked to download a small piece of software to allow this to happen.)

The plan would be to all meet together online for a time of corporate worship and teaching, and then split up into smaller online Zoom groups for study and prayer. All groups would be studying the same material and each group would have a designated leader. It may take some getting used to, but many churches have found these online groups great for interaction and fellowship.

PLEASE LET US KNOW BY EMAIL OR TELEPHONE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN AN ONLINE SMALL GROUP. WE WILL THEN SEND YOU DETAILS



Foodbank

Thank you for your recent generosity in supporting needy families through the Foodbank. Donations are now accepted in Lynwood's Café in the Market Place in Lechlade. The Food bank is receiving five times the usual number of requests, but having to operate with only half the normal staff. Please do consider giving generously. The photo shows just some of the items being taken to the warehouse.



Prayer

Please do continue to use our dedicated and CONFIDENTIAL prayer email address if there is something on your heart and mind that you would like to be prayed for. Only the vicar and Denver Keegan (our Prayer Triplet co-ordinator) will view this email. We promise to pray for you.

prayer@stlawrencelechlade.org.uk

Also, if you would like to have someone pray with you on the other end of the phone, we would love to arrange that for you. Jean Brown is one of those who has happily volunteered to do this.

Finally...

We are Easter people. We have a hope forged through the death and physical resurrection of Jesus our Lord. In our sermon series recently we came across this verse from 1 Peter 3: *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...*

I know it's risky, but let's pray that God would use us (even us!) over this strange Easter time. We still have access to family and friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Let's pray that we would be bold enough to share something of our Christian faith with others. In this time of restrictions there are many who are fearful and anxious and need to hear about a loving God and his only Son, who overcame evil, sin and death. People to need to know that there is hope – an Easter hope.



Every blessing in the name of Christ our Lord.

Andrew Cinnamond

Vicar – St. Lawrence, Lechlade