

Well, we are still in lock-down and waiting for further news of the government relaxing the restrictions we are all learning to live under. This strange time is perhaps asking unsettling questions of us- have we got too used to unfettered, immediate access to a huge range of goods in our shops? Do we need to unlearn our attachment to our cars and constant journeying by land, sea and air? Have we taken for granted being able to meet people whenever and however we want? As Christians, have we always assumed the church building will be always available and we can take or leave it being able to physically meet with our church family and physically take Holy Communion? Being all too human, we often only value something when it has been taken away from us. Maybe there are lessons to be learnt and a new drive for a discipline of appreciation and gratitude.



Church services will resume in our church building at the appropriate time, as determined by the archbishops after advice from the government. It is very unlikely we will go back immediately to the pattern of worship we had before i.e. 8am, 10am and 6pm. It is likely socially distancing measures will still be in place, thus drastically reducing the seating capacity. It would mean a household could sit together on the same pew, but others would have to sit at opposite ends. Every other pew could be used, to keep a safe distance behind and in front. It may be that there would also be no singing, as this spreads diseases, no Holy Communion, and no refreshments afterwards. There may also be a straight forward ban on groups of people meeting together. Depending on the details, this could also represent another barrier to us having any semblance of normal services. If we cannot get everyone into the church, we may have to have multiple 'sittings' of the same service. I would like to emphasise that there are NO firm plans at the moment and I am working closely with our bishops and the PCC to ensure the transition back to our church building goes as smoothly as possible. Each church family is unique in its history and context and one size will certainly not fit all. We all have to be flexible and patient as and when we can restart public services. Please do pray for real wisdom to know the best timing and to sort out the myriad of details.

MIDWEEK ZOOM MEETINGS

We continue to meet together midweek in various groups by Zoom. Technology allows us to continue to learn together, pray together and have fellowship with one another. These are all open to absolutely anyone- please do contact us for the login details.

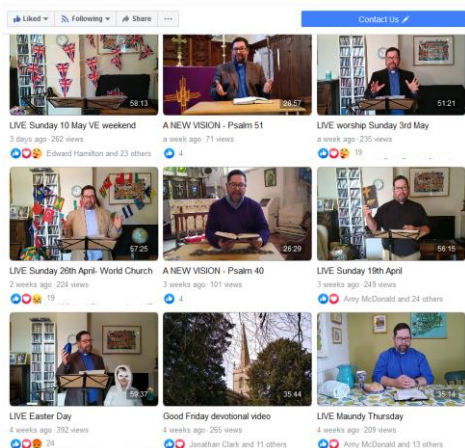
Monday	10am	Book Club – reading 'The Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan
Wednesday	10am	Parish Prayer Meeting
Thursday	7:30pm	Bible Study – looking at the New Testament letter of the Philippians



SUNDAY SERVICES

Join us live from the Vicarage, 10am every Sunday, on our church FACEBOOK page- link below. You do not need a Facebook account! On this page there are also recordings of previous services and teaching videos on the Psalms.

LINK: www.facebook.com/stlawrencelechlade/videos



YOUTH VIDEO

I am very aware that this is also a difficult time for parents and families. It seems many schools will be going back on 1st June, but this is not for all school years and it seems likely that some children will not be going back until the next academic year in September. Please do pray for our two Church of England primary schools in Lechlade and Southrop as they start up again with many different measures in place. Pray especially for the headteachers and governors in all their decision-making.

We also have produced a 30min video aimed at younger children with songs, prayers and a Bible story (using Lego!) looking at Jonah. Please do share this video as widely as you can with any primary school children you may know. (You can find it on the Facebook video page, link above.)

>> It would be great to encourage children to use their Lego to illustrate different Bible stories. Maybe as we are doing Daniel in our sermon series they may like to start with the stories in the book of Daniel? We would love to see them!



JONAH St. Lawrence Youth video

'THY KINGDOM COME'

This is a growing global prayer network running between Ascension and Pentecost. It aims to equip and encourage individual Christians and churches to grow in faith and prayer. There are lots of very helpful resources on their website, including videos, life stories, youth activities, prayer journals and a commitment to pray for our friends, family and neighbours to know Jesus for themselves.

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>



GIVING

We have commented publicly that our church finances have been under real pressure recently, but you have been most generous in your giving and our PCC Treasurer comments:

I would like to offer a special thank you, to all who have given to our special appeal during the last month. As you will be aware with the church being locked down, our income for the general running of the church from collections and visitors has completely dried up. But you as a fellowship have blessed us with your donations and I would ask all of you to prayerfully consider, if you can help us through this crisis, by continuing to give until we are able to open the doors of the church again.

May the Lord bless you, David Williams

PASTORAL

It is important that even as we settle into a new way of living and interacting that we do not forget those for whom this is an immensely stressful anxious time. Some have family working on the frontline in the NHS. Others have underlying health concerns and are looking for a time when an effective vaccine is available. Yet others are worried if they still have a job when the government furlough scheme is ended or if their business can survive the lockdown. Let's continue to keep an ear out for those who may need or help or just a shoulder to cry on. You can also use our dedicated confidential email address to get people to pray through your concerns: prayer@stlawrencelechlade.org.uk

We have also sadly lost some of those who worshipped with us at St. Lawrence church in Lechlade- Jim Pertwee, Tessa Hawkins and Maxine Ponsonby. We give thanks to God for their lives and we remind ourselves that we worship Christ who is our hope and the Resurrection and the Life.



FINALLY...

We will be using this prayer on Sunday as the final blessing for our Pentecost service:

*God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you
now and always. Amen.*

Yours in Christ's name,

Andrew Cinnamond