

Re-opening our buildings

With the relaxing of some government restrictions, the Church of England now allows church buildings to be used for individual private prayer. The St Lawrence church building is now open Mondays and Thursdays ONLY from 10am to 2pm. Please follow the signs in place respecting 2m social distancing, using sanitiser going in and out, and keeping to the marked route. Many thanks to our churchwardens, Richard Bell and Susan Holmes, for making this opening possible. There are still no plans for public worship services to re-start, but the situation is constantly developing – as they say, watch this space. Eastleach and Southrop are in the process of planning for re-opening – news to follow.



St Lawrence 'Inspire' Re-ordering Project

A few words from Nigel Jones, chair of our re-ordering committee:

We had planned to launch our consultation on the Project Inspire restoration and reordering proposals in October. The impact of the COVID-19 restrictions has slowed the project preparation activities and delayed visits by external advisors to the church. In addition, we are unsure what restrictions may still be in place in the Autumn. We have therefore decided to defer the consultation launch to Spring 2021.

Please do continue to pray for this important project, as we face the future thinking about our Christian mission and how we best use our church building in our community.



Midweek groups

It is amazing how quickly so many people have embraced technology to watch our online services and also to join in with midweek groups through the Zoom video conferencing software.

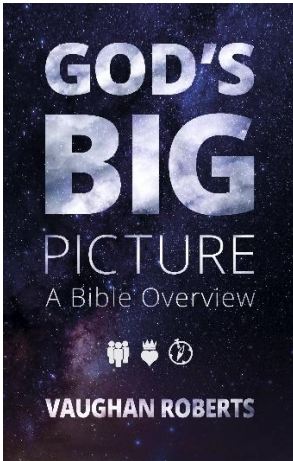
On Mondays at 10am about ten of us are enjoying a **book club** looking at John Bunyan's classic, 'The Pilgrim's Progress'. It may be a slightly unfamiliar format of a 17th Century allegory, but it has profound things to say to us about living and walking the Christian life.

On Wednesdays at 10am we join together for our **Parish Prayer Meeting** to pray for ourselves, but also our local community, nation and the wider world. There is always room for more people to get involved- you won't be asked to pray out loud, just join in as and when you want. Some pray *ex tempore*, others read out a printed prayer – either is fine.

On Thursday evenings at 7:30pm about 25 people gather together for a time of fellowship, prayer and **Bible study**. For the past few months we have been encouraged looking at the New Testament letter of Philippians through the 'Discipleship Explored' video course. We watch the videos all together then, through the marvels of technology, we break into smaller groups for discussion.

NEW midweek course

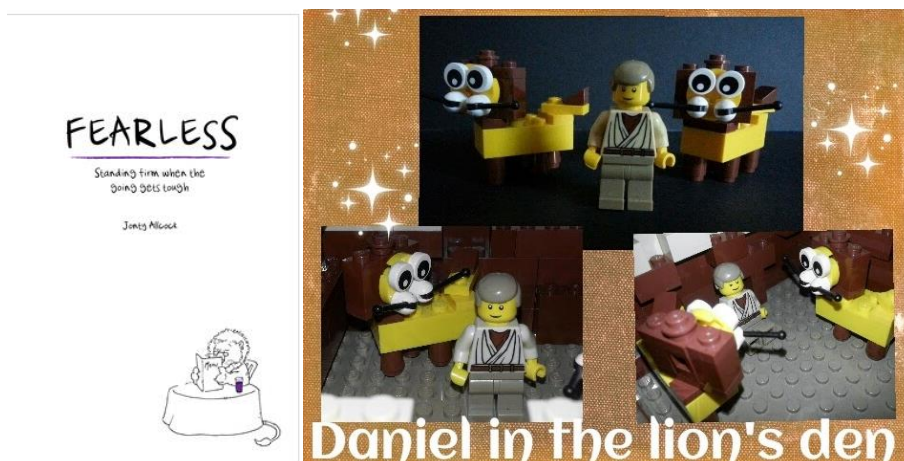
From the start of July, we will be beginning a new Thursday evening course called 'God's Big Picture'. It is an overview of the Bible, showing how it all fits together, from Genesis to Revelation. Over 9 weeks Revd Vaughan Roberts (Rector of St. Ebbe's Church in Oxford and one of the best Bible teachers I have ever come across) will guide you to understand the Word of God better. Again, everyone will watch the short video each week and then split into small groups for discussion. Each group will have leaders from the church family. The course is for absolutely everyone. If you would like to get involved, please do let me or Kate know and we will send you the Zoom details.



Daniel and LEGO...

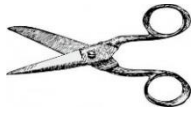
In our online services we are going through the Old Testament book of Daniel. We are learning lots about what it is like to live for God in often very difficult circumstances. If you have children at home, why not encourage them to take part and look at some of the true stories for themselves? They could also make some of the scenes out of LEGO or even make a stop-motion video! We would love to see them and use them in our services!

To help our secondary school age young people engage with Daniel, we have copies of a great book called 'Fearless' by Jonty Allcock, aimed at teenagers, helping them to be inspired by Daniel to stand firm under pressure and apply this exciting story to their lives. Please contact Kate if you would like a copy for your teenager.



>> Don't forget we have also made a video for primary school children looking at Jonah. It has songs, prayers, a talk, and even some locations around Lechlade and the Thames... You can find the video on our church Facebook videos page.

Snippets...



-As an encouragement during this time of social distancing, we are trying to put together a photo montage of us all to use during our Sunday service as a way of sharing with one another. Please email a photo of yourselves to me which we could use.

-‘The Bridge’ magazine- available online: www.lechladebridge.org.uk.

-Church Donations- please continue to be generous. Feel free to pop through the Vicarage door or direct to Church treasurers in the villages.

-Food Bank- we continue to leave donations in the box that lives at Lynwood’s Café, Lechlade for distribution via the Swindon Food Collective. Food items most needed can be viewed at: www.swindonfoodcollective.org/food-items-needed-urgently

-The Lighthouse Bookshop, Highworth has now re-opened: Mon-Thur 9am-3pm, Sat 9am-1pm (Fri closed)

And finally...

This present lock-down and all the restrictions because of the pandemic have been a test and a challenge. In many ways the restrictions have shaped us and moulded us, hopefully for the better. St. Paul told the Galatian believers,

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.



We all know how easy it is to give into selfishness and impatience, wanting everything our own way. Let’s encourage one another to live a different way, the way of the Spirit, resisting the selfish nature which often tries to get in the way. Thankfully, God has not left us alone, but has given us one another as fellow pilgrims on the way. Do think seriously about joining a small group online to be refreshed and encouraged. God is so gracious and wants us to trust him and follow him. May we all be reinvigorated in our discipleship, going deeper in prayer, committing ourselves to studying our Bibles, and, together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, keeping in step with the Holy Spirit.

Every blessing to you in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Andrew Cinnamond