

Vicar's Letter

17th July 2020



As I write this letter, we have just finished our series of sermons in the Old Testament book of Daniel. I have enjoyed studying this book and preaching the results, and I hope they have been an encouragement to all those who have joined us online at our services from the Vicarage. The one great message I got from Daniel is that God is always in control even though to our eyes it seems precisely the opposite. Over the past four months our day-to-day lives have been turned upside down by a pandemic that nobody saw coming. Our freedoms have been restricted, our routines disrupted, our certainties taken away. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives around the world...and yet God is still there with us. Daniel remained loyal to Almighty God despite being an exile in pagan Babylon. The ground was torn from beneath him and he waited on the Lord for everything. He and his friends survived egomaniac kings, plotting enemies, a fiery furnace and a lions' den. They trusted in God through all manner of trials and difficulties. This has been a very hard time for many in our community, but we have not been abandoned. Let us continue to turn to God, have faith in his promises, and share his love with others.



LEGO Daniel

Talking of all things Daniel... it is always good to see people exploring the Bible in different ways. In 1932 Ole Kirk Christiansen of Denmark started a company. It was originally a woodworking business, but soon turned to toys. When wood gave way to plastic, things really took off! It is estimated there are now 400 billion Lego bricks in the world... There have been some brilliantly imaginative uses of Lego, not least using stop-motion photography to make videos of Bible stories.

The 'Brick Testament' has more than 400 of these stories - <http://www.thebricktestament.com>

Eva and Zachary Cinnamond have also had a go... starting with Daniel Ch. 5, 'the writing on the wall':

<https://www.facebook.com/stlawrencelechlade/videos/651793922190907/>

There will be more to come...



LEGO Bible- Daniel Ch. 5 'The Writing on the Wall'

Summer for families

Many families have found the recent lock-down very hard. Even with the re-opening of schools, there have been many reports nationwide of an increase in mental health issues among young people, more family breakdowns and higher incidents of domestic violence. Children from poorer backgrounds have often struggled with home schooling, sometimes with little parental help and I heard recently of a family of five children having to share a single mobile phone for all their online lessons.

The 'Young Minds Matter' website details the help available- please do pass on the details:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3522/young-minds-young-minds-matter.pdf>

This poster for the summer is also very useful:

<https://www.facebook.com/stlawrencelechlade/photos/a.1617933611757357/2608600026024039/?type=3&theater>



Christian summer activities

Sadly, we had to take the decision not to have a holiday club this summer due to the ongoing restrictions, which simply made it impossible. But there are other events happening online this summer which families and young people might really enjoy. Pass on the details to family, grandchildren, godchildren, neighbours!

Scripture Union (SU) camps and missions, online. Free, but you do need to register:

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/summeronline>

Virtual Keswick convention (27-31 July). A full programme of teaching, worship, seminars and fellowship from this long-running Christian convention. Christopher Ash will be giving the main talks on the theme of hope in the Psalms. There is also an excellent youth programme planned with specially recorded music, songs, teaching and fun games:

- Virtual 'Keswick 4 Kids' (3-11s) - <https://vkc.keswickministries.org/playlist/keswick-4-kids/>
- Virtual 'Keswick Youth' (11-18s) - <https://vkc.keswickministries.org/playlist/keswick-youth/>
- Virtual 'Count Everyone In' for those with learning difficulties - <https://vkc.keswickministries.org/playlist/count-everyone-in/>

Also:

- Christian Youth Enterprises - <https://cye.org.uk/>
 - 'Ventures', organised by CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) - <https://www.ventures.org.uk/venture-holidays/virtual-ventures/>
 - 'Adventure Plus' activity centre based in nearby Clanfield - <https://www.adventureplus.org.uk/>
 - 'The Beach Team' (UBM- United Beach Missions) - <https://www.thebeachteam.org/>
- 'Faithinkids', a great website full of resources for parents and kids- talks, activities, discussions, videos, podcasts. Especially good for things to do together as families: <https://faithinkids.org/>

faithinkids




Scripture Union

Physical Services

By now many of you will have filled in our on-line survey, asking questions of how you have found the past few months and what are your thoughts about going back to physical services- thank you for taking the time and effort to fill it in. These results will help the PCC and I to decide when to resume meeting together for services in our church building. We know that many will not want to rush back immediately, due to underlying health conditions and fears of spreading infection. I understand these concerns and it is important that people do not feel under pressure to return. We need to go at a pace that folks feel comfortable with. The churchwardens and PCCs of each parish will prayerfully decide what is best in each unique situation and keep their local community involved.

It seems likely that we will start back with a very basic pattern of services and at the same time carrying on with our online service, recognising that for many people this has been a real lifeline through difficult times. We still have restrictions in place for physical services - social distancing, no singing, no refreshments, Holy Communion with bread only, and no mingling or refreshments afterwards. We pray that these restrictions will be lifted soon, but it is important as parish churches we follow the advice of both the government and the archbishops of the Church of England.



Snippets...



>> Christians Against Poverty (CAP) do a great work through money management, debt-counselling etc. They have a local branch in Highworth. Contact them for confidential help:

<https://capuk.org/i-want-help/our-services/cap-debt-help/how-cap-can-help>

>> Many of us have been saving money during the pandemic by not eating out, not driving as much etc. Why not use this time wisely and consider your financial giving to the church?

<https://www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk/donate-to-st-lawrence/>

>> Our 'Inspire' re-ordering project for St. Lawrence church is making good progress, but the presentation planned for the autumn will now happen in 2021. See the website for details and the latest newsletter:

<https://www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk/restoration-and-reordering/downloads/>

>> The 'Ministry Training Course' from Matt Searles and the South Central Gospel Partnership is now running online. Based at St. Ebbe's church in Oxford it aims to equip Christian men and women to handle the Bible well in their own context and ministry. Have a chat with our own John Harris, who is presently doing the course, or look at the website and promo video: <https://www.scgp.org.uk/training/mtc/>

Finally...

The Cinnamonds will be on holiday Fri 17 Jul - Fri 7 Aug. Please see the churchwardens for any urgent parish business.

Andrew Cinnamond (Vicar – St. Lawrence, Lechlade)