

Dear friends,

It is hard to believe that is nearly the end of August, and September (and autumn) is staring us in the face. We hope and pray that schools will soon return to normality and there will not be another significant upturn in the number of COVID infections.

Perhaps life seems more uncertain than it has before. Perhaps many of the things we once took for granted are now seen much more as blessings to us. Many have been badly hit by the impact on the economy and patterns of working may have changed permanently. Exam results have become a bone of contention, a political hot potato, and a source of real stress. People have had to cut short holidays to avoid having quarantine for two weeks. As Christians we know that despite the turmoil and angst in this world, God is constant, unchanging, and He is a safe harbour in the storm. We can trust in his faithfulness and goodness to us.



WE'RE GOOD TO GO



It has been good to run online services from the Vicarage with the participation of various members of the Cinnamond family, but it is not the same as meeting together. Indeed, I think it is a poor substitute for meeting our fellow Christians face-to-face. God made us physical beings, eternal souls fleshed in a material body with all our senses able to explore the created world around us. Screens can never give us that intimacy of meeting and speaking with one another, interpreting the subtle body language and signs of emotion. Screens cannot give you a hug or a welcoming hand on the shoulder. There is a warmth and human vitality that technology cannot replicate.

Churches are slowly beginning to return to physical meeting together and reconnecting bonds of love and fellowship. It is important to obey the government restrictions as a way of loving our neighbour and recognising that the divinely-appointed authorities over us. When we meet together we are encouraged to:

- ♦ follow social distancing
- ♦ follow new rules for Holy Communion
- ♦ -wear face masks
- ♦ avoid congregational singing
- ♦ avoid refreshments afterwards
- ♦ use hand sanitiser



St. Lawrence church will re-start physical services on **Sunday 30th August at 10am.** We will begin with just one service on a Sunday following roughly the order of service adopted during the lock-down. The vicar and PCC will constantly review the situation, especially how many we can safely have worshipping in the church building due to the reduced capacity because of social distancing. We can expect further changes to the current restrictions over time. Please do pray for wisdom as we move forward in faith.

We will also continue with some form of online service, as we know that there will be a significant number of people who will feel comfortable committing themselves to physical services and large gatherings of people.

TECHNOLOGY HELP

It would be great to have a little group of volunteers available to help with our online ministry in providing service videos, children's teaching material and, in the future, live streaming services from the church. You can be old or young, male or female, as long as you don't mind fiddling with cables and plugging things into other things. Many people spend considerable time online these days, a trend that has greatly increased during the present pandemic, and it is part of our Christian mission to reach out with the Gospel through the internet. Please do contact the vicar if you can help in any way.





ONLINE FLOWER, CRAFT & PRODUCE SHOW FOR CHILDREN

This year the Lechlade Flower, Craft & Produce Show is an online event for children only. Tuesday 1st September is the last day for emailing us photos of your creations. See the Lechlade Gardening Club website for details. www.lechladegardeningclub.org.uk

SMALL GROUPS

It is great that so many people in our church family want to deepen their faith through small groups. Some have groups have continued meeting during the summer, others have had a break. This may be a good opportunity to get involved in these groups, which would love to have new members. Most groups involve fellowship and conversation, Bible study and prayer.



- Ladies' group- re-starting 1:30pm, Mon 14th Sep. See Kate for details.
- Men's group- please contact Will Graves or David Corris if you would like to be involved in this group.
- Thursday evening- we have had a good crowd at our Zoom meetings for 'God's Big Picture', an overview of the whole Bible. When it comes to a close in a few weeks' time will gauge opinion and decide what material to follow next. Watch this space.

PARISH PRAYER MEETING

We will be re-starting our online Parish Prayer Meeting via Zoom 10am, Wed 26 Aug.

Please contact Andrew or Kate Cinnamond for Zoom details. This is a wonderful opportunity to pray for ourselves, our local community and nation.

BOOK CLUB – 'The Pilgrim's Progress', Part 2

After a well-deserved summer break, we are starting again Mon 31 August at 10am.

Join us for a discussion on this 17th Century Christian classic of spirituality and discipleship.



FOODBANK



Thank you so much for all your donations- they are gratefully received at this very difficult time for many people. The Foodbank is impressed by the amount of food we are donating, so please keep it up. Items especially needed: long life milk, juice, coffee, tea, sugar, pasta, tins (meat, vegetables, fruit), biscuits, dried food, nuts, flour, bottled sauces. You can continue to put donations in the collection point at Lynwood's Café.

FINALLY...

I look forward to seeing many of you at our physical services, or online through Zoom. Please do let me know how I can best pray for you and serve you. I want to leave you with these words from Romans Ch. 15, a great reminder of living in hope and love:

... everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ's name,

Andrew Cinnamond

Vicar – St. Lawrence, Lechlade