

Friends,

Greetings, love and prayers to you all!



A verse to ponder: Romans 5.4

“Endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts”.

Endurance, character, hope – three great words for our times – all of which God honours and delights in.

So, let’s start with the positives

1. I am deeply appreciative of the positive attitude being shown by so many people. Signs of gratitude, kindness and respect mean a very great deal. We will all be aware of how much we owe to those involved in health services, teachers who are still at school, and shop assistants who are often having to face anger and frustration. Your prayers of thanksgiving when you see or remember these people will only amplify the spiritual mood of confidence and hope. God delights in that.
2. It’s not easy offering help, or accepting it. Having been self-isolating, our fridge was starting to get pretty empty. So I responded to a kind text and asked for some shopping. That was not easy as I was thinking: “But I should be the one helping others”. Yet, when that kind person came to the door with a shopping bag full (with some home-made shortbread biscuits – unasked for), she had such a look of pleasure on her face. I was really touched. I don’t find it easy to ask, but I am so glad I did. I am reminded of foot washing: in the Gospels, Jesus is shown to be a person who washes our feet – and allows others to care for him by washing his feet too. Both are gracious acts.
3. You seem to be keeping in touch with each other. It is so good, during a time of crisis when it is easy to feel powerless, to know that you have the ability to make a difference. A phone call (even better than an email) perks both speakers up. I am working with others on establishing some sort of Telephone Tree so that those who may not otherwise be connected with a group in the parish will be in touch somehow. Please don’t be surprised if someone from one of our congregations phones you – it need only take two minutes, but it is good to be in touch. If there is news that I should know please pass it on:

Rev Robert Cotton: rector@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 575489

Rev Tom Pote: curate@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 511725

Parish Office: office@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 567716

Please make sure we have an up to date email and phone number for you (especially if you have changed either recently).

4. The sun is shining – both literally and metaphorically. [The anthem that the Girl Choristers recorded is simply wonderful](#) – and has had nearly 5000 views. More from that sun-lit story soon. And there will be another one coming on Palm Sunday (and more after that, I hope). I have heard other stories of surprising hope: candles in windows, rainbows on balconies, and clapping for our NHS carers.
5. Yes, our church buildings, including the Trinity Centre are now closed, but (as the notice on all our doors proclaims): “Our church community is alive and active”. Thank you to those who have completed our [Volunteer Response Form](#) to support fellow parishioners. We will be in contact in due course as needs are identified. Some of you have asked about foodbanks. The collection points in both St Mary’s and Holy Trinity are clearly now closed, but the bins in the major supermarkets remain open. I know that there is a special need for gifts as the school “holidays” begin.

Much volunteering is happening within and alongside other agencies. It is excellent that the church is not merely trying to do its own thing. Noelle Coe, the Town Chaplain, wrote "You might be interested to know that Street Angels are not going out onto the streets at the moment but we are offering to do weekly phone calls to any vulnerable or isolated people over the age of 18 - just to check on them or signpost if necessary. Our Angels are also contacting SW Voluntary Action to see if they can be of help as they are all DBS checked and had Safeguarding training."

Spiritual resources

- We will keep posting "Pause to pray" [on the parish website](#), at least twice each week. I am hoping that we can develop an easy way to involve more voices (and even videos) in this. If we can do that, it will ensure that this is visibly a sign of the whole church praying together.
- There will be a special "Pause to pray" each Sunday. For this coming Sunday March 29th, we enter 'Passiontide' which is the two week build up to the crucifixion.
- We are planning to mark Holy Week and Easter in special ways. In particular, I would like us all to be able to share in the narrative of this week on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day.
- More music has been promised. How they do this, I have no idea. Sheer admiration!

ZOOM in on the AGM

Do join us for the parish AGM at 1030 on Sunday 5 April

We will hold a 'virtual' AGM using 'Zoom meeting', which can manage up to 100 people dialing in by phone or online. Instructions on how to access the Zoom meeting will be provided in this newsletter next week and on our website. Won't it be wonderful if we can do all this successfully with that number!

All the papers will be uploaded soon on the website.

Two important aspects of the Annual Meeting:

1. To show our support for church wardens and others who lead and guide this parish; in particular, we will be thanking Stephen Marriott and Steve Palmer who have completed their time as wardens – and electing Helen Parkinson and Jenny Nockolds as their replacements (unless there are other nominations). Please give thanks and pray for these people.
2. To receive the annual accounts: the liveliness and creativity of this parish relies on a huge amount of work, done with wisdom and care, in the background, ensuring that the money that we give is wisely spent. Especially in the light of the current situation, we want to close the books on last year, and ready ourselves for coping with keeping the parish on track in 2020.

Finally

Earlier this week I came across this verse from a poem by Christina Rossetti:

*Lead lives of Love, that others who
Behold your lives may kindle too
With Love and cast their lots with you.*

With love and prayers

Robert

27th March 2020