

Dear Friends

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' (Psalm 46.1, NIV)

I wonder how you are feeling after this month or so of 'lockdown'? I know some are feeling 'fed-up', others remain bewildered whilst others are enjoying the extra time and space that this extraordinary situation seems to have offered.

Our lives have been drastically altered by the Coronavirus threat and we are having to adapt to our new situation. Our churches remain closed and I felt this keenly during Holy Week and Easter. However, as we adapt we are beginning to explore new ways of coming together so that although dispersed and apart we can still be church together.

And so we are trying new things! See below for our new **Bible Study Group** and **Elevenes on Tuesday** initiatives!

Worship

On Easter Day, I held our first service by Zoom. I wish I could say it was an outstanding success but it wasn't. Thank you to all who joined the service and who offered me feedback. There were teething problems which I will try to iron out. But, it was a start...

I will be holding a service by Zoom every Sunday at 10.30am for the foreseeable future. If you would like to help out by reading a lesson or offering intercessions, please email me and I will include you when I can.

We are now in Easter season and this week our worship focuses on Jesus' resurrection appearances – please see the attached order of service.

Please click on the following link to access and join this Sunday's service:

Topic: Gill Nobes' Zoom Meeting

Time: Apr 19, 2020 10:30 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/2651714777?pwd=NGtTaG5LRlljaGIPZks0Z2pXYjhtQT09>

Meeting ID: 265 171 4777

Password: 0CtnbL

Worshipping in this way won't be everyone's cup of tea and so I highlight below, the religious broadcasts on the BBC this coming week.

TELEVISION:.

Sunday 10am (BBC1) **Sunday Worship** A service from St Davids Cathedral, Pembrokeshire, recorded before the closure of church buildings was announced.

1.15pm (BBC1) *Songs of Praise* Aled Jones visits the Salvation Army's Strawberry Field centre, in Liverpool.

RADIO:

Sunday 6.05am (R4) *Something Understood* The Revd Malcolm Doney appreciates the things in life which can go unnoticed (repeat).

8.10am (R4) *Sunday Worship* A virtual service from Holy Trinity, Platt Lane, Manchester, with speech and music recorded in isolation.

3pm (R3) *Choral Evensong* A repeat of Sunday's archive recording of a service from the Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, Texas, first broadcast on 19 April 2017.

Wednesday 3.30pm (R3) *Choral Evensong* An archive recording from Royal Holloway, University of London, first broadcast on 7 April 2010.

The following free resources, complimenting this Sunday's lectionary themes are available from Roots on the web:

- Resources for adults: www.rootsontheweb.com/adultsathome19apr
- Resources for families: www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome19apr

WhatsApp Prayer Group

Please do think about joining a small prayer group – you can meet for free using WhatsApp. We have created one group and have a couple of people looking to join another group. Would you like to join them and be part of a small WhatsApp Prayer Group?

The groups are an ideal way to meet together informally to share prayer together and offer encouragement and support to each other.

If you would like to be a part of a group, please email me and we will set up some more groups.

Remember the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:11 *“Therefore **encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**”*

Bible Study Group

We are starting an on-line Bible study group (via Zoom) using the Bible Society's 'Bible Course'. Peter Chapman will be running an evening group on Thursdays from 7.30-8.00pm. The Bible Study Group begins on Thursday 23rd April. There is a short dvd to watch in advance of the Group meeting. Full details on how to access the Zoom Group and the dvd will be circulated by Peter.

If you would prefer to join a daytime group, please let me know and I will set one up.

Pastoral Support

On Tuesday 21st April, I am launching '**Elevenes on Tuesday**' – a coffee morning by Zoom. Make your coffee, bring your cake and get comfy on the sofa. Dial in to Zoom by clicking on the following link:

Gill Nobes is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94760429294?pwd=VDITbnFMZExSRnE0eEVsUEtoU1hUUT09>

Meeting ID: 947 6042 9294

Password: 057508

We are continuing to try to ensure that congregation members receive a phone call every few days from one of our church leadership teams. Should you wish for specific spiritual support then please do be in touch with either me (my details are below) or John Le Page on 257436.

Looking after your mental health

The Church of England has suggested 5 top tips for dealing with loneliness and isolation. These are:

1. **Pray. Light a candle, if safe, and pray for hope, faith and strength to keep loving and caring for each other during this time of struggle.**
2. **Talk about how you feel.** This may be difficult if you are self-isolating, but do use the telephone, internet, and social media. If you need to contact a counsellor this can be arranged by your GP, or via local agencies, or privately.
3. **Focus on the things that you can change, not on the things you can't.**
4. **Look after yourself - physically, emotionally, spiritually.** Plan in things that you enjoy at regular intervals during the day – a TV programme, a phone call, a book, a favourite dish, a game.
5. **Look after others. Even if only in small ways, but do what you can:** a smile, a kind word, writing a letter or an email.

A Franciscan *Lectio Divina* Exercise for this Coming Week

What is *Lectio Divina*? *Lectio divina* (Latin for *sacred reading*) is a contemplative way of reading and praying with Scripture. Rather than trying to rationally understand a static text, this practice helps us be present to the Living Word of God and allow it to change us. In *lectio divina*, God teaches us to listen for and seek God's presence in silence. Although the Bible is most often used, many people practice *lectio divina* with nature. Franciscans believe that the first act of divine revelation is Creation itself, so it makes sense to "read" or observe God's presence in nature, in animals and plants.

As with other forms of *lectio divina*, the practice is divided into four steps. Find a place where you are surrounded by the beauty of nature and where you feel safe to be quiet and alone for 20 or more minutes.

1. *Lectio*/Read - In silence, be attentive to your surroundings, opening to the mystery of these beings' existence and prayerfully asking them to address you. Simply *asking* is creating a space in which a response can happen. If you like, use a journal to write down any impressions that arise.

2. *Meditatio*/Meditate - Ponder what you are observing, being attentive to whatever is in front of you as though you could be in dialogue with it. For example, as you look around, if you see a flower, gaze at it and also consider what it would feel like for the flower to look back at you. What it would be like to be in mutual relationship with all of Creation?

3. *Oratio*/Pray - *Oratio* is an opportunity to enter into dialogue with God, offering gratitude as well as lifting up your hopes, fears, and pains. In *oratio*, you are invited to surrender all of these things and allow God to transform you and the world through this encounter.

4. *Contemplatio*/Contemplate - *Contemplatio* is simply abiding in the presence of God. Rest joyfully in Mystery after lifting up your prayers and problems to God, confident that your needs are known.

And Finally in case you missed this ...

Music for Hope



'Andrea Bocelli's *Music For Hope* live concert from the deserted Duomo di Milano has broken world records. The opera singer's Easter Sunday performance became the largest live-streamed classical music event of all time, with a combined 35 million people viewing the 30-minute concert. The video received more than 28 million views from across the globe in its first 24 hours.'

Don't forget, 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' (Psalm 46.1, NIV)"

God bless
Gill
Revd Gill Nobes
Rector of St. Sampson

17th April 2020

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