

WEEKLY MESSAGE FROM OUR VICAR, ALEX – 14th APRIL 2022

Dear Church Family Members and Parish Friends,

Hoping this finds you all well - and that you are looking forward to the services of the rest of this week as much as I am.

The services are listed below and also details of when you will receive the Zoom links and information if you are accessing these from home.

Our Services & events over the next few days:

Tonight, at St. Paul's at 7.30 pm, we have our Maundy Thursday Communion with the opportunity of foot washing (for those who would like this). This will be a service of music and reflections, with a silence at the end for a while after the service for anyone who would like to linger in the Lord's presence.

The Zoom link & information for those attending on Zoom will be sent out this afternoon.

Tomorrow morning, Friday 15th April, at 11 am, we have our Messy Easter Celebration at St. Mary's and tomorrow afternoon, at 3 pm, we have Reflections on the Cross at St. Paul's (there will be a led reflective time at 3pm and then time after the service to go back to the different reflections and spend time in quiet in the church)

The Zoom links & information for both of these services will be sent out tomorrow (Friday) morning.

On Saturday (16th April) we will be having an Easter Egg hunt, at St. Paul's, at 2 pm. (Though we will be starting and ending in St. Paul's, we will also be using the Vicarage garden as part of this, so if you arrive later than intended and cannot find us in the church building, have a look for us there instead).

On Sunday (17th April) we will have Easter Communion Services at 9 am at St. Paul's and at 11 am at St. Mary's.

The Zoom links and information for both of these services will be sent out on Saturday.

I look forward to seeing you very much indeed.

The other news items included in this email are as follows:

1. An update on masks
2. A reminder of the date for our APCM
3. An update on the Ukraine collection

4. Our next food bank collection
5. A message from George Drewitt
6. A message from Jim Illingworth

Love and prayers

Alex

1. An update on masks

Thank you very much to all who sent responses to my request for your opinions and helpful suggestions on mask wearing and covid safety, now that the spring has arrived and the virus is less dangerous than it was for its first 2 years.

I received 37 responses and quite a few other people also kindly said that they hadn't remailed because they were happy to go along with any choices made.

Of the 37 responses, 17 said they would like to stop wearing masks, 7 said they didn't mind and 13 said that they would prefer us to keep them.

This indicates that there is a majority who would prefer for mask wearing to be free choice from now on (anyone can still wear a mask if we wish to!), but that there are still some of us who would like to wear them.

Therefore we have decided to make masks optional, with the following additional provisions (all based on the suggestions which were sent):

1. Zoom will continue to be available for our Sunday services
2. There will be an area of seating available in services in both churches, which will be specifically for anyone who would like still to wear a mask and would prefer to be surrounded by others also wearing masks
3. Everyone will be asked to still bring a mask to church (even if choosing not to wear them for the majority of the time) so that:
 - a) if chatting with someone e.g. before or after the service who would prefer us to wear one, we can put it on for that short while to help them to feel more comfortable at ease
 - b) we will continue to wear masks when receiving communion for a little while longer - this was suggested by several responders, but is also a personal request to enable me (as I get very close to everyone at this point) to continue to protect Michael (who is one of our church family members who is particularly vulnerable) for a little while longer (this will be kept under review and will not be forever!)

Other items raised through the responses were:

- a. Quite a few people asked if all of us could be reminded to not come to church if we are experiencing any covid symptoms - and also that we may wish to wear a mask if we have an ordinary cough or cold for additional protection for others
- b) Several people asked about communion and, whilst recognising that it is wise not to share the common cup and to take communion in one kind for the current

time, some people have been wondering whether there are any healthy alternative ways to take the wine as well.

It is Church of England Canon Law that communion is only received through the common cup, so in usual circumstances we would be breaking the rules to take communion in any other way. However there have been various communications from the Diocese and discussions in our deanery about this recently, so I will do some more research and see what, if any, alternative may be possible for us, whilst sharing the common cup continues to be a significant health risk. This will be discussed at the next PCC and then shared with the church family.

c) Several people made comments about the St. Mary's coffee area, asking whether people could move off quickly, once drinks have been collected, as this gets very crowded and is tricky to navigate

Some of you also made comments about circumstances which are more personal to you - and I hope I have picked up on these in other messages, but please do chat if there is something you would still like to draw to my attention.

2. A reminder of the date for our next APCM:

Our APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) will be on Monday 25th April, at 7.30 pm. More information will follow next week, but please save this date and time in your diaries. It will be an opportunity to review the last year and also to think towards the future together.

3. An update on the Ukraine collection

Thank you again for the wonderful contributions to our collection for Ukraine. They have been safely delivered to the Ashley Centre in Epsom (2 large carloads) and will be going on lorry number 12 (Surrey Stands with Ukraine has sent out 11 Lorries and 1 taxi so far) to the Polish border with Ukraine, where they will be distributed to those in need.

Some of you also kindly made financial donations, totalling £235 (some have also given directly on the website). This has also been passed to the charity.

Thank you all.

4. Our next Foodbank collection

Our next food bank collection will be on Wednesday 20th April, from 2-4 pm, outside St. Mary's.

The items particularly needed by the foodbank at this time are as follows:

Long-life sponge puddings, powdered milk, chocolate spread, spaghetti in sauce, custard, rice pudding, sugar (500g bags please), shampoo, conditioner, shaving foam, adult toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, loo roll, long-life milk (semi-skimmed and full fat only please), long-life fruit juice, small snack sized chocolate (freddos, penguin bars etc), hot water bottles.

5. A message from George Drewitt

As well as being husband to Sophie, dad to Florence, Annabel and Charlotte, working full time, being one of our church wardens and being on various other church teams, George is also chairperson of a charity called 'Afacic', who support children and young people with learning difficulties.

The charity is holding a quiz night to raise funds for this very good cause on Saturday 23rd April, from 7.15 pm, ready for a 7.30 pm start at the Ashtead Scout Hut, Woodfield, Ashtead, KT21 2RL.

Ticket prices are £15 for adults & £12 for younger people and it includes a fish and chip supper, with guests bringing their own drinks and nibbles.

Please contact if you'd like to join in: cw_nork@norkwithburghheath.com

4. A message from Jim Illingworth

As well as being a wonderful enthusiast and getting us all energised about the environment and Eco Church, Jim also works for Dyscover, a charity providing specialist aphasia support for those in need.

Jim and Christine (his wife), who are also talented musicians, are taking part in a concert on Tuesday 19th April - next week - at Epsom Playhouse at 7.30 pm, to raise money for this very important cause.

For details look at www.epsomplayhouse.co.uk

... Next week there will be more news of events that our church family members are involved with - including a parish plant sale being led by Deirdre Jackson, Morna Moore and Theresa Allen. Look out for the flyers and how to get involved!

Love and prayers,
Alex

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