



Ade writes...

Dear Church

So much has happened in the time since I last wrote. We have received the news over the weekend that churches may open for private prayer from 15th June. This is not compulsory. Unlike several other churches (mainly in the rural areas) ours was not left unlocked for private prayer during the week.

Nevertheless, I know that people will be eager to get back into the beautiful sacred space that is our church building and take the opportunity to pray. We cannot do so until it is cleaned, and proper arrangements put in place so that visits can take place safely, observing social distancing. I am liaising with Ian and Tayo our wardens to put things in place. Given the size of our church, the age and condition of some of our facilities and the limits on our time (as you know I am part-time in the Parish and Tayo works full time) this will take some time.

We are planning to have the church open in some form for private prayer by the 4th of July.

More importantly, the events of the past several weeks have exposed the true nature of the human condition: the weakness of our structures, the unfairness of our systems, the utter selfishness of our behaviour, the fragility of our bodies, the pride in our attitudes and the narrowness of our minds.

Many words and phrases have been used in the public square; as people see or refuse to see what is wrong. *Injustice, oppression, failure, hatred, 'enough is enough', retribution, virtue-signalling, colonialism, 'I think', Black, abandoning, care homes, democracy, vandalize, rights, 'band-wagon', White, Lives, valuing, us, 'easing of lockdown', victimized, debate, guilt, racism, history hypocrisy, anger and change.* These are all legitimate words, which have been used powerfully.

But as long as our discourse excludes the words and phrases of the Kingdom of God - **repentance, humility, forgiveness, sincerity, protection, arrogance, contempt, death, idols, 'fear of the Lord' shame, confession, sacrificial, salvation, hope, 'eternal life', transformation, sin, neighbour, wisdom and love** there can never be true and lasting peace or freedom. For anyone.

So let us continue to pray as Jesus taught us the prayer that encapsulates all we should ask and hope for.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.