



## Ade writes...

5 November 2020

As we contemplate another month of lockdown and the challenges that lie ahead how do we stand firm in our faith confident that God is in control? It is not easy. Many of us are facing personal difficulties with our health, finances, jobs and bereavement. We miss proper contact and singing in church and now even that has been taken away. We can no longer go to the Cathedral later this month to see our young people being confirmed. Across the nation and indeed the world, there is economic and political instability. What shall we do? The words at the end of the third chapter prophesy of Habakkuk have provided me with much comfort as I have dealt with serious challenges over the past couple of months.

Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.  
The Sovereign Lord is my strength;  
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
he enables me to tread on the heights. Hab.3:17-19.

And so I want to encourage you brothers and sisters to hold on and not give up hope. As we are told in Hebrews 6,

*10 For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. 11 Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. 12 Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance.*

You will have seen in the news that the Archbishop of Canterbury has led other religious leaders in making representations to the Government to allow public worship.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishops-join-interfaith-call-pm-allow-public-worship>

As we await a response, we have been asked to pray. Following the earlier Day of Prayer that was called back in March, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have asked the nation to join them in prayer during the month of lockdown. They have specifically asked churches to join in prayer at 6pm every day. The regulations mean that our church is closed, but I shall be praying at 6pm in church whenever possible. You are the church so please join in whenever you can, wherever you are.

Here is a link to the Resources

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches/call-prayer-nation>

Let us pray especially for our young people whose lives and futures are impacted most by the lockdown.

In their letter the Archbishops also appealed to us to be calm, courageous and compassionate, characteristics which we have in abundance at All Saints.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/20201104%20Joint%20letter%20ABC%20ABY%20to%20the%20nation.pdf>

So let us be calm. Jesus is still on the throne. God will not fail or forsake us.

Arrangements for church will carry on as they did last time.

Over the next 4 weeks we shall provide recordings of services as we did during the first lockdown. Where this is not possible we shall provide links to other services (as we did on All Saints day when we had to close church as a precautionary measure).

We are making enquiries about accessing the services by phone link for those who do not have internet access.

The church will be open for private prayer on Friday mornings from 9-10am, and otherwise by appointment. Please email me if you want to come to church for private prayer.

We shall be resuming Wednesday Fellowship on 11/11 with the Pilgrim Course. Friday prayer will continue at 6.30 pm.

So let us be courageous and even in these difficult times offer what we can to the Kingdom. Please continue to think of how you can help in Church. One thing lockdown has shown is how disproportionately the burden of doing things falls on certain shoulders. We need Volunteers to do the readings, cleaning church, and vitally, help with the practical tasks needed to maintain our buildings.

And let us be compassionate too. I appeal to you to continue to watch out for each other. This is not just by keeping in touch - it involves being sacrificial and mindful of our actions. Do be careful about what you share, especially online. Please adhere to the safety measures we have been asked to follow so that we can protect the vulnerable and come out of lockdown as soon as possible. Continue to show your love to Him by caring for other believers and others in our community. There is so much need. If you wish to drop off good for the Foodbank please email or text me to arrange a convenient time to do so.

Through the next month I pray that we at All Saints' are devoted to one another in love. That we honour one another above ourselves. That we are never lacking in zeal, but keep our spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. That we are joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. And that we share with the Lord's people who are in need and practice hospitality. (Rom 12:10-13) To the glory of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Blessings,

*Ade*