

Newsletter from the Bury St Edmunds Circuit
for Sunday 29th March 2020



Dear Friends

Psalm 46 : 1

*"God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

In these difficult, strange and challenging times it is good that we can draw on the words of scripture and the knowledge that God loves us. It seems so strange that we cannot worship together physically and so we must do that mentally and spiritually. We can draw strength from knowing that we are all worshipping together across the circuit.

We will be sending out a worship sheet and a newsletter each Tuesday via email or post. If you receive this by post and you have an email address then please let me have it. If you hear of anyone who has not received this and would like to receive it then please do let me know. Also if you would like this in large print then we can arrange that for you.

On Sunday (29th) the clocks go forward, it is spring; the signs are all around us. I have cut the grass, the spring flowers are out, the fish are starting to come to the surface of the pond, the blossom has begun and there are new shoots on the trees. New life is all around us. When we might be shut in I hope that you are able to look out of a window and see the new life, it is this new life that gives us hope and it is hope that will get us through these times. But besides the hope we have the certainty that God is with us, he is faithful and unchanging and with him we go forward hand in hand.

It is strange times and our Saviour was to journey through strange times. As we journey through Lent we have heard some of the wonderful things that he did and the way that he reacted with people. I hope that we can learn from all that he did. As most of you will know I have been on sabbatical and spent some of my time in Egypt. On my last Sunday there I was preaching from the lectionary reading of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman. A stranger, a Samaritan, a woman rejected by many and the lowest of the low and yet she had something to offer Jesus. In these difficult times what is that we can offer to Jesus. Our prayer life is so important and it is what we can offer, prayer brings us close to God and to others.

I have cut my sabbatical short because of the ongoing situation and my need to be here with

you, hopefully to give you support and also to receive support from you. Thank you so much for the many phone calls and emails I have received it really uplifts me. The England I left and returned to just two weeks later is a very different place and continually daily life changes. I have seen such a difference in behaviour of people from those who so generously are offering to shop for people or walk their dogs to those who suffer with greed and those who are using the situation to scam people.

Together we have to be strong and witness God's love in our lives, especially in our prayer life.

I hope that I can return to Egypt sometime in the future in order to complete the work I started there. And it would be good to be able to share with you some of what I have been doing and exploring, but that will have to wait for now.

So this is the first of our newsletters and if you have any items of news you would like to share then please forward it to me.

Rita, Ruth and I are hoping that we are keeping in touch with you either through a pastoral visitor, this communication or by us contacting you, but if you hear of anyone that is feeling isolated then do contact us and we will follow that up. We are all trying to be careful and follow government guidelines so unless there is an emergency we will not make a personal visit. Please continue to hold us in prayer.

We look to the future in the knowledge that God is with us and we can continue strong in his name.

I hope that you can draw comfort from the words of this hymn.

- 1 This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful, unchangeable friend,
whose love is as great as his power,
and neither knows measure nor end:
- 2 'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home ;
we'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust him for all that's to come.

Joseph Hart (1712–1767)

God bless from your ministers
Debbie, Rita and Ruth.

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P.S.

Dear All

Since originally writing this newsletter and worship sheet we have had the latest news from the Prime Minister of the importance of staying indoors and only going to work if you are a key worker and that we can only go out once a day for exercise.

Therefore we have had to say to Adrian that he is not to come into the office any more, and that like you the ministers are now staying at home.

This means that much as we would have liked to have sent information by post to everyone every week, this will probably not happen, but we will send it by email every week. So if you have an email address and you have received this by post then please do let us know and we will be able to add you to the list.

Please stay safe and don't forget I am at the end of the phone if you would like to have a chat – I do enjoy talking and hearing your stories although I may bore you about Egypt and all that I have been doing!

God bless
Debbie