



Bulletin 15

It seems surreal that we're now making plans for August – wow, what a journey we have been on so far! However, the future now seems to be brightening with each month and as a church leadership, we find ourselves making plans for the further recovery of our normality as we look to what we can achieve in the coming month.

Here's the plan! Firstly, we agreed and promised each other we would travel together as the church family. So everything still centres around our 9.00am daily morning prayers and our 10.30am Sunday 'Facebook Live' gathering. Those remain the same as they have through our spring and summer.

But what might we achieve in the light of the easing of lockdown regulations? Here's what we've come up with and will now put into effect:

THIS SUNDAY (26th JULY), the following gatherings will be available:

- 8.00am A simple service, in Emmanuel Church, of Holy Communion. *Capacity: 30 individuals or more if seated in households.*
- 10.30am Our normal, Facebook 'Go Live' gathering together on Emmanuel with St Paul's page.
- 6.30pm A simple service, in St Paul's Church, of Holy Communion. *Capacity: 20 individuals or more if seated in households.*

ON SUNDAYS, FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST, our gathered worship routine will be:

- 8.00am A simple service, in Emmanuel Church, of Holy Communion. (At the moment, legally, this has to be with bread only). *Capacity: 30 individuals or more if seated in households.*
- 10.30am Our main gathering together – on Facebook 'Go Live'.
- 6.30pm A simple service, in St Paul's Church, alternatively of Holy Communion (At the moment, legally, this has to be with bread only) and Evening Prayer. *Capacity: 20 individuals or more if seated in households.*
- 9.00pm A short service of Compline on Facebook 'Go Live' (available after as recording too)

During the WEEKDAYS OF AUGUST

- **Monday – Saturday**, morning prayers at 9.00am on Facebook 'Go Live' (*From September we will probably have it earlier in the morning at a time to be decided*) .
- **Every day of the week**, Compline at 9.00pm will be on the Emmanuel and St Paul's Facebook page 'Go Live' and available afterwards as a recording.
- **On Wednesdays**, at 10.30am in Emmanuel Church, there will be an informal Lord's Supper, an Agapé, using both bread and wine (in individual cups) to celebrate the Lord's grace, mercy and covenant of salvation. *30 individuals or more if seated in households.*

Towards the end of August we will make and communicate plans for whatever further freedoms may await us in September!

And finally, can I commend this week's collect to you? The collects of the Church of England are collected prayers, written or adapted mainly by Thomas Cranmer who largely gave us our Book of Common Prayer in the sixteenth century.

The word ‘collect’ comes from the Latin, ‘collecta’ which meant ‘the gathering of the people for prayer’. Cranmer of course, was the great re-former of the Church of England who, together with his European brothers and sisters in the faith, helped return the Church of England to its biblical foundation. He later paid for his work with his life. He was burnt at the stake in my hometown of Oxford, in Broad Street, where to this day there lies a shiny steel cross embedded in the road where he died. I remember standing on it as a child and wondering what it must have been like.

Cranmer was always keen to weed out accumulated church heresy and replace it with biblical truth. It’s always worth trying to find the biblical basis of his collects – his prayers ‘to gather the people of God together’!

This week’s collect reads:

*Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

I wonder what biblical verses you can find? My mind went straight to Ephesians 3:20:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...

Not only have I loved digging deeper into the treasures of the Psalms over these past weeks but also the collects. Repeating them every day for a week exposes their deeper meaning and content. This week I’ve been captivated by:

- ***that we, loving you in all things and above all things***
 - seeing the Lord’s love made manifest to us through all the manifold blessings he showers upon us.
- ***such good things as pass our understanding:***
 - I can’t wait to be mesmerised by the reality of heaven’s glory and wonder.
- ***your promises, which exceed all that we can desire***
 - Wow! Imagine your total saturation in blessing which just overpower you with joy, fulfilment and happiness!

These are all **realities** of what now we ‘see but as a dim reflection as in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. What now we only know in part but then we shall know fully...’¹

Praise the Lord for the godly believers of our past who have embedded scriptural truth and promise into our liturgies that reveal and bring God’s promises before us!

Keep praying for one another, for vaccine and treatments, for the worldwide community and for the Lord’s hand of grace to remain upon us and continue to shape and sustain us through these times. There will be times of singing and rejoicing again and the longer we await them in faith the greater will be our praise when they are restored to us! I just trust our church roofs are firmly secured lest we blow them off with our rejoicing when the moment comes!

Every blessing in Christ,
Rev Karl

¹ 1 Corinthians 13:12