



Bulletin 34

Dear Church!

30th March 2021

Three weeks to go!

From this weekend, we could, in theory, have three weeks to go before the official end of lockdown restrictions on 21st June. Many months ago, Christopher Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, predicted there would be no sudden end to dealing with the Covid virus, rather a gradual return to normality. His words have been proved right! It's frustrating not to have a time when the church can say, in all the fulness of the sense, 'We're back!' But we are certainly moving ever further towards recovery of our church and national life.

With effect from Sunday 6th June we shall be re-introducing our 8.00am Book of Common Prayer service of Holy Communion service. This is significant because not only does it serve those who usually attend, it also serves as our mandatory Sunday celebration of The Lord's Supper and frees us up to conduct other services with whatever informality we please.

It's a bit of a technical point, but by order of the House of Bishops we are not permitted to use 'the common cup' due to Covid19 restrictions, nor small individual cups by their direction or conduct Holy Communion services online to receive bread and wine in our homes. This is why we have been using the term, 'Agapé' Communion for our 10.30 gatherings, thus differentiating it from official communion and keeping us legal and in keeping with clergy vows, church law and the House of Bishops' directive!

I think it has been important for us to remember with both bread *and* wine, our Lord's sacrifice.

The big game-changer for me, and I suspect for all of us, will be singing together again. Sadly no-one can provide a light at the end of the tunnel for us on this one yet. But it will come – I suspect as a result of the effectiveness of vaccines rather than anything else. In the meantime, at least we can sing outside.

With regard to 121, I trust we are *all* giving this our thought, prayer and preparing to issue an invitation. Peter, in 1 Peter 3:15 commands every Christian,

"... in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Witness for the Christian is not an optional extra! We may not all be evangelists, but we are all called to evangelise! This simple scheme whereby we simply read Mark's Gospel (two copies available in church for you to take away) with a friend and chat our way through what we have read is such an easy bandwagon to climb on. Remember the opening line,

"At our church we all been challenged to find a friend to read Mark's Gospel with and chat our way through it, might you help me out by being the one I do it with please?"

Don't delay, get on the trail today! – Pray, Identify & Invite !

On another matter, as things open up again, and we are all beginning to see more of each other we are proposing to send out mailings less often as the news remains essentially the same. It would also give those who have been preparing the postal packages and getting them to your letterboxes a well-earned rest. So, mailing may not be every week in future. That's simply an indication that events so far restored will be continuing to remain open!

Finally, a verse we have looked at before but do well to remember from Hebrews 10:25,

"Let us not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

If we've learned one lesson about church over the last year, it's how much we need each other's company and encouragement in our walk with our Lord. If you've not made it back into the building yet, be assured that we still have a high regard for safety, hygiene and social distancing. You might like to consider what parameters need to be met for you to return and then, when they are met, make your return. At the moment probably about two thirds of our congregations are back in the building. That said, our 9.00 am & pm daily prayers, 10.30 Sunday and Wednesday services will remain online for the foreseeable future!

As the summer (at last!) begins to arrive and adds a further spring to our step, let's ***'keep in step with the Spirit'*** by carrying on our journey together – and in person whenever we can – it makes so much difference!

Every blessing in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In His grip and grace,

Rev Karl

Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk in step with the Spirit.
Galatians 5:25