



Five Crosses
Tintinhull, Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil Marsh,
Thorne Coffin, Lufton
NEWSLETTER
JULY 2020

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Dear Friends,

We are moving forward in our national response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Those who cannot work from home are going back to work, businesses and shops are re-opening, schools are welcoming back more pupils, the roads are getting busier and life appears to be slowly getting back to something more like normal. There's lots to feel happy about but many of us are still anxious about what the future holds – because we know that the new normal will not be exactly like the old normal, and uncertainty brings anxiety.

What is true in our everyday lives is true too in our churches. It was announced that churches would be free to re-open for individual private prayer from mid-June. The Church of England has issued guidelines for doing that which recognises that not all churches will be ready to open their doors yet. Our churches are starting to consider what we need to do in order to open safely – for our visitors and for our regular congregation members. At the moment it looks as if a slow and careful process will be the best approach for us. We are keen to open on the one hand, but on the other we are concerned about doing so too quickly and carelessly, and possibly putting ourselves and others at risk. We don't want to rush to open only to have to wind back if things don't work out well. So, please bear with us. We will announce what we are doing when we feel we are ready to open our doors safely.

In the meantime we will continue to publish our worship online every Sunday from 9.15 am on the benefice website (fivecrosses.weebly.com)

Our Church schools have both started to welcome more children from their Reception and Year 1 and Year 6 classes. The staff have been doing a marvellous job with the children of key workers and now with other children as well. They have been providing work for the children who cannot be in school and keeping in touch with children and parents. The work the teachers and teaching assistants have had to do has been very different from what they are used to and they have responded brilliantly. This period of school closures will mean that most children have missed out on a lot of their schooling – their social mixing with friends and school-mates and there will be a lot of catching up to do. We can be confident, though, that our school staff will be working hard to help pupils do just that so that our children are not disadvantaged more than absolutely necessary. We can all be very proud of what our schools have been doing during the lockdown. **Please keep an eye on the benefice website for updates to what we are doing in our churches.**

With all best wishes in Christ, Fr Peter

A letter from the Right Reverend Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath and Wells:

“Building a sustainable and hopeful future”

One impact of the Coronavirus pandemic is there is now a lot of talk about the need to change and to re-imagine society, in order to build a sustainable and hopeful future. This is to be welcomed. However, change is something that we always have to live with. The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, writing some 500 years before Christ, was a great proponent of this. He is known for saying: ‘There is nothing permanent except change’ and that you cannot step into the same river twice. By this he meant that just as the river flows so that you cannot touch the same water twice, so no two situations are exactly the same and that the world is constantly changing.

We live in a time of extraordinary change. Self-driving transport is now practical, not just for cars, but also perhaps more alarmingly for ships and aircraft. Artificial Intelligence is opening amazing new possibilities and medicine is advancing rapidly as the decoding of the human genome increases our understanding of many diseases. At the same time our world groans under the weight of lifestyles and exploitation of resources which are not sustainable. I am writing this on World Environment Day and it is becoming increasingly clear that we need to change the way we live before we wreck even more havoc on the world which God has given us to steward and care for.

But in looking for change we need perhaps to look in rather than out. I

remember once reading someone saying: ‘You can’t change what is going on around you, until you start changing what’s going on within you’. Or as Tolstoy put it: ‘Everyone thinks of changing the world. But no one thinks of changing him/herself.’ It is sometimes said that if ‘we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.’ There may be some truth in that and perhaps we need to use this time of lockdown to continue to reflect on what it means to look at the world through God’s eyes and to live faithfully in God’s world so that we all play our part in building a sustainable and hopeful future.

Every blessing Bishop Peter

News from the Parishes

TINTINHULL

John Gower writes: “I am delighted to announce that the first steps towards opening the Church are soon to begin. A very special thank you to all those who helped clean the Church after two months of being shut. Beginning on Wednesday 24th June, the Church will be open for private prayer from 10-00 to 10-30 am and 4-30 to 5-00 pm every day except Fridays. To make the Church safe from the Coronavirus, there will be designated seating and the person supervising will sanitize areas used along with door handles or anything else touched. Thanks to Fr Peter who has done so much to enable this to happen. Obviously I will try and inform you of any changes to this particularly when Sunday Church Services are resumed. A sincere thank you now surely must go to the TOG group. For the benefit of villagers and to raise money for their May flower show, they made a lot of face masks. They were brilliant as I can testify when I wore one last week when I had to go to Yeovil Hospital for a pre op assessment. Unfortunately the flower show had to be cancelled. They had raised £820-20p and decided to donate half to St. Margaret’s Church restoration fund and half to Yeovil Hospital. We, and I am sure, YDH greatly appreciate their achievement. Fortunately, we live in a village where everyone appears to act responsibly and the Coronavirus is under control but we still need to continue to remain vigilant to stay safe.”

LUFTON

From Francis Burroughes:” As I am writing this, and depending on what happens in the next fortnight or so, it is possible that we may be back in our churches in July. At Lufton we normally sit two pews apart, in good Church of England fashion, which is two and a half metres, or eight feet in real measurement, we use our own prayer books and hymn books, and as we meet once a week on Sunday evenings, that solves the 72 hour quarantine requirement. And we certainly do not go in for hand shakes or hugs and kisses during our services,

which are not authorised by the Book of Common Prayer.”

And from Susan Collins: “What strange times we are living in – uncharted waters which have been challenging and will remain so for some time yet. Marvin and I have been ‘shielding’ and clearly it has affected our ability to cope with going out into the world, with any form of confidence. We have relied on family, friends and modern technology to help us through, with the addition of our faith in God. As the necessary restrictions are gradually lifted, we look forward to, once again, being able to physically worship in our beautiful, little Church, where we will be able to ‘socially distance’ and use our own prayer and hymn books. We are grateful to Father Peter for continuing with on-line Services to keep us in touch with God and the Church, in the meantime. A dear friend, with whom I keep in touch, has taught me a great deal about patience and ‘Grace’. I am still a ‘work in progress’. However, she sent me the following, very appropriate prayer, forwarded to them by their ‘acting Priest’:-

‘O God, make the door of our Church wide enough to receive all who need human love and friendship. Narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor straying feet, but rugged and strong to turn back the tempter’s power. O God make the doorway of our Church the entrance to Your Eternal Kingdom. This we ask in the name of You, Father, your Son and The Holy Spirit. Amen.’

YEOVIL MARSH

From Mike Kane: “None of us have the luxury at the moment of joining with each other for prayers in church, but it would be a shame if we couldn’t manage to pray together in person until all restrictions have been lifted. It has occurred to me that any of us could meet up in an outside area, if we limit the number to two or three and keep the required distance apart. This could be in a garden, park or even two people either end of a bench outside somewhere. Is there anyone in the congregations that you feel you could pray with? If so we could start with the Lords Prayer and then just see what comes to mind. Think of the way the early church started and the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 18 verse 20. “*Where two or more are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them.*” no special building or special robes needed just two or three people with Jesus. All we need is the will to do it so why not give it a try. bless you all.”

From the Editor: “Please send any contributions to me before or by 19th July for inclusion in the August on-line edition of the Newsletter. Delivered copies are still not possible as we are keeping deliverers safe, but if you know someone not online who needs a paper copy perhaps the church wardens could print you one out. Finally this made me smile and proof read carefully “Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get. Keep safe and alert. “