

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to this mid week edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Many of us will probably be struggling with the news that as part of the strengthening of measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic church buildings will now be closed. Below Anna reflects on what this might mean for the ways in which we express our worship to God.

Scripture Passage

John 4:19-26

The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”

Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Reflection

On the last Sunday that we were able to worship together in church, the Gospel reading was from John 4, and over the last week or so I have been reflecting on a few specific verses from that chapter.

In John 4.21-24, Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, "Woman, believe me, **the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." In response to the coronavirus pandemic, it has been necessary to suspend public worship in churches for the foreseeable future, and in the last few days it has become necessary to close them too. Suddenly, we are not able to worship in the same way as we have done previously; the mountain and Jerusalem are no longer the focus of worship.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, in a letter issued on the 17th March, have challenged us:

"Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day... We urge you, sisters and brothers, to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world."

We have the opportunity to express what it means to be people who worship in spirit and truth; this is a time for praying and worshipping in new ways. As William Barclay puts it, "true worship finds God in every place". This means that we might experiment with different ways of worshipping God, perhaps taking up practices we haven't tried before, such as keeping a journal of our prayers, or spending time in silence with God, or reading a book of the Bible that we haven't read for some time or have never read. You might like to colour in the attached Bible verse as part of a time of prayer and reflection (maybe even putting it up in your window when it's complete). This is also a time when our true worship will be expressed

through our love for our neighbours. This might mean dropping food or medicine round to someone who is self-isolating, or phoning up a neighbour and asking them if there is anything they would like prayer for, or remembering to donate items to the local food bank.

Let's embrace this challenge; let's look outwards and seek to be the Church in new ways.

Anna

Points for Prayers

- Thanksgiving for so many volunteers in the Camelot Community who are willing to help others during this emergency
- Those who have used churches as a place for private prayer and who are affected by and perhaps struggling with the decision to close church buildings
- Those who are themselves or whose immediate family circle are infected with coronavirus
- The Government of this and other countries around the world seeking to make wise decisions to minimise loss of life and especially to protect the elderly and vulnerable

A special prayer for coronavirus

God of hope be with me, calm my anxious mind and remove fear. Surround me, keep me safe until the threat passes. **Surround me with love, and deliver me from evil.**

Protect my **family**, preserve us O God, and keep us in health and provision. May my **community**, despite enforced isolation, be united through acts of loving kindness. **Surround us with love and deliver us from evil.**

Help those in the **NHS** as they care for the sick and deal with the virus; for **businesses** as they manage the economic challenges and for employees sent home. **Surround them with love and deliver them from evil.**

Grant wisdom to our **government** and may the **PM** be surrounded by wise counsel. Guide their decisions today to lead us safely. **Surround them with love and deliver them from evil.**

May those working to stop the pandemic globally make the breakthroughs they need to **eradicate the virus**. Reduce its impact on other nations affected today. **Surround them with love and deliver them from evil.**
Amen.

Why not try?

- Lighting a candle and placing it in your window as a symbol of Christ the light of the world.
- Investigating services streamed on the internet, for instance St John's Yeovil or the Prayer Book Society on YouTube.

Updates

- Church buildings now closed. No weddings or baptisms/christenings. Funerals only with immediate family either at graveside or at crematoria (again with restrictions on entering crematoria).
- Will and Lindsay who were married at St Michael's North Cadbury last Friday with just the regulation two witnesses send their warmest greetings to all at North Cadbury and hope to see them before too long.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

We pray that 'we might live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us' (Ephesians 5:2)