

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 66

Wednesday 4th November 2020

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

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. We reflect on the past few months and also give some information on the new lockdown due to begin tomorrow.

Scripture Passage

Psalm 122

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”

Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem -- built as a city that is bound firmly together.

To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls,

and security within your towers.”

For the sake of my relatives and friends

I will say, “Peace be within you.”

For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,

I will seek your good.

Reflection

I had planned to take this opportunity to reflect on and review the period since the summer when we have been permitted to hold public worship services again in our churches. I realised that I would be doing so against a background of increasing uncertainty as to what we might or might not be able to do in the immediate future.

I am not intending to debate the details of the impact of the second lockdown although below I do include a short summary of what we know about it at present. After all we can all be tempted to believe that if we had been responsible for such decisions we would have made them in a very different and wiser way. And we might be right to think in such a way. But equally well we might be wrong and our hypothetical decisions might in fact have been much worse.

So what is our responsibility in these circumstances? The answer given both in our Bibles and in the liturgies of our church services (whether Book of Common Prayer or Common Worship) is 'prayer'. Psalm 122 which I have chosen for today's reflection puts it this way 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem'. We are to pray not simply for the health and wellbeing of our immediate church family but for our community as a whole. And in this we have a special responsibility to pray for those who make decisions on behalf of that community that they may be granted a God given wisdom.

The famous and highly evocative Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. It is not an easy word to translate because it encompasses a whole range of meaning from peace to wellbeing, soundness and completeness. Such a prayer that our community might be whole and at peace with itself seems to be particularly relevant for our days at a time when so many divisions are appearing as to which is the right direction to take.

And when I look back over our time since the first lockdown was eased thankfulness for a sense of completeness also comes to my mind. In the week before the announcement of the second lockdown we had completed the reopening of all the Camelot churches with the Harvest Service at Bratton Seymour on 25th October. And then the day after on Monday 26th October we completed the round of Annual Parochial Church Meetings with the meeting at Yarlinton.

Psalm 122 opens on a note of joy. ‘I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!”’ And this joy was very evident to me on each of the occasions on which I had the privilege of officiating at the reopening of a church.

Many services stood out for me during this period but perhaps a personal highlight was leading outdoor worship for various Harvest services. As we stood or sat in various churchyards often with the variety of nature and wonderful views around us the greatness and generosity of God’s provision for us was brought home in a fresh way.

And yes even though this year the annual church meetings were more stretched out they still represented a sizeable commitment of time. And yet they also were occasions of joy as I witnessed the strength and resilience of the local commitment to each village church in the Camelot Group.

Once again we are challenged by the coming realities of lockdown. But as we do so let us take with us this joy that God gives. As Nehemiah 8:10 puts it, ‘The joy of the LORD is your strength.’

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ
- For the impact of the new lockdown on the life of the church
- For the peace and wholeness of our communities
- For the new lockdown to be effective in stemming and minimising the second wave of coronavirus
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Guidance on new lockdown

The basic guidance is contained on the government website which includes the following details:-

‘Places of Worship will be closed, unless they are being used for:

- Funerals

- To broadcast acts of worship
- Individual prayer
- Formal childcare or where part of a school
- Essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks
- Other exempted activities such as some support groups'

Remembrance Sunday

Specific guidance concerning Remembrance Sunday has been given by both the church and the government. Although no services inside churches are possible, it is possible to hold services outdoors subject to social distancing and a risk assessment. Such services are to be short and focussed on wreath laying. So far as possible numbers are to be kept to a minimum with members and veterans of the armed forces being the principal participants. As stated above individual prayer in church is also possible. If you wish to know more about arrangements in your own village please contact the relevant churchwardens. For more detail on the guidance follow the weblinks below:-

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday>

Broadcasting from Church

The broadcasting of acts of worship is given as a specific exemption for the use of the church during lockdown. In preparation for an anticipated second lockdown Anna did some research on what might or might not be possible. This research is sent as a separate attachment. Although Anna

would not claim to be an expert in this area she has gone carefully through the possibilities known to her. There appears to be no obvious and easy option in this respect. However, we welcome any feedback on Anna's note and the options which she suggests at the end of her note.

An inclusive Communion celebrated on behalf of the benefice

During the second lockdown as in the first, Ron and Pam will be celebrating Communion regularly in their home each Sunday at 10.00 am. Please be aware of this because even though no-one can join them they are praying for us all and hope that you will feel included in this act of Communion.

All Saints and All Souls Service

On Sunday afternoon, there was an opportunity for people to light a candle, or have a candle lit on their behalf, to represent loved ones they wished to remember. Below is a photo of all the candles which were placed on the high altar.



Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who are grieving the loss of a loved one at this time.

Anna

Private prayer

North Cadbury church continues to be open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm.

The Parish Office

The Parish Office is closed although Rob does come in regularly. In his absence please contact Rob via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Update on Bishop Peter

Bishop Peter thanks everyone for all the cards and other expressions of support which he has received. A card was sent to him on behalf of the Camelot Parishes as a whole. He says that he has been lifted on 'eagle's wings' through the love and prayers of others and he thinks that the treatment for leukaemia is going well. He is grateful that potential donors for a bone marrow transplant have been identified and he is preparing for such a transplant later this year. Please continue to pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

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)