



St Leonard's Church
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Anglican Parish of Denmark-Walpole

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St. George's Church
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We endeavour to be an expression of God's love in the community

Thursday, 4 June 2020

Dear Parishioners

Well, another week, and another set of changes!

While it is very tempting to change what we had decided, I think, for the moment, we will keep with what we had agreed to: Walpole, St George's is now open for worship at 10 am each Sunday and will continue with a form of Morning Prayer; Denmark, St Leonard's will reopen for worship on July 19 after I return from leave.

It was lovely to be able to lead worship at St George's on Sunday and be part of a 'live' congregation! Thank you to Harold and Fr. Kevin for your ministry in Walpole.

In his recent pastoral letter, Bishop Ian, in his reflection, poses some very good questions. Questions I hope that you will consider and reflect upon and come up with your own answers:

The Emergency measures have pressed an enormous pause button on normal life. I wonder what you have found difficult, or have valued, about the past ten weeks? It is worth reflecting on this, especially as we begin to re-open churches. What will we want to try and retain that we have valued? and what might we wish to do less of that has not proved to be ultimately as important?

It is an interesting exercise. What has been difficult, what have you missed, what is now important to you, as you seek to worship God?

Unfortunately, for the time being, things like shaking hands, hugging, sharing the Common Cup during Communion, and the after-church fellowship and cuppa are all likely to be beyond our reach.

So, what do we want our "new normal" to look like?

I had a déjà vu experience recently. I remembered the time following "911" and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, that there was a ground swell of cooperation, prayer and hope around the world, that after such an horrendous act of violence and destruction, we might move into a better, more caring world. Unfortunately, the reality led into war in the Middle East and that hope was lost. Now we see the whole world engulfed in this pandemic, we have taken a breath, a period of time when we have had to stop and live a simpler life, a time generally of good will and cooperation between people, between communities, between nations. Sadly, if you turn on the radio or TV at the moment, and listen to the News, what do you see? I fervently pray that we haven't lost this opportunity to come together, to care and to help each other. Will a portion of humankind always act in aggression and self-interest?

How do we want our future to look? What can I - we - do to achieve that?

This week we celebrate Trinity Sunday. I realise that it is one of those Sundays, in the past, that I tried to avoid preaching! There is the strong temptations for preachers to try to explain, in my humble opinion, the unexplainable! Our three-in-one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Creator/Source of all Being, Eternal Word/Saviour/Pattern-card, and Life-giving Spirit/ Comforter/Enabler



One of my favourite icons is the Rublev Icon, written by fourteenth century Russian, Andrei Rublev. While at one level it depicts the three angels who visited Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18, at another, it has become strongly associated with the Trinity. There is something very powerful in this image, and it extends an invitation to the viewer to 'Come', to enter into the circle, to complete the circle and join in God's mission in the world.

One theory was that the rectangular mark on the table, once held a mirror, and so when a person approached and looked at the icon, they would see themselves as part of it.

As at Pentecost, the Trinity Sunday gospel talks of Jesus sending his disciples out into the world – sending us out as his disciples now.

Last Saturday evening, Harold Luxton, from Walpole, sent me a newsletter which he receives from a church community in New York City. In it the Rector and Pastoral Team were reflecting on current events in the USA. A couple of things they said jumped out at me, which I was able to share in my sermon at Walpole. They are as relevant this week as they were last:

On Pentecost we recall that the Spirit of God connects us, gathers us, and sends us out together.

and

Everything happening in our world – all that's been lost and all that's been revealed – calls us to step forward now. We don't simply watch in horror but act in *hope*.

"Act in *hope*' I ask you again to think about how you see our future, what you *hope* our 'new normal' will be like. How can we improve what we do, be better, more compassionate, less judgemental, and more open to this community into which we have been blessed to find ourselves?

I'll get off my soap box now ... I don't know if I need to write a sermon ... just joking!!

On to other things.

For those who have been using Keith Slater's *Simple Table Services* and would like to keep receiving them, please let me know and I will get the next ones which he has written.

It has been lovely to see the *Mustard Seed* reopen, see the happy faces of the vollies and satisfied customers. Generally, people have been good about following the safety rules.

I look forward to seeing the Walpole congregation again on the 14th, this weekend I am being inundated with family, it will be lovely to be able to indulge in "Granny hugs" again!

Please remember, that if you need anything, or now, if you would like a visit, please let me know.

I leave you with piece written by a very gifted email friend, Thom Shuman:

God, who created you in the divine image, sends you forth:

we go, to reflect the presence of our Creator to everyone we meet.

Jesus, who has redeemed you, has established God's Kingdom in our midst:

we go, to bring healing to the broken of the world.

The Holy Spirit, who calls you to be God's people, goes with you to many places:

we go, to tear down the walls that divide us, and to build lives of hope for all of God's children.

And now,

may the peace of the rolling waves,
the peace of the silent mountains,
the peace of the singing stars,
and the deep, deep peace of the Prince of Peace,
be with you now and forever. Amen.

May God be with you this week and always.

With my prayers and good wishes, your priest and your friend,

Sally