

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH GRAFHAM

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

4th November 2020

I started writing 'Thought for the Week' when we first went in to lockdown in March and now as I write the thirty third one we are preparing for another lockdown. Initially many people, who didn't have to work, treated lockdown as a sort of extended holiday - a chance to catch up, to do the things they hadn't got round to at home. I wrote about us having time to slow down, to reflect and to pray. But as the year has gone on many of us have not had holidays, our daily activities have still been restricted even when we haven't been in lockdown, and we may have restricted ourselves or been more cautious about doing things we would have done without thinking in previous years. Many of us are tired. Many people are saying that they find it hard to motivate themselves; that creativity has dried up. I wonder how you are feeling this time round. Going into lockdown now is potentially harder though let us be thankful for the assurance that it is time limited. Many of us find the winter months difficult anyway with colder days and dark evenings. Drawing the curtains at four or five o'clock can make us feel more isolated and it is a long time until bedtime.

Some of us will still go on working. Some of us might be feeling positive. Perhaps lockdown means that this year the Christmas cards will be written in good time. Maybe lockdown will be easier than the sort of half-life we've been living. Perhaps instead of staying out in the garden late into the evening, there will be the space to read that book or do that jig-saw.

We can probably all learn from what we did or didn't do in the first lockdown; what was helpful and what was less so.

Whatever our situation or state of mind, I think it is important to acknowledge our feelings and to tell God about them. I find the psalms hugely encouraging in this respect - all human emotions are there, nothing is held back from God. There is praise and joy, there is doubt and lament, and there is plenty of anger. We can tell God exactly how we feel. We don't need to protect him or only show him the things of which we are proud.

We can also ask for his help to face the days ahead. The psalms not only express the full range of human emotions, they speak of hope and trust in God. You will each have your favourite psalm but you might like to look again at one of these - Psalms 27, 46 or 91. Perhaps choose one or two verses to learn by heart to return to at times when life feels a bit of a struggle. In an earlier 'Thought for the Week' I quoted from the writings of Julian of Norwich and I think it is worth repeating what she wrote about God: 'He did not say: You will not be troubled, you will not be belaboured; but he said: You will not be overcome'.

And very importantly we can still support and encourage each other by staying in touch in whatever way we can and by continuing to pray for each other and the wider world. If you need help with shopping or other practical things do get in touch with me or Jill. If you feel a bit isolated or lonely and in need of chat do give me a call on 892645.

Our Bishops are calling on us to make this month of lockdown a month of prayer, so I thought this week I would offer you a poem by Ann Lewin which seems to me particularly appropriate for this season of the year and of our lives.

Prayer tree

Prayer gives us rootedness,
Reaching out
Discovering in darkness
Sources of nourishment;
Pushing with patient insistence
Against obstacles;
Drawing from strange places
Strength for life that
Grows in light;
Holding us as we bend,
And when we break, offering
Hope, that from the
Unimaginable dark,
New shoots will spring.



(from 'Watching for the Kingfisher' by Ann Lewin published by Canterbury Press 2009)

With my love and prayers

Camilla

We will be sending another mailing later this week about worship during lockdown once we have received final confirmation of the regulations.

Please share these mailings with anyone who you think might find them helpful. If they would like to receive them direct they are welcome to email office@standrewsgrafham.org.uk and we will add them to the mailing list.