

Parish Notices Sunday 19th April 2020

Please pray for:

Mon: The NHS and amazing Health Care Workers; Family and friends of Martin Osborne, whose funeral will be led by John Shepherd at Chiltern Crematorium this afternoon

Tue Teachers who are continuing to keep schools open, and will have to continue through school holidays; Family and friends of Eric Edwards, whose funeral will be led by Tim Yates at Chesham Cemetery

Wed: National and Local Government and all those with authority.

Thu: Shop workers, suppliers and all involved in the distribution of food and basic supplies.

Fri: Small business owners, those facing particular economic challenges;

Sat: Church leaders, nationally and locally - our witness in Chesham and the villages.

Safeguarding during Covid-19

The number of vulnerable people in our communities is greater than ever. Thank you to all who are reaching out to them at this unprecedented time. As a Christian community please can we all take note of the current safeguarding advice from the Diocese, written in the last few weeks

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/safeguarding/>

Please will anyone who is in touch with young people or vulnerable adults as part of a church response during Covid-19 read this information carefully. For further support with this please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer **Rachel Meldrum 01494 782783** or email: safeguard@greatchesham.org.uk

As usual, if you have any safeguarding concerns about a child or adult, contact Rachel Meldrum within 24 hours.

The Parish Office remains operational. Lynette will be based there. Please contact by telephone or email but please do not come in person.

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Dear friends across the Parish,

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” 1 Corinthians 15:56-57

The apostle Paul’s great resurrection chapter (do read it if you haven’t recently) comes to a conclusion with this wonderful affirmation of victory in the risen Lord Jesus – the greatest enemies of sin and death have been defeated at the cross, and now in Christ we need not fear, but can have a humble and joyful confidence in the present, and for the future.

It is good to be reminded of that as the challenges of the lockdown period are extended formally for another three weeks, and as the enormous pressures that many are facing continue. We can’t underestimate the financial struggles many are facing, the mental health issues arising, the feelings of loneliness and isolation, not to mention the grief and sadness of losing loved ones. The Easter victory of Jesus does not remove the challenges and the suffering, but it gives us a right perspective with which to face them, and a wonderful promise that He will be with us in the midst of them.

How good it has been to come together as a Parish during this Easter period. Many of us were together (though apart) for a quiet time of reflection on Maundy Thursday evening – I was very moved by Jeremiah’s lament at the end of the service. I hope that you were able to join with all or part of the Good Friday 3 hours at the cross on Youtube, with all 7 of our churches taking a part in leading us through those moving and powerful last hours of the Passion narrative. Praise God for the work of Jesus on the cross, and then for the joy of resurrection on Easter morning – enjoyed in our various online services across the districts.

We would now be moving into the season of Annual Meetings and elections for new officers in our churches. These meetings have been postponed until later in the year, and we are in the process of setting new dates for our APCM and ADCMs. In the meantime can I express my gratitude to all the district and Parish wardens for their hard work, alongside the Parish staff team and a whole host of volunteers serving in different ways to keep the ministry of our churches going through these difficult days.

Let’s be encouraged in our service by the very last words of 1 Corinthians 15 – in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the victory that God has given us, Paul writes, *“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”*

With love in Christ,

John Shepherd