

Parish Notices Sunday 21st June 2020

Please pray for:

Mon: The NHS, and those working in social care and in our local residential homes

Tues: Our local schools and their staff teams, as children return and as further planning is done for September

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; Family and friends of Sheila Dickson, whose funeral will be led by Simon Winn at Chiltern Crematorium this afternoon.

Fri: Small business owners, those facing particular economic challenges; Family and friends of Sylvia Howe, whose funeral will be led by Chris Gercke at Chiltern Crematorium this morning.

Clergy Contact Details

Revd John Shepherd- john@theshepherds.org.uk Tel 01494 784372

Revd Josh Bailey- associate@cheshamchurch.co.uk Tel 01494 783629

Revd Chris Gercke - curate@cheshamchurch.co.uk Tel 01494 783498

Revd Tim Yates - tim.yates3@btinternet.com Tel 01494 772914

Revd Simon Winn -rev.simon.winn@gmail.com Tel 01494 773318

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

Restore Hope- Gap Year Internship Programme

if you are an enthusiastic, servant-hearted and adaptable person in a gap year, career break or want a year of change please get in touch at www.restorehopelatimer.org or email jo.clare@restorehopelatimer.org

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Dear friends,

How are you feeling? I love the honesty of the Psalms, where the writers express their emotions so openly – joy, anger, sadness, thankfulness, despair. Psalms 42 & 43 has been a source of great encouragement to many as an honest expression of a believer struggling with depression, with that repeated refrain, “*Why, my soul, are you so downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” Talking about our mental health has become much more acceptable in recent years, encouraged by high profile celebrities and even royalty – it is good to see them catching up with the writer of these Psalms some 3 millenia ago!

There has been a phrase coined for our times: The Covid Blues. With all the change that people have been facing, with our regular rhythms of life disrupted, with all the uncertainty of what lies ahead, and with our normal relationships and levels of social contact diminished – it is not surprising that many people are feeling the Covid blues. A general sense of dislocation, a lack of motivation, feelings of tiredness, anxiety about the future are among the symptoms.

As the lockdown is lifted we will have things to look forward to, but the return to any sort of normality, including in the life of our churches, will be slow and complex. Usually following a significant crisis event, there is the experience of post-traumatic stress, an outpouring of grief as people reflect on what has happened – and although we want to look and move forward, it will be important to give space for sharing our experiences and listening to one another.

The Church should be (it hasn't always been) the best place for allowing honest, open reflection, and where a listening ear and a compassionate response can be found. It is very good to see that the Association of Christian Counsellors are offering 10 free sessions for key workers and for those bereaved during the Covid crisis. Much of our reflection and processing of what has happened will be done informally with Christian friends and family, but if you are feeling in particular need then please don't hesitate to contact your minister.

When we are feeling low it is good to have others who will listen, but the solution to the Covid blues, or to any of our troubles, is not ultimately found anywhere else but in God himself. The Psalmist is honest about his feelings - “*Why, my soul, are you so downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” and then each time he speaks encouragement to himself – “*Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God.*” (42:5, 11; 43:5)

May we, like the Psalmist, be those who keep looking to God and help others to do the same in the coming days.

With love in Christ,
John