

Parish Notices Sunday 7th June 2020

Please pray for:

Mon: The NHS and amazing Health Care Workers.

Tue Teachers who are continuing to keep schools open, and will have to continue through school holidays.

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.

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

Parish website address: www.greatchesham.org.uk **Parish Office:** Tel: 01494 783629
e-mail: parishoffice@greatchesham.org.uk Registered Charity No: 1129438
Address for Friday printing: printers@greatchesham.org.uk

Dear friends,

I was delighted to see pictures on Facebook this week of an Emmanuel church member who is in her 90s, out of the house for the first time in 12 weeks, going for a socially distanced walk “around the block” with a friend. Stuck at home in the vulnerable category, phone calls through the window have been her main form of communication with the outside world, but things are beginning to change... slowly!

We are now a fortnight into the relaxation of lockdown regulations, and many have been enjoying the opportunity to see family and friends in a socially distanced way. Debbie & I enjoyed a lovely early morning walk in Ashridge with friends and a picnic breakfast in the sun! Staying alert to the ongoing dangers is vital and progress will be very slow, but there is some progress – praise God!

In the Parish, people are inevitably asking about when our churches will be open for us to gather again as God’s people. The government have suggested a date of July 4th for a partial reopening of places of worship, and the Bishops have not yet given any instructions other than the current permission for the minister and delegated individuals to enter the church building. It is likely that the return will be slow and cautious, with hints at opening in stages, first for private prayer, then for small weddings and funerals, and then for more regular services, all of course with careful social distancing and deep cleaning, etc.

I attended a very helpful leadership seminar this week, in which the speaker who has much experience as CEO of a charity working in disaster areas spoke about three stages. The “Response” phase being the immediate weeks after a crisis breaks; the “Recovery” phase which involves typically 6-12 months of grieving, of adjustment, of reflection; and the “Reconstruction” phase which usually lasts 2-3 years of in which a new future is established. These stages often overlap, and there may well be two steps forward and one back, but it feels as though we are reaching the end of the response phase and beginning the stage of recovery. This is a period not to be rushed, but one for listening to each other, for allowing trauma to be processed and grief to be expressed, for recognising that different people will move at different speeds, for learning lessons from what has been positive as well as what has been hard, and above all for listening to God.

In the midst of change, praise God that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, and so as we gradually feel our way forward, He is the one we can trust and call upon now and in the days to come.

With love in Christ,

John Shepherd