

Parish Notices Sunday 9th August 2020

Please pray for:

Mon: The NHS, and those working in social care and in our local residential homes; Parish Holiday club, online this week.

Tues: Our local schools and their staff teams, as they have a break in August, and plan for return in September.

Wed: National and Local Government and all those with authority, making decisions about local lockdowns and economic support;

Thu: Volunteer organisations supporting the most vulnerable – FoodBank, CAP Debt counselling, Community Fridge, the FoodLife project, etc

Fri: Small business owners, and others facing redundancy or other particular financial challenges. .

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

Eureka! Parish Holiday Club

As we won't be able to meet in person this coming summer for our Church holiday club, the Parish of Great Chesham have decided to run an online club.

It will be open to children of all ages, with a youtube video broadcast everyday, alongside activity packs, a scavenger hunt and a zoom movie night!

So join us for a journey of discovery into God's wonderful world.

contact Hannah at children@cheshamchurch.co.uk to see if there are any spaces!

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,

How did Jesus feel? I read a book with that title a while ago, which provided an excellent insight into the emotions that Jesus experienced. Sometimes Jesus is portrayed as an ethereal character who floated through Galilee in a white robe generally being nice to people. But of course, if you have read a gospel, you'll know that Jesus was a flesh and blood human being who laughed and cried, who got angry and felt lonely, who was passionate and felt rejection – He knew the emotions that we ourselves experience.

The most common emotion that Jesus is recorded to have experienced in the gospels is that of compassion. Our English word is derived from the words "pati" (to suffer), and "com" (with) – so compassion is to feel the suffering alongside another. The Greek word is a wonderful one to say: *spagchnizomai* – which means literally "to have the bowels yearn". The bowels in the New Testament were the very centre of a person's emotions (today we would say the heart), so to feel compassion is an experience of the heart being deeply moved.

In Matthew's gospel there are at least four occasions when Jesus is filled with compassion. Two of those are when he encounters broken bodies, healing many (14:14), and opening blind eyes (20:34). A third occasion is when Jesus is surrounded by a huge crowd who are weak with hunger but have no food (15:32), and the fourth is when he sees a crowd who are spiritually hungry and have no one to teach them (9:36). Jesus is moved with compassion by both physical brokenness and spiritual emptiness; and his compassion moves him to action.

We live in a world which may look very different from 1st Century Palestine, and yet very little has changed. It is still marked by both physical brokenness and spiritual emptiness, which we can see even in our own town of Chesham in spite of our relative prosperity and privilege. We see people suffering with physical and mental health, with relational and financial challenges; and we see growing Biblical illiteracy, increasing secular mindsets, and a drift away from God. Are we moved with compassion like Jesus?

Let's pray that the Spirit would move our hearts to deepen our compassion, and so move us to action. Let's continue to support the work of Foodbank, CAP, Community Fridge and other Christian initiatives; and let's be praying for clear Biblical witness to our town, and especially for the Real Lives mission in October as we long for many to discover the joy of knowing God in their lives.

With love in Christ,
John