

Dear Friends,

Who would have imagined how dramatically our lives have changed since the last time we wrote to you? Those of us who work are now working less, from home or not at all. We are all experiencing radical changes in our personal freedoms and the range of activities available to us, including the closure of St Barnabas and all churches in the UK. Yet in some ways, our daily lives remain the same: we still have to wash clothes and dishes (probably more of the latter as we are all eating in), put out the rubbish, care for our pets and so on.

Yet despite all the differences in our life here on earth, God remains the same. Rev Martin Wainwright, Vicar of St Paul's Howell Hill, shared a sermon on YouTube about Philippians chapter 4, verses 6-7 (you can see this on our Facebook page if you would like). He reminds us that at this time of great anxiety, we can take control by turning to God in prayer with all our cares and concerns and with thanksgiving too. God is our only constant in these rapidly changing times and what a privilege it is, now more than ever, to be in relationship with Him and able to call out to Him in every situation.

So what about St Barnabas? How can we still be church when the church is closed? We remember Jesus' promise that where two or three gather in His name, He will be there too, but we can't do that now, unless we live with other Christians.

### **St Barnabas Going Forward**

We are in the process of setting up a telephone tree to enable us to stay in contact with each other and support everyone in the church. By the time you read this, many of you will already have heard from us directly about this. We are planning to organise the congregation into trios, i.e. groups of three people, who will be in regular contact with each other. Each trio will include at least one person in a vulnerable group, and one person who will take responsibility for any necessary action to meet practical or prayer needs of the

others in the triangle. This may mean meeting the need directly, e.g. praying for that person or getting some shopping in for them, or passing the query onto a designated helper household. We need permission from each of you in order to share phone numbers / email addresses for this scheme but are working hard to get this up and running as soon as possible as we know many people are feeling lonely and cut off at this time.

For those of you with internet access, we are continuing to post on our Facebook page and share online sermons and other resources on our website, <https://stbarnabas-epsom.org.uk/> We are also hoping to start a weekly service / worship and prayer session via Zoom or Webex. These are video meeting apps that enable users in different locations to have a virtual meeting with full audio and video access. Our working title for this venture is “St Barnabas Everywhere”. We will be sending out more information on this as it develops so please do email us on the address below if you would like to be a part of it.

For those of you who are “off-line”, you will find below a full list of the readings for every Sunday in April and May. You may like to arrange a time to chat to the others in your trio about the scriptures over the phone.

If you have any other ideas about ways that St Barnabas Church can continue in these challenging times, we would love to hear from you on our wardens’ email: [churchwardens.stbarnabasepsom@gmail.com](mailto:churchwardens.stbarnabasepsom@gmail.com) We know that many people are finding the current situation very difficult: should you feel in need of pastoral support from a priest, this can be arranged. Some of the local ministers who have taken services for us have offered to provide pastoral support when it is needed. You can let us know by email or phone as above.

We hope to write again in May. Wishing every blessing to you and your families and hoping you all keep well,

Helen and Sarah

## Readings for April and May 2020

### **5<sup>th</sup> April, Palm Sunday**

Psalm 118, 1-2, 19-end

Matthew 21, 1-11

### **12<sup>th</sup> April, Easter Sunday**

Acts 10, 34-43

John 20, 1-18

### **19<sup>th</sup> April, second Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2, 14a, 22-32

John 20, 19-end

### **26<sup>th</sup> April, third Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2, 14a, 36-41

Luke 24, 13-35

### **3<sup>rd</sup> May, fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2, 42-end

John 1, 1-10

### **10<sup>th</sup> May, fifth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 7, 55-end

John 14, 1-14

### **17<sup>th</sup> May, sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 17, 22-31

John 14, 15-21

### **21<sup>st</sup> May, Ascension Day**

Acts 1, 1-11

Luke 24, 44-end

**24<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter and the Sunday after Ascension Day**

Acts 1, 6-14

John 17, 1-11

**31<sup>st</sup> May, Pentecost**

Acts 2, 1-21

John 20. 19-23