

Rector's Update 04 – Cycling with and against the wind

(25th March 2020)

Dear Friends,

I went for a cycle ride on Sunday. Rather than following the usual (and wise) pattern and starting into the wind, I felt the Lord tell me to firstly go with the wind and then come back against it. So it was a lovely ride with the wind to Great Yeldham, but a bracing, exposed return against a strong headwind. Nevertheless, I was able to get back without too much duress because I paced myself. So it is that for us to get through these next weeks, we need to be ready for things to get harder; if we pace ourselves we will get through it.

As the week has progressed, it does feel that we are beginning to move from the 'surreal' to the 'real', as sadly the first coronavirus related death has been recorded at the West Suffolk Hospital. Indeed, I have been contacted about funeral arrangements this week by someone who was feeling unwell – that was sobering.

The three C's – Calm, Considerate, Community

It is relatively easy to be *calm* when problems feel far away; it gets harder when dangers are closer to home. I am continuing to pray for everyone in our villages. I have spoken with one or two people who are particularly anxious, and some who are unwell. Please particularly hold these people in your prayers. Let us also invest in personal prayer now so that we can draw on these spiritual reserves and remain calm even if things do get more difficult.

Likewise the same goes for being *considerate*. Again the onus on us all is to follow the governments advice on isolation; we may never know the person who we help by doing this, but it is a real person who is loved by God and by their friends and family.

Regarding *community*, the church was involved, in varying degrees, in supporting the letters which has hopefully been delivered to all villagers from their respective Parish Councils. The church has offered support both formally and informally to the Parish Councils.

To that end Loretta Shewring has offered to be a point of contact for those in need of befriending, or in need of practical support. Our Elders and a number of volunteers from our church community are available to help. I very much hope that you feel able to contact Loretta if you are in need, and also that we can offer this support to those in need outside the church community.

Loretta's contact details are: 01787 464 978, shewring9ha@btinternet.com

I have also take a number of other actions to try to ensure all of us are being contacted by someone, particularly those who are alone or who do not have internet access. Please let me know if you feel isolated or have inadvertently been missed out.

The 10.30am Services will be livestreamed

Thankyou to the many who watched last week (and apologies for the interruption when I accidentally pressed the 'off' button!). In line with the latest guidance this will now have to be streamed from the Rectory as churches are now closed. Henry *will* be preaching even though he will not be with me in the Rectory! It does grieve me deeply that the church buildings are closed, but let us never forget that we ourselves are the church – as Paul said in 1 Cor 12 – “*You are the body of Christ.*” We will continue to worship together.

I plan to send the usual notice sheet out later this week so that you can following the readings etc. Livestreaming instructions are overleaf.

Spiritual Practices

There are so many things out there online that it is sometimes hard to know where to begin. Personally I am saying morning prayer (you can follow the Bishops saying morning prayer at 8.30am every morning on www.facebook.com/BishopsCofEsuffolk/). I am also reading more general books relating to the faith, and continuing with my usual read through of the Bible.

You might consider using the Lectio Divina App which one of the small groups is using. This gives a short Bible reading each day and encourages reflection and prayer. Search for “Lectio 365” in the Apple App Store or on the Android Play Store. For more information, please call Christine (01787 312 848) or Jenny (01787 379 370).

My advice is whatever you do, try to think what one thing is it that the Lord has shown you from what you have read or heard. Do contact Henry or me if you want further suggestions.

Offertory / Collection

I have been asked what we are doing now that offering cannot be taken during services. Please could you seriously consider making your donation via a standing order. Details below:

Long Melford: “Long Melford PCC” Sort code 60 21 03, account number 01206125

A&S: “Alpheton & Shimplingthorne PCC”: Sort code, 60 04 16, account number 56293658

I was tired when I got back from my cycle against the wind but I did make it. We will get through this together. Let us draw each other closer to God with the wind of the Spirit.

May God’s peace be with you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Rev'd Matthew Lawson, Rector of Alpheton, Long Melford, and Shimpling

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Livestreaming

We are aiming to livestream all 10.30am services so you are able to participate at home:

1. Go to the Melford Church website:
www.longmelfordchurch.com
2. Scroll down to the Facebook box on the front page.
3. Click on the words Holy Trinity Church at the top of this box.
4. Once in our Facebook page scroll down a bit to see the service.

