Dear friends,

I hope you are all still in good health, and are enjoying the life we have become accustomed to!

The news this week that we now have more freedom to meet with others away from our homes was very welcome in my family.  The realisation that the National Trust has re-opened its car parks in Slindon was a good sign that it’s ‘business as usual’ for walking in the woods and on the Downs again – so welcome in this lovely weather.

My email this week will be brief – I’m sure that will be a relief to most of you!

There are several more church members receiving this email this week, so welcome to you!  In the unlikely event that you wish to read past copies of this newsletter, they are now being posted on the ABE website, starting with last week’s.

I start as usual with mentioning our ABE parish services for this coming Sunday 17 May (6th Sunday of Easter):

St Mary’s Aldingbourne

My usual message as follows:

Morning Prayer: Fr Tony will lead his usual on-line service of Morning Prayer at 10am.  All are welcome to join the service via Zoom, please contact Sarah Nichol to access if you are not already on her ‘attendance’ list.  This is a lovely way to worship ‘together’ in this time of social distancing.  All members of the parish are invited to join this service.

Coffee Mornings:  A ‘virtual’ coffee morning and chat is held every Thursday at 10.30am via Zoom, again organised by Sarah Nichol.

For details about joining either of these events, and to receive the link to both, please email Sarah on nicholsarah8@gmail.com.

St Mary’s Barnham

St Mary’s continues its Easter celebrations with two recorded Masses on Sunday, celebrated by Fr Graham at 9.30am and 11.15am.  The 9.30am service will follow the order of the Book of Common Prayer.

There will also be a said Mass on Thursday 21st May to mark the Feast of The Ascension of the Lord and this will be available to view from 7.00pm.

Some news from St Mary’s:  *‘It is with sadness that we must announce the death of the Queen Bee from the St Mary’s bee hive!  The worker bees are currently tending to some royal larvae and it is hoped a new Queen will take her throne in the next week or two.  The hive population halved to around 20,000 bees over the winter months and following the death of the Queen’*

St George’s Eastergate

Revd Sheila will be leading the usual service of Holy Communion from the church, which will be available to view from about 10am.

I will repeat last week’s message to you all from Kate and Sheila – do please let Kate, Sheila or me know if you’re happy to give a short message as described below:

*Following the positive response to the sharing of video messages during the recent family service, Revd Sheila would like to include one or two messages before the blessing each week in her online service.*

*It would be great to hear a little about what you have been doing and how you have been coping in lockdown, plus any messages of encouragement you may have for the congregation. Sheila invites anyone that wishes, to record a short video message to share. It can be a single speaker, couples or families - all are welcome.*

*(Please note: The videos should be less than 30 seconds long, be filmed with your phone or ipad in the horizontal position and include an introduction of yourselves at the beginning.  Alternatively, sending a photograph of yourselves holding a large card with a message for everyone would be another lovely way to share your love and thoughts for fellow church goers.  Please send these to both**jonathan.stapleton@gmail.com**and**smhandaway@hotmail.co.uk**with a reference of “Family check in” and your name.)*

*We look forward to hearing these messages of love in the weeks to come to help lift our spirits and increase our sense of community when we cannot physically meet together.*

All recorded services from St George’s Eastergate and St Mary’s Barnham continue to be available to view on our Parish YouTube channel. [Click here](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5E_HBUg1AnyMx9wZIKB4zw) to view, or type 'Parish of ABE' into the YouTube search box and select ‘Parish of ABE Recorded Services’.  A link to this channel, along with links to our Facebook pages, can also be found on our Parish website [www.parishofabe.org.uk](https://www.parishofabe.org.uk/) along with other useful information and resources.

Contact Newsheet, Prayer Diary for May and Parish News magazine

This week’s Contact Newsheet is attached.  This includes the bible readings for this Sunday which you might like to read during the services (the second sheet gives the readings for Aldingbourne and Eastergate and the third sheet gives those for Barnham).

The May prayer diary is also attached which you may find helpful when praying for those in our parish, local and diocesan communities, and fellow Christians overseas.

The May parish magazine continues to be available to view online at <https://www.parishofabe.org.uk/parish-mag>, and some printed copies are still available if you would like one, please call or email me and I will arrange for one to be delivered to you.

Parish Prayer Group

The weekly Prayer Group continues to meet from 5.30 to 6.30pm on Tuesday evenings to pray for the parish generally and for individuals who we know are in need and have asked to be prayed for.  During this period of lockdown, all are invited to join the group to pray together in spirit in their own homes.  It is a lovely way to feel connected with others in the parish and to feel our Lord’s presence with us all.  If you would like a list of detailed prayers emailed to you, or delivered if you would prefer, please let Maggie know (courtnadge@outlook.com or call 552099 or 07740 543974).  Maggie has put some general prayers on the Parish website which you may wish to use during this time of prayer.

Food Bank

Please continue to support the local Foodbank by placing food items in the basket in the Barnham Co-op store.  Further details of this valuable service, and a list of most needed food items, is given on the attached Contact sheet.

Music video

I mentioned last week the music video ‘The UK Blessing’, an amazing piece of Christian worship music recorded by churches across the UK.  It’s particularly impressive because of the lockdown restrictions under which it was produced.  You may know by now that the Prime Minister has just presented an award to the video’s organiser, Tim Hughes, labelling the video ‘a sensational singing masterpiece’.  I make no apologies for including the link to the music video once again: <https://youtu.be/PUtll3mNj5U>

Boris Johnson said: "At a time when our churches are closed, I am filled with admiration to hear how you have used the power of music to bring together Christians of all denominations from across our United Kingdom.  Your sensational singing masterpiece 'The UK Blessing' is truly uplifting and has touched millions around the world with its message of hope and its beauty."  (To read more, go to <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/prime-minister-gives-tim-hughes-award-and-labels-uk-blessing-video-a-sensational-singing-masterpiece>.)

Finally

I was reminded the other day about how we should always look for the best in other people and not to judge others, particular on first impressions.  And that, whatever we do for others, we do for God.  This week I was sent a short video clip which, I thought, illustrated this quite well, so I’ve attached to this email.  An amusing little depiction of this message, I hope you will agree!

Richard and I wish health and happiness to you all, and your families, this coming week.

Best wishes,

Gary