Dear friends,

Well, the weather has taken a different direction at last – a blessing for our gardens and countryside, but not so good for taking our lockdown walkabouts!  I hope you are keeping well and able to make the most of the gradual lifting of restrictions.

Good news from the government for our church buildings this week in that they can, from this weekend, be open for private prayer.  Arrangements are being made for St George’s and St Mary’s Aldingbourne to be open from Monday and St Mary’s Barnham will be open from Sunday (see more on this below).

As usual, a brief update on ABE news and our parish services for this Sunday 14 June (Trinity 1).

St Mary’s Aldingbourne

The church will be open for private prayer during the daytime from next Monday 15 June.

Morning Prayer will be held as usual by Fr Tony on Zoom at 10am.  All members of the parish are invited to join this short service, please click on this link to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84292695105?pwd=VzNVTmRYbExmUjJIaGwwZ2JkM3pNUT09>

Coffee Morning:  The usual online coffee gathering and chat will be held next Thursday at 10.30am via Zoom.  To receive the link for this, please email Sarah on nicholsarah8@gmail.com.

St Mary’s Barnham

The church will be open for private prayer during the daytime from Sunday 14 June.

St Mary’s will celebrate Corpus Christi 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.

The St Mary’s church bookstall continues to be available for all church visitors and passers-by.  It has recently been moved from its usual place inside the church to the lych gate (weather conditions permitting), so that anyone visiting Church Lane can take a look.  This has proved to be very successful and is providing funds for the St Mary Barnham Church toilet fund – what better cause could there be?!

St George’s Eastergate

St George’s Church will be open for private prayer during the daytime from next Monday 15 June.  The Jar of Compassion, sadly unavailable to accept donations for the last few weeks, will be in the church near the lectern, should you wish to donate to this year’s chosen charity, Sage House Dementia Support.

This Sunday, Revd Sheila will be leading the usual service of Holy Communion from the church, available to view from about 10am.  The service includes prayers, readings and other contributions from various members of the congregation.

Please remember that more video messages from members of the congregation will be welcomed for the St George’s Family Check-in each week – please refer to my previous emails for details, and let Sheila or me know if you can provide a message.

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/), which also gives other useful information and resources.

News from the St George’s Family and Young People’s church

**Sunday Seekers** continues weekly on the FACEBOOK page ‘Family at St George’s Church, Eastergate’.  They play a game, light the candle with a prayer then sing , watch videos, chat and introduce a craft. There’s an amazing amount of good things going on to keep everyone in touch – it’s great fun for all ages (says Gary), but particularly for all primary age children (says Kate!).

[Click](https://www.facebook.com/Family-at-St-Georges-Church-Eastergate-100655808143407/) here to access or, if anyone is not on Facebook but would like the link emailed to them, please email kateholland0@hotmail.co.uk.

The **Pray and Play** FACEBOOK page continues to follow the theme of Parables with a story and craft each Friday, suitable for the under 5’s.  Please [Click](https://www.facebook.com/ABEplayandpray/) here, or go to  [https://www.facebook.com/ABEplayandpray/](https://www.facebook.com/ABEplayandpray/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

The monthly **Family Service** still follows a child friendly format, so do join us on the first Sunday of the Month on the Parish ABE’s YouTube channel.  All the links to the Family Service videos can be found on the Parish website [www.parishofabe.org.uk](https://www.parishofabe.org.uk/)

Contact Newsheet and Prayer Diary for June

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 prayer diary for June is also attached.

Parish News magazine

The June Parish News is now available - the colour version of the magazine can be found on the ABE website at <https://www.parishofabe.org.uk/parish-mag>.  Some printed copies have been delivered to people’s homes and further copies may still be available for collection from boxes placed outside our three churches.  If you know of anyone who is in particular need of a printed copy, please call or email me and I will try to arrange for one to be delivered to you.

Jonathan, our Parish News Editor, is grateful to all those who have submitted articles for the July/August edition. The deadline for copy for this edition is next Wednesday 17 June – if you feel you could contribute any interesting article or story, this would be much appreciated.  Please send any contributions to Jonathan at abenews@outlook.com.

Re-opening of our church buildings

In my newsletter last week I reported that Bishop Martin had written an Open Letter to all Members of Parliament whose constituencies are in his Diocese, asking them to ‘lobby for an urgent review of the continued closure of our church buildings to individuals who seek solace in such places.’

During this past week the government announced that churches can re-open for private prayer – originally stated to be from Monday 15 June but later revised to Saturday 13 June.  This is a welcome step forward in the gradual process of returning to ‘business as usual’ in our places of worship, although I expect it will be a while yet before full public worship, without social distancing, will be allowed.

The churchwardens have made preparations for each of our three churches to be open during the daytime from next week.  Naturally, visitors are required to observe the 2m social distancing rule and to respect the need to avoid touching surfaces where possible, and to clean hands on entering and leaving the church.  Each church will have its own arrangements for using the building which will be on display at each church.

We thank the Lord for this very positive step, which will undoubtably be appreciated by many.

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 Foodbank by placing food items in the baskets in the Barnham Co-op store or the Trading Post.  Further details of this valuable service, and a list of the most needed food items, is given on the attached Contact sheet.

Finally

I suspect that several of you may appreciate watching and listening to another remarkable feat of collaborative ‘worship’ music – but not of the contemporary style that I have been championing over recent weeks but, in this case, a virtual choral Evensong.  This service, of course, is based on that in the Book of Common Prayer and is appreciated by some in the parish at occasional ABE services.

The service was recorded on 19 May on the theme of thanksgiving and unity, and included almost 1000 submissions from 20 countries.  The service was presented by the Rodolfus Foundation, a charity that runs singing courses for young people.  It was introduced by the Revd Richard Coles and included contributions from Stephen Fry, Alexander Armstrong, Sir Simon Russell Beale and the Voces8 choir.

The choral singing is quite magnificent and provides a delightful alternative worship style to that which I have generally been promoting here.

To watch, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X8FYAb3JK0>.

 My best wishes to all of you as we start to move forward with our lockdown arrangements.  Please pray for our parish, our priests and all who keep our church community alive and flourishing during these difficult weeks – and especially now as we embark on the serious process of finding our new incumbent.

I wish you all God’s blessing and good health.

Best wishes,

Gary