*August 2020*

*Dear all,*

*I am a collector of sticks! Like my Grandpa, I love to pick up fallen twigs as I take one of my many walks, saving them to use for a fire later, or perhaps helping towards a delicious BBQ. I find a real satisfaction in collecting and making use of these sticks that seem discarded by nature, perhaps giving them a new lease of life in their new role as a fire-starter and warmth giver, before they of course become ash.*

*During this time of COVID-19, we have become more aware of this life cycle, the cycle of birth and death, and perhaps we are considering our own ‘life purpose’ even more than before. This feels like a new season, one we haven’t had before, one where things are not quite the same, missing things that were there and now have gone, grieving for those things that were planned, but will not be now.*

*I have found I am grieving. Grieving for those who were with us before the lockdown, but I was unable to see again, as they died surrounded by masked carers; for those times and holidays I have not had that were planned and looked forward to. But most of all, I grieve for the churches. I grieve for the plans that I could see for the churches this year, the Buxton Team Parish Message Meet Up reports that have mainly been on standby. I grieve for the Eucharist; I have stood in solidarity with all of my parish who are also unable to receive communion during this time. I long for the time we can gather together, relaxed again, in friendship, love and peace as we worship in song and Eucharist on a Sunday morning.*

*In all of this there have been the constant Bishop’s updates, reminding us of things to do and decisions to make. And this time has been an experience of doing completely different things to normal. Early on, when I was self-isolating with COVID-19 myself, I set up Church, Chat and Support to respond to those who needed food parcels, essential items, hot meals or phone calls. Thank you to the team of volunteers who together have now helped over 100 people and this is one thank you reply of many that we received… “Just to say a big thank you for Church, Chat and Support. J and J have phoned me and wished me all the best; I had a nice chat which was really needed.”*

*Catrin Hubbard, our new curate, is starting to settle in to her new home here in Buxton. We are looking forward to her ordination which will hopefully be late September. Due to the pandemic Catrin is meeting individually with church members. If you would like to meet with Catrin over a socially distanced coffee then please pass on your contact details to Jennie at the parish office.*

*The rest of the ministry team are all offering different skills to help and support the parish during this time of change. From Church Chat and Support, written sermons, prayers, leading online services, preaching, blogs, phone calls and funerals, all of us continue to offer what we can during these unprecedented times for the Church of England.*

God is our shelter and strength,
    always ready to help in times of trouble.
 So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken
    and mountains fall into the ocean depths.

Psalm 46 v 1-2 (Good News Bible)

*I also want to send thanks to my Church Wardens who have been a great help and support to myself, and I know others, throughout this time. Do pray for us as we move forward during this strange and unprecedented time for the Church as we cope with all the ‘new’ that is happening!*

*And I am aware that not only do we need to consider you, the existing congregations, but also those who have been searching during this time. Perhaps reaching out to the spiritual side of life for the first time, perhaps praying for the first time.*

*I have been focusing on this verse from Ephesians over the past few weeks:*

The mystery is that people who have never heard of God
and those who have heard of him all their lives
(what I’ve been calling outsiders and insiders)
stand on the same ground before God.
They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus.
The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone,
across the board…

My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God,
who created all this in the first place, has been doing
in secret and behind the scenes all along.

Ephesians 3: v4-6 and 8-9 (The Message Bible)

*This encourages me that we must continue to offer services and activities that are engaging and inviting to all who are seeking, as well as those who are used to attending church buildings.*

*So, do have patience with us as we start to look towards opening the churches again. Everybody I speak to; congregation and community, has a different idea of what they would do, whether to open, whether to focus on online or in the community. Do trust that we, the Church Wardens and the Ministry Team are aware of the many needs of the community and also the rules and regulations that need to be put in place before some things can start to happen. It is six times the work with six church buildings, compared to only being one building.*

*As we look towards the next few months: Churches within the Buxton Team Parish will open, however, I am aware there are many who feel unable to attend Church, for whatever reason, and you are just as important to the plans that are being created. I encourage all those who need to continue to isolate or shield, or do not feel comfortable attending churches when they open, to stay at home and continue with at home worship and prayer, perhaps joining in with some of our new initiatives. Some will want to only return to their church when they are nearer to how they used to be. I think that churches may never be the same, but I am looking forward to the time when we do not need the face masks, the hand sanitizer and when music and singing can be part of the service again.*

*Plans for Buxton Team Parish*

*In consultation with my Church Wardens and Ministry Team these are some of the plans for the next few months. Church buildings will open again for Sunday morning worship, however, because services will be different and have strict safety rules and regulations to keep us safe, we are offering many other activities to ensure we continue to ‘Be Church’ together even if socially distanced or through the wonders of technology and phone lines. What I am outlining below is a vision for how to build on successful things that have started during lockdown and to welcome people who are seeking. At the same time, the plan includes re-opening our church buildings in a way that is as safe as possible.*

*On the final page I am asking a couple of questions for you to answer to let us know your thoughts on how you would like to join in with these new plans. Please do complete this and send to Jennie at the Parish Office, or phone Jennie and let her know your thoughts over the phone or click on the link* [*https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79*](https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79) *(those who have internet) and complete the form electronically.*

*The plans for the next four months, for Buxton Team Parish are as follows:*

 *August*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***St. Anne’s Church*** *is now open for private prayer* | *2pm till 4pm Every Saturday and Tuesday (including prayers at 3pm for the ill and those who have died).* |
| ***Phone-line Service*** | *All parishioners can phone a local number to hear a service led by the Rector and members of the Ministry Team.* |
| ***Weekly Ecumenical Service of Morning Prayer (On-line)*** | *Rector Liz has become ‘Churches Together in Buxton’ chair during the lockdown so she will lead an online service of morning prayer – all who have access to the internet are welcome.* |
| ***Treasure Hunt***  | *A treasure hunt is being planned around the church buildings – inviting the community to be involved.* |
| ***Biblical Stones***  | *Inviting the community to decorate stones to place around the churches* |
| ***St Mary’s, Jigsaw Church (On-line)****(No need to be a member of Facebook)* | *If you are looking for on-line worship, this lay led service is an exciting one to join.Email:* *ericbutterley@btinternet.com* |
| ***Activity Church (On-line)****(No need to be a member of Facebook)**(For adults and children alike)* | *This exciting on-line service encourages all to be creative with a bible story. To join in Email:* *activitychurchks@gmail.com* |

*September*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Churches Re-open*** | *Plans are being made, risk assessments completed, safety regulations put in place.* |
| ***Mini-Church starts*** | *Join a Mini Church group and follow the five B’s) Further details overleaf.* |
| ***Sponsorship forms*** | *Raise money for your church or for the parish doing fun activities.* |

 *October*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***The Alpha Course (On-line)*** | *To take place on-line for those within the congregations and the community.* |

 *November*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Bible Basics Course (On-line)*** | *Planned for online for those who would like to learn more about their Bible.* |

*There will be a chance to sign up for the other activities over the next few weeks. More details will follow on all of these services, courses and events, but here is some further information on the ones that are happening soonest:*

*Phone-line service for all*

*Simply phone in at any time and listen to a service led by Rector Liz or a member of the ministry team. There will be a new service each week. This will cost the same as a local telephone call (for many this will be free of charge). Anyone can listen to this service over the telephone. The Rector will soon be starting these services, so all the community can be part of this, even if they are isolating or shielding.*

*Biblical stones for the churches*

*Start decorating stones with a biblical story or verse using pictures or words. Place it around your church. We are going to advertise for the community to do the same.*

*Mini-Church*

*We are starting ‘Mini-Church’ in September, this will be something you can be part of. The plan is for groups of six (or more if online) to meet together weekly, to be church.*

*The groups may all be different and decide to follow a different format. However, the idea would be for each Mini-Church to follow the five B’s (see below):*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Break the ice* | *Someone brings a game, or an icebreaker question, or something that gets people sharing briefly about themselves.* |
| *Bring a song* | *Someone brings a song, hymn, piece of music that shows them something about God or their own life and faith. CD, YouTube or lyrics and read out. Sorry, no singing allowed yet!* |
| *Bible Questioning*  | *A short piece of scripture is chosen by someone and read out, twice. Then a discussion is had on what it might mean, or which bits you like and why. Some questions can be planned beforehand and asked to the group.* |
| *Believe in prayer* | *Someone brings set prayers or written prayers, or leads an open prayer time. It can be on a particular subject or just open to suggestions. Prayers can be read together, spoken, signed, or using other creative ways to pray.* |
| *Be United, Tell others the news* | *This is a space for the host to encourage all to tell others the good news of how God may have been working in the last week or previous months. What good news do you have to share with others? All items shared at this point should remain confidential within the group.* |

*As we plan towards re-opening the churches, please do let us know your thoughts below on paper, phone or on the following online link:* [*https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79*](https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79)

*If you have any prayer requests at this time, please phone Revd Keith (01298 74868) or email: keithcocking@live.co.uk.*

*Blessings to you,*

*Liz England*

*Liz England
Team Rector, 6th August 2020*

*Future planning (please tick)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | *When the Buxton Team Parish churches open are you planning to attend for Sunday worship within the building?* |
| *Yes, my church building only* |  |
| *Yes, any of the Buxton Team Parish Churches* |  |
| *No, I am needing to isolate or shield, don’t feel safe or don’t want to yet* |  |
| *I am not sure at the moment* |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Yes* | *No* |
| *Would you be interested in being part of a Mini Church?* |  |  |
|  | *People mainly from my own Church* | *A mix of people from the other Churches in the Team Parish as well as my own.* |
| *If yes, would you like to be in a group with…?* |  |  |

*Your Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Your Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Your usual Church \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Your contact number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Your email address (if you have one) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Please send this completed form to Jennie Parker at the Parish Office, Bath Road, Buxton
SK17 6HJ or telephone Jennie 77856 to let her know your thoughts, or follow the link for the electronic form which can be found at…* [*https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79*](https://forms.gle/KNuQCym2Ln4WkxF79)