

# *This Week at St Mary's*

13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

## OUR EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIPPING IN CHURCH AGAIN

It has been great to see people back worshipping in the church building. This Sunday our choir will be present - distanced in the choir stalls. Let me reiterate our gratitude for their work over these past nearly 6 months.

There was initial uncertainty following the Prime Minister's announcement this week whether church services could continue. The Bishop of London issued a clarifying statement that "*places of worship can still hold more than six people in total, despite the new restrictions on gatherings, and public worship can continue.*"

However, at the same time, distancing, masks, being discouraged to sing (I really hope at least this will soon end!) does make the experience of a worship service a bit different. Whilst we come as individuals, as St Peter tells us (1 Peter 2.5) we come as *living stones to be built into a spiritual house*. A significant part of that is done in relationship with our fellow human beings. Peter also says it is for the church to *proclaim the mighty acts of God*. Being part of a group singing (loudly) a rousing hymn is a key element.

I'd love to hear how you think worship best works in the present context. Let's ensure the building is as welcoming and beautiful as we can make it. Let's do all we can to make the service such that all can be drawn close to the living Christ. Let's grow together in our discipleship of Christ - *wider, younger and deeper*. And let's be alert to see the new shoots of life that may be beginning to emerge, from the God committed to make all things new.

Tom Gillman

## **EDUCATION SUNDAY - Today** *(Extract from talk given by Barbara Easton, Head of Service, Methodist Academies and Schools Trust.)*

Most people's experience of 2020 has been a bit of a roller-coaster, not all bad or good. Many of our children and young people have learned to ride a bike, play an instrument, train a puppy, crack their computer game. Statistics about the mental health of children through lockdown and the impact on safeguarding services are beginning to emerge. Some will have experienced bereavement. We know that not all youngsters have been able, or willing, to learn away from the resources and imperatives of the classroom. The social and relational aspects of education have largely gone by the board. They have struggled to be away, and they will struggle to be back.

2020 also raises questions for the long-term. If you are 60, the percentage of your life spent in lockdown could be between ½ and 1%. But if you are 6, it is around 5 to 10%. The longer that the pandemic requires us to live restrictively, the greater the proportion of children's learning about life that will have been acquired in 'strange times' - other people, kept 2 metres away from; facial expressions, hidden behind masks; grandparents, unseen and unhugged. Then there are the long-term economic consequences of the pandemic - statistics show that youngsters who complete their education in a recession take around 20 years longer to reach the levels of economic stability of other generations. Their worries about jobs, housing and life's ordinary pleasures are compounded.

The early days of the pandemic brought a sense that the world could embrace a better way of living. Reflecting on other tragedies in the year, social media became a place to #bekind. Yet, as things moved on, being kind took its place alongside being stressed, angry, judgemental...human... One impact of this remarkable year is seeing the Bible in a different way: familiar stories have taken on a different resonance. The unforgiving servant, like the people of God leaving Egypt, given the chance to wipe the slate clean but unable to take the opportunity to be new.

How can we embrace change when we are anxious and struggling ourselves? But how else will we step out into the Kingdom if it is not by embracing the chance to be a learning people in a time of change? In our children and young people, and in education, there is both hope and opportunity.

**NOTTINGHAM CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL.** Nottingham Stories: Separation and Serenade. Streamed Classical Music Festival featuring virtuoso violist **Carmen Flores** playing at iconic Notts venues. Award-winning filmmaker **Tim Bassford** has produced a series of beautifully shot films to be streamed via the NCMF website, free to view. Music has been selected to complement the venue it is performed in, alongside the story of how these institutions coped with lockdown and the uncertainty in their sectors. Council House 14 Sep, St. Mary's 16, Delilah Fine Foods 18, Nottingham High 21, Royal Concert Hall 23, Nottm Contemporary 25 Sep.

**NEXT SUNDAY Canon Richard Frith** will be presiding and preaching (Tom is at the Minster.) Since September 2019, he has been Canon Precentor at the Minster, responsible for liturgy and worship. Originally from Rotherham, he worked in publishing prior to training for ministry at Ripon College Cuddesdon. He served his curacy in Oxford, before returning north to be a parish priest in Halifax. He is married to Emma, and they have a son, Stephen, who is 12.

**MUSIC AND MEDITATION CONCERTS.** Organised by Carmen Flores and John Keys as part of the Nottm Chamber Music Festival in the sacred space of St Mary's, 2 concerts of 1 hour in length at 4pm (subject to regulations). 11 October Eleanor Turner (International harpist) and Clare O'Connell (cellist), 18 October Villiers Quartet. More details to follow.

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST MARY'S.**

- **Numbers** limited to 50, please let the office know if you are coming, with Test & Trace (policy at door).
- Automatic hand **sanitiser** at door and/or **wash hands**.
- **Wearing of masks**, please.
- All **music pre-recorded**, no communal singing.
- If you use a **paper service sheet**, please take it away with you.
- **No collection** - cash/yellow envelopes in chest by south door.
- **Communion**, bread only.

**THE MEADOWS FOODBANK** - for this week's update they are particularly in need of razors, shaving foam, toothpaste and soap bars/shower gel; washing-up liquid; and washing powder, tablets or liquid. Also welcome are food donations of the following - tinned peas, carrots, potatoes, kidney beans; pasta sauce; rice pudding; and jelly. We are very grateful for all your support - please contact St Mary's office (below) re any queries for the time being.

**GIVING MONEY** - Best done online but cheque also welcome. Preferable from the church's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest 560061 00834602) For **One-off donations**, use either the **QR code** or **Donate button** on the website. *Please continue (better still, increase) your financial support of St Mary's in this difficult economic climate.*

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

*St Mary's is usually open for private prayer and reflection  
11-3pm each weekday - please call to confirm if visiting*

**11.00am SUNDAY SERVICE at St Mary's  
Live & Streamed**

*(See our website and follow the link, including for Order of Service)*

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**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks  
John Bowers  
Rosemary Clark  
John Conway  
Harry Palmer  
Mike Ridley

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