

From the Rectory

Another month and lockdown has seen some easing of restrictions... some of you have formed enlarged 'Bubbles' so are able to see – and hug – your grandchildren, parents, children...

The big news for the Church is that we have been able to open our buildings for private prayer... of course I know that we can and do pray anywhere, but for some people the peace and quiet of our churches provides some much needed solace and sanctuary. I have hated that being denied to those who are maybe in particular need so excellent news. A big thank you to all those who have cleaned, microbe shielded, put up notices, roped off areas and generally ensured that they are safe places to be in. 😊

This week Boris told us that we could now open for services... as has become almost expected he did this without consulting with the Faith Leaders, so we don't yet have the necessary guidance to know exactly what we are allowed to do, and not do. As I write this we still await this guidance... however our bishops have emphasised to us that we *can* not that we *must*... we will have services again when we can do so safely – and when we have people to take the services as I am still shielded.

We will continue with online services certainly for the time being, even when we are able to meet in church again there will be people who will not immediately be able to return. Also there have been people able to access our services who would not be able to come to the church building, they are part of our church community too.

We have an opportunity as we begin to re-open our buildings to consider what it means to be 'church' in these villages. There may be elements that we have missed and are very keen to re-instate but this may also be the time to let go of some things so we can concentrate on different things.

Two of our villages have large building projects going on... we cannot expect people to just join in with what *we* like... we may need to be prepared to go out to where people are and ask what they need, what they think we should be doing too.

The Anglican Church has a parish system which means that everyone is part of a parish, the church (and me!) is there for everyone, not just those who attend on Sundays, we aren't a members only club. In fact someone once said (forgive me I can't find out who) that 'the Church is the only organisation that exists for the benefit of those who aren't its members.'

So do join with us as we pray our Youtube service at 10am on Sunday, or if you would like to see real people, join with our Morning or Evening Prayer and Compline on Zoom... I'd love to see you.

But also enjoy the opportunities this time gives us of 'travelling' to other places and joining in their worship... family home... where your friends are preaching... it isn't a competition, wherever you find God is the right place for you to be.

May all of you be enriched by the many different experiences we have around us at the moment. And please do stay safe.

God Bless

Felicity Couch