

Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | May 2020



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

VE Day 8 May

**Bishop Keith on
the weeks of change. Pg 2**

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Cover photo:
VE day 1945

The spirit supports us

Bishop Keith reflects on the weeks of lockdown and our focus for the future

“**W**e are living through a profound moment for our nation and the world, the effects of which will be felt for a long time to come.

But the Church remains a constant Christian presence in every community and an anchor of hope for many.

We have endured weeks of lockdown and who knows what the next few weeks will hold. Will the Government ease restrictions? Will certain groups remain in isolation, “shielded” from the virus but also the freedoms any easing will bring.

Whatever our focus has been until now, as we look ahead to what’s coming, how are you?

I continue to hear stories of encouragement and surprise. A recent favourite is from Runcorn and an older lady accessing an online service from her parish holding a telephone up to her computer screen so that a friend, another lady on her own, could hear the sermon!

Do read later in this CDN about the ways in which the National Church is helping those for whom accessing the internet is not straight forward. A new service called Daily Hope is a landline telephone number that you can ring to access prayer, reflections and worship.

But with encouragement and thanksgiving there is challenge and testing. For some, perhaps the novelty of online or telephone worship has begun to pale as we crave actual company. Maybe we are wondering what our lives are going to be like when whatever “normal” looks like returning, if it ever does. We may be crying out to God for some sense of what this all means.



Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead

“Sometimes when we will allow ourselves to be silent before the Lord we allow the Spirit to pray in us and through us in this way “with sighs too deep for words”, and this is the beginning of our discovering how it is that we ought to pray.”

But with prayer of intercession and thanksgiving, I wonder whether in this time as we approach Ascension Day and Pentecost, we might also give ourselves to silent prayer. I have often found Romans 8:26 an enormous relief in prayer:

“Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words”.

Sometimes when we will allow ourselves to be silent before the Lord we allow the Spirit to pray in us and through us in this way “with sighs too deep for words”, and this is the beginning of our discovering how it is that we ought to pray.

If silent prayer, given you have a house full of preschool or primary school children sounds remote, know that there are others in the diocese who are praying for you.

If you are at your wits end with loved ones in hospital, or you have financial and job uncertainties and all the praying you can do is more in panic, praying “Help!”, know there are others in the diocese praying for you too.

And if we are praying in this way and learning to sense the Spirit interceding within us, don’t be surprised if in that moment you find God giving you a person to call, a word to speak, a website to recommend, or service to access.

We do not know what is to come. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit helps us in our weakness. And when the Spirit does, then the Spirit (as the rest of Romans 8 reveals) will open to us even more the heart of God for our lives, our country and our world.

With love in Christ.

+Keith

Creativity blooms across the diocese

Vicars, Churchwardens, lay workers and parishoners have been using social media and their own imagination to spread the word of God from their living rooms, kitchens and gardens.

Jane Proudfoot, Rector at St Wilfrid's Grapenhall has a Youtube channel for prayer. Her occasional co-star 'Buster the Dog' shown in the picture below, joins Jane during children's worship.



Revd Paul Rossiter, Hoylake



The parish of St Matthew's, Stretton, hosted a Facebook party to mark the second anniversary of their monthly ukulele sing-along Singing Kettle.



Revd Louise Annison, Blacon



Simon Stride, Sale



Sarah Halton, Marple

If your church streams video content you can now add a 'live stream' tag to your details on 'A Church Near You'. www.achurchnearyou.com



Birkenhead Priory Parish created a video story on Youtube, depicting Easter Day. A lot of work went in to its production with costumes and set design, which included the tomb where Jesus was buried.

Staying connected TOGETHER

The coronavirus has highlighted how important it is for people to remain connected in one way or another. The Diocese of Chester usually communicates using a variety of methods, employing both digital and traditional print to spread the word of God. The arrival of coronavirus has meant that we are not currently able to produce printed material such as this CDN, making it difficult to reach people who don't have access to computers or smart phones.

Keeping the message of the Church alive and vibrant in these

times, especially when churches are closed, has brought new challenges, but thankfully people and organisations in our own diocese and across the UK have reacted quickly to keep the lines of communication open.

The Ministry Team in Macclesfield has responded to this conundrum and turned to a service they discovered called WhyPay, whose USP is to facilitate "genuinely free" group phone calls. The Macclesfield Team now bring people together in a telephone conference call more akin to a coffee-morning at Church.



Revd Martin Stephens



The Revd Martin Stephens says: "We've been concerned that a number of church folk are on their own, and although one-to-one phone calls are great, sometimes what you need is the chit-chat of a number of people together, like round the table in the church Welcome Area.

"I've discovered a phone calls facility with WhyPay, whereby whoever is wanting to be part of a group chat each dials up the same given number, then types in an access code, and finally a PIN. It's as easy as that!"

The Church of England has also developed a telephone service for those unable to easily access the internet. Daily Hope is a free national

phone line, available 24 hours a day and is a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. It offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services at the end of a telephone line. Call Daily Hope on: 0800 804 8044



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Events



VE Day in 2020

8 May 2020

Resources to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) on 8 May 2020 are available on the C of E website. tinyurl.com/yca73cxk



Big Picnic for Hope

8 May - At your home

A virtual get together to mark VE day, the project asks people to stay at home, to picnic indoors or in their gardens. More information at bigpicnicforhope.com



Reading Mark during the pandemic

13 May to 5 August 2020 - Online

A series of online talks and discussions, hosted by a range of people from the Diocese of Chester. Details will be made available on the website. chestercathedral.com



Youth & Young: Keeping connected

15 May 2020 - Online

A webinar organised by the national church to explore and advise on we keep connected with young people when we can't meet in person. Book at tinyurl.com/ybget3f8



Thy Kingdom Come

21 - 31 May 2020

Join the global wave of prayer calling all Christians to pray between Ascension and Pentecost. Church resources are available from thykingdomcome.global