

UPDATES AND USEFUL INFORMATION (20th May 2020)

Dear All

Life continues through interesting and challenging times. Much remains uncertain. We might hope that the lifting of some restrictions heralds further movement in that direction, but that is dependent on how the virus (and people) behave. We need to wait and see.

Meantime we hope that this circulation continues to be helpful. We are retaining all of the past 'Coronavirus' emailings, as well as associated and relevant documents, on the [Synod Coronavirus blog](#)

WORSHIP ROADSHOWS

The worship roadshows or, as they have become, mini 'stay-at-home' sessions continue.

Please pass the information on to anyone who might be interested and may not yet know. The advantage of doing it this way is that it stays and you can catch up. To find them, please go to the [Synod YouTube channel](#) and look for the video you want. We are also happy to email (or post) the written script to anyone who would like to receive it, either instead of watching, or to accompany the watching. If you would like to receive the emailed script, please email [Lindsey](#) to request it. If you, or anyone you know who doesn't have email, would like a posted script, please let one of us know by phone or email.

This week's, number 4, (available Thursday 21st) presented by Paul, explores pitfalls and practicalities in leading worship.

BIG DAY OUT

Inevitably, we have now postponed Eastern Synod's Big Day Out, scheduled for June 13th. We are currently exploring provisional dates for a re-scheduled event in 2021, and will announce that over the next few weeks.

SYNOD MEETING

At the moment we are hoping to hold the next Synod Meeting (10th October, at Christ Church, Braintree). That will be kept under review, but is the current intention.

WHAT NEXT? (LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN) – QUESTIONS ON EARLY YEARS PROVISION IN CHURCH BUILDINGS

I would like to again refer to the "Ready for the new "normal"" document. It is now on the [Eastern Synod Website](#)

As we look to what might move us into the future, the question that I seem to be asked most just now is around the possible re-opening of nursery school and playgroup provision. I have therefore prepared some advice. This is to be found at [using Church Buildings for early years](#)

Beyond that, unless you already have this under way, I would encourage you to begin thinking about some of the issues raised in that document. I would suggest that some thought around the first questions posed in the document would be useful.

So, reproducing page 6 –

To ponder and discuss during the lockdown days
In terms of church life, is there anything?

- Good/valuable that you would like to continue and develop through this phase?
- That you have thought, 'I wonder if we could try this...?' as lockdown continues?

To ponder and discuss as we prepare to emerge from lockdown
As you look forward to lockdown being ended, how do you respond to the following statements?

You might like to indicate your strength of feeling, positive or negative, with a score of 0 to 5 by the comment, or draw appropriate “smiley” faces to indicate warmth or coolness towards the idea, or express your neutrality.

- “We return to being church in our traditional/established ways as soon as possible.”
- “We recognise that health and social restrictions will be with us for a long time and so we cannot do what we’ve always done at least for a long time.”
- “Our return is governed by what is financially possible; appreciating that our wider church life’s sustainability may have been stretched.”
- “Our return, along with practical considerations on social distancing, will be shaped by discerning God’s new mission for us in the post-lockdown context, (1) locally, and (2) as a denomination.”
- “We learn from the lessons of the lockdown days, mindful that some churches have been able to reach parts of the community that traditional ministry didn’t touch, including (but not only) through worship offered online.”

Can we see the challenges and opportunities for ministry in each of these scenarios?

And for ease of access, [What next discussion paper](#) the document is on the Synod blog – but if you want the ‘posh’ version (and a downloadable pdf) it is now on the main URC website – [Communications the New Normal](#)

Also, if you would like it in hand – and more manageable chunks, the South Western Synod have produced a helpful set of the different sections - [Preparing for the new normal advice from URC synod moderators](#)

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUNG PEOPLE IN MINISTRY?

An Invitation to anyone working with Children and young people in any aspect of ministry. Nicola will be hosting a Zoom meeting Wednesday 27th May 2.30pm. A great opportunity to have a chat and to share ideas. -I look forward to seeing you. Nicola

Nicola Grieves is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
[Download and Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 546 192 3407
Password: 0MSt4q

ROOTS LINK FOR THIS WEEK

Roots – Families at home 24th May

ALL-AGE WORSHIP RESOURCES (related to next Sunday – May 24th)

Families at Home - Thy Kingdom Come

This week sees the start of The Thy Kingdom Come Global wave of Prayer, journeying from Ascension to Pentecost.

A gathering prayer to say together

As a sprinkling of notes can bring music to a lonely silence;
as a sprinkling of words can bring warmth to an empty heart;
as a sprinkling of rain can bring wonder to the petal of a rose;
as a sprinkling of light can bring a rainbow to a dark sky;
as a sprinkling of snow can bring magic to a tired garden,
so may our sprinkling of prayers bring the love of God into our world afresh.

Amen.

Singing together

A song to sing and dance to, you might like to make up some actions

Saddleback kids - Lord's prayer

Reading, watching and listening together

Bible reading Matthew 6:1-6

Matthew 6:9-13 International Children's Bible (ICB)

So when you pray, you should pray like this:

'Our Father in heaven,

we pray that your name will always be kept holy.

We pray that your kingdom will come.

We pray that what you want will be done,
here on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us the food we need for each day.

Forgive the sins we have done,

just as we have forgiven those who did wrong to us.

And do not cause us to be tested;

but save us from the Evil One.'

[The kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours forever. Amen.]

Video

A visual retelling and reflection with Nicola

Praying together

[Here is the Lord's prayer signed in Makaton](#)

It is a great way to pray together and if you are linked up by video you can say with the people who you cannot be together with just now.

Emotion Stones

We can talk to God no matter how we are feeling.

'Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it' Philippians 4:6 (ICB)

Draw the different feelings on some small stones. If you don't have any stones you can draw faces on card circles. Place the stones in a bowl sitting together take it in turns to take a stone from the bowl. As you hold the stone in your hand talk to God about how you are feeling. It might be someone else that you know that is feeling sad, angry, worries etc and you can pray for them. As a reminder that God is always with put a stone in your pocket and carry it with you.



Prayers to say together

When we are worried,

Lord, teach us to pray.

When things frighten us,

Lord, teach us to pray.

When others are hurting,

Lord, teach us to pray.

When we want to thank you,

Lord, teach us to pray.

When we don't understand what is happening to us
or in our world,

Lord, teach us to pray.

Wherever we are, whatever we are doing,

Lord, teach us to pray. Amen.

Through acts of loving kindness,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Through care for those in need,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Through friendship shown to lonely people,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Through keeping asking awkward questions,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Through never giving up on those who feel lost,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Through constant care, and persistent prayer,

your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Amen.

Creating Together

A reflective song to listen too while you make your craft

Hillsong – The Lord's Prayer

Five prayers I pray

You will need card and coloured pens

Draw round your hand and cut it out. Decorate your cut out hand and write the five different types of prayers on the fingers.

Find somewhere quite to sit and hold the hand you have made. Use this to help you talk to God starting with your thumb and ending with your little finger.



Prayer chain

Cut out two small hands and make holes either side of the cut-out hands. Taking the one of the hands thread string through the holes and secure with a knot. Cut out heart shapes and thread them onto the string. You can thread as many hearts as you like. As you put the hearts on the string think about the people and things you would like to pray about. Write or draw on the hearts and then secure the second hand at the end of the string. Hang the prayer chain in the window. Gather as a family together around the window and share your prayers together. You can join in a big Amen at the end.



Playing together

Make and eat pretzels together as a visual reminder to pray.

You will need:

- 1 teaspoon instant yeast;
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 3 cups all-purpose unbleached/bread flour;
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt; 1 cup warm milk;
- 1 whisked egg and baking sheet.

Mix the yeast, sugar, flour and milk in a bowl until it forms a ball. Take the ball out and knead by hand for 5-10 minutes.

Divide the dough into six pieces and roll each of them into a long thin roll.

Cover the rolls with a towel and let the dough relax for 5-10 minutes.

Take the ends of the rolls and fold inwards to form a pretzel shape.

Place the pretzels on a baking sheet and brush with the whisked egg. Sprinkle salt on top.

Bake in a pre-heated oven (220 degrees /gas mark 7) for 15 minutes until golden brown.

Eat while warm.

JOINT PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM

The Joint Public Issues Team is doing significant work around public and social issues. This is constantly changing, and they are regularly updating the information they are providing. If you want to see the latest version, it is available on the Synod blog [Joint Public Issues Team](#)

URC ADVICE

Just a reminder that the [coronavirus advice page on the URC website](#) is being updated with resources and advice on a daily basis:

Finally, just a reminder from Lindsey, Nicola and myself that we are still there for you and, if there is anything you think we might offer, or you just want a chat, then do contact us:

Our prayers and our best wishes,

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A PRAYER FROM CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND

God, our rock and shield, we pray for our land, and all nations and places in our world, as many endure the effects of the illness Covid-19 and the Coronavirus pandemic.

For those who are ill, grant healing;
for those who mourn the death of loved ones, bring comfort;
for those who care for the sick, grant strength and endurance;
for those who are isolated or whose livelihoods are threatened, give courage and hope;
for all who take difficult decisions, from governments to health practitioners, give wisdom and compassion to accompany the knowledge and experience that they bring.

Deliver us from this disease, we pray, and enable all nations and communities to grow in collaboration and unity as we face this challenge together.

Grant a legacy of enduring common purpose in facing all that threatens our global common good.

We pray in Jesus' name, in the unity of the Spirit, Amen.

STAY SAFE AND KEEP WELL! GOD BLESS!

PAUL