

NEWSLETTER

As “le confinement” is gradually being lifted, it’s probably time we went back to having a regular newsletter again, to try and keep everyone as up to date with developments as possible. So here we go!

Firstly, a note from our Bishops, Robert and David:

“Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We have just celebrated Trinity Sunday, the day that sums up the Church’s liturgical year with its focus on the awesome and wonderful reality of the three-personed God. The Father-Creator, the incarnate, crucified and risen Son, and the Pentecostal Holy Spirit are together acknowledged and worshipped on a Sunday which marks the liturgical transition from the telling of the events of salvation to the twenty plus Sundays of “Ordinary Time”. In these Sundays, we work out the Christian message of faith, love and hope on a journey towards Advent and the completion of God’s work of the restoration and healing of humanity and the created order.

In 2020 these Sundays are, however, much less ‘ordinary’ than usual. We are all struggling to work our way towards some kind of ‘new normal’. We cannot be sure what this will be like, although we can be fairly sure that the continuing threat of Covid-19 means it won’t be the same as the ‘old normal’.Across the diocese and in each chaplaincy, clergy and councils are working out if and how to ‘re-open’, deliberating over local and diocesan guidance, and putting into place new safety guidance.

The great theological virtue that sustains us in all of this is our Christian hope. This hope is the future dimension of faith and it is to a large extent the test of faith. It is neither given by ourselves nor it is to be kept to ourselves. As a pilgrim people we live in a hope that is renewed and fostered every day by the Holy Spirit. And it is this hope that helps us cope with all our struggles and trials of life in our diverse contexts and situations.

For many of us these last months of lockdown have been a hard experience when we have felt isolated and lonely. Deconfinement now brings a different range of stresses and anxieties. We will have to find new ways of caring for one another as we seek how to be church and how to offer in-church worship with physical distancing, with proper hygiene, and with some of our members not yet being or feeling ready to join in congregational gatherings.”

Worship in our Chaplaincy

At the Chaplaincy Council meeting on 6th June, it was agreed that we would start to re-open our churches for worship. This is subject to very strict protocols for keeping us all safe and a copy of these can be seen on our website or sent to you if you’d like to see a copy. We have to abide by these protocols or risk not only closing the churches again but potentially causing harm to others by infecting them.

So we can worship again which is good news, although it won’t be quite the same as before. For example,

- We will need to clean each worship venue scrupulously and disinfect surfaces (teams of volunteers needed!)

- We all have to wear masks
- We all have to stay 2 metres apart from each other unless we are part of a household
- We can't sing or have a choir
- The Eucharist will only be in the form of a wafer
- We will need stewards on the doors to ensure social distancing and use of hand gel
- We must keep a register of attendees
- We must bring our own hand gel if possible, tissues and a pen to sign the register
- We can't socialise at the end of the service
- We will be using printed service sheets which will be binned at the end of the service.

The advice is also that if for whatever reason you don't feel well, then please don't come to church.

Our Zoom services on a Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings will continue for those who can't get to church for whatever reason. These have been a great success story for our Chaplaincy, bringing all 3 congregations together and also friends and families living in Britain and Kenya. Please don't feel you have to come to church if you are worried – the advice is clear that if you are over 65 and/or have an underlying health condition don't even try – God is making house calls at the moment!

Our first congregational service will be this Sunday 14th June (weather permitting) in the Revd John Smith's garden in Oppède. All are welcome but please also bring your own chair. It will start at 10.30 a.m. There will also be a Zoom service at 10.30 a.m. as usual.

Our first service at All Saints' Marseille will be on Sunday 21st June at 10.00 a.m.

No news yet on services at Aix – we'll keep you informed as we get news.

Zoom Communion services will continue to be available from 21st June but at the later time of 11.30 a.m.

Prayers

If you would like prayers for yourself or anyone you know, please let our Chaplain Jamie know at anglican.marseille@gmail.com . We can all do with a little help at the moment!

Events

Sadly we can't plan any events at the moment other than services, so all fundraising has had to be postponed and also a number of weddings booked for this year and a couple of baptisms.

Finance

Without the regular giving at services, our income has dropped and a big thank you is due to all those who have generously and thoughtfully either continued to give via their banks, or have set up new standing orders. But there's room for more – so please let our Warden Jane know if you are able to give by cheque or standing order at the bank and she'll be happy to help. Without this funding our Chaplaincy can't exist and it has proved to be a lifeline to many of us through this difficult time, with the online services and pastoral care provided by Jamie and his ministry team. One effect of the lockdown has been that we now have access to 8 services a month rather than 1 for many of us, so the Chaplaincy is proving even better value!

As the new editor of the Newsletter, I would be grateful for contributions. I will shortly have a new Warden's e-mail address, which will be posted on the website and mentioned in the next Newsletter, but for now please continue to use janequarmby0430@gmail.com. .

This brings prayers and best wishes from the ministry team as we continue to journey through these challenging times.

Jane Quarmby, Chaplaincy Warden

10th June 2020