



15th April 2020

Dear Friends,

I thought I would wait until after Easter to write to you once more. And the first thing I want to say is a huge thank you to everyone who made Easter happen, so to speak. It truly was a whole church festival, and although we couldn't physically be together, it felt like Jesus really did pass through the walls of our homes and brought us his peace. And if you are wondering what on earth I am on about, just read John 20:19!

Sadly, as many of you already know, on Easter Sunday night our dear sister Bee Vamplew passed away. With the help of technology, a few of us were able to pray over her, and I am deeply grateful for that opportunity. Having just closed the evening service with *Thine be the Glory, Risen Conquering Son*, there was a special poignancy in entrusting Bee into God's powerful love. But even so, we mourn her loss, and we pray for her husband Graham and the whole family.

Given restrictions on funeral services, there will be a service of committal for family and friends only, and then a thanksgiving service later in the year, once restrictions have been lifted. Bee was a wonderful woman of God and is held with such deep affection by her friends here at Millmead – the Woking Pastorate in particular. We will miss her greatly.

Office and Hours

As for many of you with your own responsibilities, this time has been very intense for Karen and me – not least in responding to all the technical changes brought on by lockdown. And as much as it is a privilege to be alongside you all in this crisis, we also realise that we need to pace ourselves. So, with that in mind, we have decided to split our days off in order to protect some space for each other. Whilst I will continue with Monday as my sabbath, Karen will be working that day; likewise, Karen will be taking Wednesday off, aided by the fact that I will be working.

You have always been very respectful of the pastor's day off. It has been such a blessing to me over the years. And I am sure you will support this decision now, as Karen and I seek to lead the church through these challenging days. Please also encourage and help everyone else in leadership roles in our church to guard their time, and pray for their wellbeing, as I know you do.

From Easter to Pentecost

After the PM's announcement a few weeks ago, we have had to re-organise our work at least a couple of times. The goal was very much to reach Easter. Now that we have done that, the next goal is to lead the church up to Pentecost. Not only does that make 'liturgical' sense; it is also a realistic time frame to structure our church life.

During this time, we will be continuing with our two Sunday services. In the mornings we are going to have various passages and speakers; in the evenings we will be beginning a series this Sunday evening on the Lord's prayer. What better time to learn what this prayer really means, and why it is so world transforming?

A reminder about live-stream: <https://guildfordbaptist.streameventlive.com/>

Also, you might have noticed that I am doing a daily reflection up to Pentecost, exploring some themes arising from the first chapter of Acts: <https://www.guildfordbaptist.org/whats-on/easter-to-pentecost-daily-reflections/>

A reminder also that we have midday prayer. So great to see so many people joining. It lasts only a short time, but it is a great way to punctuate the day: www.guildfordbaptist.org/dailyprayer

Mercy Ministries at Millmead

This Easter Sunday we launched a Covid-19 Fund. I am pleased to announce that we raised £6,145 to support various charities and organisations at this time. Our intention is to distribute these funds effectively over the next few weeks. We should like to keep this Fund open for as long as the need is there, so if you want to contribute to this fund at any time, please see below for details:

1. Via bank account
Account name: Guildford Baptist Church
Account number: 01070371
Sort code: 60-09-21
Reference: Covid Relief
2. Cheque or cash
Please make cheques payable to Guildford Baptist Church. Put the cheque or cash in an envelope with a note stating it is for COVID-19 Relief Fund and post to Jill Pearson (home address)
3. Debit or credit card
Enter <https://www.guildfordbaptist.org/covid-19/millmead-covid-19-relief-fund/> into your browser and give via ChurchSuite

Please gift aid your donation if you are able to.

Gift aid forms can be found on our website: <https://www.guildfordbaptist.org/covid-19/millmead-covid-19-relief-fund/>

For all other info about Lifeboat Trust, Millmead Food Connection, Food Bank etc, do look at previous letters. Or consult the website: <https://www.guildfordbaptist.org/covid-19/>

Millmead Prayer Connection

Lastly, a word about prayer ministry.

At this time of special need and not being able to meet together in person we want to continue to offer prayer for each other. People can contact us by email or phone with prayer requests for themselves or others they know.

Email: prayer@guildfordbaptist.org

Telephone: 01483575008 (church office)

Prayer requests will be shared with the prayer group. Personal prayer by phone or online can also be arranged.

In closing, do watch this space for updates, changes, new initiatives. I shall be writing soon by the way about the church meeting on Thursday May 7th.

Meantime, may you know God's peace in abundance, renewed energy to embrace the challenges of this next period of time, and an overwhelming sense of God's love for you and all those you are journeying with. Like the Emmaus disciples, may you recognise the Lord alongside you.

Ian