

Vicars Musings week 11

Just as I thought it was time to take a rest and breathe an announcement comes that it's time to open churches for private prayer, which is wonderful news just a few weeks earlier than anticipated. Thankfully at both churches this will not be a problem just a little time ensuring we have robust protocols in place.

In both churches' I aim to have information about us worshipping communities and something about the Christian faith, along with some prayers and meditations. Uppermost in my mind is that those coming in who may never have been in before feeling welcomed, and will want to come again, and maybe even join us when we do worship again together. Until that time, we will continue to pray at home whilst our main worship remains on zoom

I hope with help from my 'technical team' for our agape service come from St Marks soon. One of the things I have enjoyed about zoom is the way that in our homes, kitchens, living rooms, sofas, beds, and gardens and in our lockdown time sacred space for worship has been created from familiar and comfortable space, some have joined remotely others in their own quiet time. We have been joined by friends not normally able to be with us from further afield, I think Anny in Belgium is furthest away, who knows others may still join us. I believe our numbers are well over 50 on a Sunday. It has been uplifting to see how, as a church family we have come together across the benefice. For me it really is the first time I have experienced that sense of unity since we became a united benefice. As you know next month it is St Swithuns patronal festival, no big BBQ this year but hopefully we can think of something creative to do to celebrate.

Many of you have commented on the language and content and format/structure of the Agape liturgy, this has given me a chance to and consider how we might liturgically go forward and also in a wider sense how we communicate our faith to the local community. From the reaction to the Easter Garden, the posters, the prayer tree etc. I am more aware than ever that we need communicate to the community around that we have something to share. With the prospect of opening our churches this how we go forward from here is a huge consideration. What I do know is that If we as a community genuinely want to be the body of Christ in the World then we must allow the spirit of God to move in our lives. Things can never be the way they were but maybe that's not such a bad thing!