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Dear friends

God will restore his people

I wonder if you've watched one of those makeover programmes on TV. Someone is unhappy with their kitchen, living room, house, garden or whatever, a special team is called in, the makeover is completed and the transformation is usually met with shocked delight.

This love of makeover goes to the heart of the gospel, which is about the transformation of our hearts. It's not about self-improvement, but salvation – about a new heart and the power to bring it about through Jesus's death on the cross and the power of his Spirit.

We get a picture of this in the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37.1-14. God's people were in exile, broken and dispirited, lacking in hope. Then God gives a vision of a valley of dry bones that he brings to life.

It's playfully recalled in the song – 'Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones ...'

The vision has two parts:

- Firstly, Ezekiel prophesies to the bones – God's people must hear his voice.
- Secondly, he prophesies to the breath – God's people change from an exhausted scattered people into a vibrant one.

The vision shows God delights in taking what has had its life taken out of it (the dry bones), letting people hear his voice and experience his Spirit to fill them with new life.

Let's make this our prayer for St Peter's and the church worldwide. As the bones reconnected in coming alive, let's reconnect.

- Reconnect with God
- Reconnect with church in worship
- Reconnect with God's plan for our lives, for our church and our world.

With my love and prayers.

Kip

RECONNECTING:

- with our world through Christian Aid

We are delighted to announce that St Peter's has raised a staggering £2,415.72 so far for this year's Christian Aid campaign to stop the climate crisis! A huge thank you to everyone who has donated! Special thanks to all those who walked 300,000 steps and to Bishop Martin's Year 2 for doing a marathon together! Our collective efforts will make a huge difference to people most affected by extreme weather such as Susan who told us about her pigeon pea project in Malawi in our Christian Aid services on 2nd May (if you missed it, you can watch again through the online services on the website). Thank you again to everyone who gave their time, money, quiz master skills and enthusiasm to make St Peter's Christian Aid Week 2021 such a success!

- with church through worship

Next week (Sunday 27th June) will be our final online service. When we began recording them in March 2020, we never imagined we would be doing them week by week (apart from a couple of weeks when we had a break) for almost 15 months. As church services start up again, and we are welcoming people back through our doors, we have made the decision to focus on our worship in the church building again.

We are so grateful to all those who have faithfully and sacrificially been part of such varied and wonderful services on our YouTube channel. A huge thank you to each person who has played a part in a service - those who have preached, prayed, recorded a Bible reading, shared their testimony, led our worship through the songs and actions, produced such beautiful background images and Lego scenes, as well as the technicians who have woven everything together to complete the service each week.

From Sunday 27th June there will be an 8.00 am HC and a 10.30 am service in church each week. Both services will be open to everyone and we will continue to follow all social distancing and health and safety guidelines to ensure church is a safe and secure place to worship.

- with our vision for St Peter's through our Gift Day

Most of you will have seen the video Tim Farmer and I filmed some weeks ago, outlining the challenges ahead for us as a church. This is just a reminder that Sunday 27th June is our Gift Day. The church will be open between 8 am and 1 pm and then again in the evening from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you are able to, can I encourage you to consider bringing your gift during one of these times, if you have not already done so.