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Dear friends

Holy Week and Easter

We have been through hard times and that is why I love these words of Isaiah's, full of hope for difficult times:

'Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you... because you are precious to me. You are honoured, and I love you. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you.' (Isaiah 43 1,2,4,5)

One of the stories in the Bible that illustrates that God is with us in the face of fear and difficulty, is the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3. 1-20.) As followers of God, they were not free from care, anxiety, fear, pain or threat. They faced all these things, but as they were bound and thrown into the fire, God was with them in the flames.

'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.' (Psalm 23.4)

In that story, the fire can represent all that we struggle with at this time - but God is also in the fire. Jesus did not avoid the cross; He died on the cross bearing our sins and the sin of the world. Jesus is with us within the fiery furnace of all we may be suffering.

'Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows' (Isaiah 53.4)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were assured of God's presence: *'God is able to deliver'* (Daniel 3.17). St Paul had a similar faith: *'Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.'* (Ephesians 3.20) They didn't see even death as the greatest disaster.

We need faith like theirs today; a deep personal faith in God who is our Rock even in our darkest moments; a faith that knows God can and does intervene; a faith that makes us pray with expectancy; a faith that trusts Him, come what may.

- Let's pray for coming out of the pandemic.
- Let's pray that like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego we walk together.
- Let's pray that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus our Saviour and Friend, who suffered, died and rose again so that lives and places change.

Join us on the journey to the Cross and on to the joy of Easter and to being God's Easter people.

With my love and prayers.

Kip

ST PETER'S NEWS

- **Church is reopening for services!**

Good Friday 10.30 am - a reflective service around the Cross.

Easter Day 6.00 am – Sunrise service in the churchyard.

10.30 am – Easter communion service

There is no need to book a place for the services, although we recommend you come in good time. Please wear a mask, and follow the guidelines for social distancing, hand sanitising etc.

We hope that we will be able to hold a 10.30 am service in church each Sunday from then on. The online service will continue for the time being.

- **Holy week service of reflection**

Last year Mike and Kip put this together and you can follow it again to help you journey to Easter Day - [Holy Week Service of Reflection](#).

- **Easter all age trail** - in our church grounds from 22 March 2021 onwards. There will be some interactive stations and activities on Good Friday between 2 – 5 pm with an Easter Garden activity outside the Simon Peter Centre and a chance to decorate a Palm Cross in the Church Hall courtyard. There will also be some stations on the trail for you to participate in. (More details on the website)

- **Worship through play** – Sunday 29th March and 11th April at 4 pm.

A reminder that if you want to join in this to contact Ruth Fletcher.

- **Thank you, Lorraine!**

On Easter Day in church we will be thanking Lorraine Fletcher for her wonderful commitment and service in heading up our children's and youth work. Please pray for Lorraine as she starts a new adventure, and pray for the way forward for our ministry with young people.

- **Our beautiful church grounds**

I hope as many of you as possible are able to enjoy all the spring flowers around the church, especially on either side of the footpath leading up to the main door. A huge thank you to our gardening team for their hard work and dedication.

- **Living in Love and Faith Course**

We will be running this online course exploring Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage after Easter. Like Alpha there will be video clips, Bible study, discussion, and time for prayer. The aim will be for each session to be a safe place to listen and speak. You can find out more about the course at: www.churchofengland.org/LLF Please contact Kip or Julia if you want to know more and to sign up email Julia: curate@stpeters-woolton.org.uk
The course will start on Sunday 18th April at 7.00 pm and will run for 5 weeks.

- **Electoral roll – are you on it?**

What? The church's electoral roll is the register of its voting members.

Who? Baptised adults (over 16 years) who live in the parish, or who have worshipped regularly at St. Peter's for at least six months and are committed to being part of the life of the congregation can apply.

Why? Enrolment is a way of saying "I belong". For us it is an act of commitment to St. Peter's and the church as a whole. It opens the way for a greater involvement in the life of the church at parish, deanery, diocesan and national levels.

How? Look out on our website for the form and instructions for completing. The forms will be there in early April and will need to be returned by early May in order to take part in the Annual meeting at the end of May.