Dear Friends,

"/I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy/" (Philippians 1:3-4). You wouldn't guess, from the way Paul starts his letter to the church in Philippi, that he was writing it from a dingy prison, in chains. His eyes are on Jesus all the way. Paul's reality is: who he is in Christ ('servants of Christ Jesus' v1), who his readers are in Christ ('the saints in Christ Jesus'

v2) and what they share in Christ. /"This is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best, and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God./" (v9-10) Amen! I have to remind myself that, vaccine or no vaccine, my health prospects for the next 12 months are way better than anyone in New Testament times. And they seemed to be much less concerned than our times about health and mortality. Lets keep our eyes on Jesus all the way.

\*1. Post Lockdown?\*

We're waiting to see what tier we'll be in, but in all 3 tiers churches can re-open for public worship. This is great news, and means that on site worship can resume from Sunday 6th December, the live stream will, of course, continue. Please pray for our planning for Christmas, working out the right blend of online and on site services, both for the church family and for outreach to the community. We are waiting for detailed Church guidance, so I may do an update when we have that. Cell group meetings seem to be ok in Tier 1, but possibly not in 2&3. The Community Centre can also open, but what's allowed in there also varies from 1 tier to the next.

Praise God for the amazing progress on vaccines - the Oxford vaccine trial seems to have discovered, by 'mistake', the optimum dose of the vaccine. When God's people pray, 'mistakes' happen!

(<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/nov/23/oxford-covid-vaccine-hit-90-success-rate-thanks-to-dosing-error>)

\*2. Christmas Shopping!\*

I'm sure you've not started yet, but... here's a really easy way to shop and raise funds for the church at the same time:

 \* \*EasyFundraising.\* If you register here (very easy) and choose St

 James Yeovil or St Peters Yeovil, a % of all your online shopping

 spend will go to the church. You have to start from the

 Easyfundraising page, but it covers just about everything from holly

 to holidays. If you register through this link, we get £5 for every

 person who joins

 <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stjamesyeovil/?invite=t7eeq0&referral-campaign=s2s>

 \* <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/>  if you use Amazon, you can go via

 '\*Amazon Smile\*' and choose St James Yeovil, which then gets 0.5% of

 all your spend on Amazon. Or use local shops to keep them in

 business! Sorry, St Peters isn't registered yet!

 \* You can also donate via JustGiving, a safe online platform

 <https://www.justgiving.com/pcc-stjames>, as well as through the GIVT app.

\*3. Christmas Giving!\*

Across both churches we've pledged to give 2.5% of our income, plus whatever is raised through Advent and Christmas, to our Mission Partners. So we'll be\*making a donation of £1000 each to Christians Against Poverty, Counselling for Yeovil, The Lords Larder and Yeovil Street Pastors\* in the next few days. All the monies raised from Lent boxes earlier in the year go towards this, and if you want to make a donation during December, please bring it to church in an envelope marked 'Mission Partners'. Or donate directly!

\*4. More Christmas Giving!\*

If you are making \*knitted stars for St Peters church,\* please get them to Kristi as soon as possible so we can get the packing complete. Many thanks to the willing band of packers who have been accompanying their TV viewing by packing stars into cellophane bags.  We are planning to deliver them, along with a special greeting card, to people nearest the church around 2nd week in December. We have \*over a thousand to deliver \*so if you can help, even with just a few, that would be a help. The more helpers we have the fewer each person will need to deliver. Please contact Kristi or Margaret at St Peters if you'd like to help.

\*5. Advent Praying\*

The\*new Worship at Home booklet\* is ready, with a simple daily prayer format for Advent, and one to use over Christmas. You can download it from here <http://www.stjamesyeovil.org.uk/?page_id=1945>. We're delivering it to households who don't have access to online services, if you know someone who would like a copy, or a visit, please let me or the church wardens know. Attached is the parish prayer diary for December, if this helps as a guide to your prayers.

\*Advent \*starts this Sunday, 4 weeks of preparation for Christmas, during which we look forward to the birth of Jesus, God breaking into the world to grab the steering wheel of history and turn us back towards Him. There will be a weekly reflection posted on our Youtube channel, and a video going up this week explaining the seasons of the church year, if you've ever struggled to tell your Advent from your Epiphany.

yours in Christ

David (Ruth is back from leave at the end of the week)

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St James and St Peters on Youtubehttps://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS\_rhjBAJTiXz3kIXLMN\_Xw/ <<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS_rhjBAJTiXz3kIXLMN_Xw/>>