

Dear Friends,

A very happy new year from Ruth and myself, though it looks like it will be hard going to start with. It was lovely to see many of you over Christmas, and we pray that as we begin this new year we'll be ever more conscious of God our strength and our shield. The famous 'gate of the year' poem includes these verses

/So heart be still:/
/What need our little life
//Our human life to know,/
/If God hath comprehension?/
/In all the dizzy strife/
/Of things both high and low,/
/God hideth His intention./

/God knows. His will/
/Is best. The stretch of years/
/Which wind ahead, so dim/
/To our imperfect vision,/
/Are clear to God. Our fears/
/Are premature; In Him,/
/All time hath full provision./

Church in Lockdown:

- The lockdown legislation allows places of worship to remain open.

This came as quite a surprise, and after taking advice from the Diocese, the PCC has made the decision that /we will close both churches for public worship and private prayer during the lockdown. /Sunday morning worship live streamed worship will continue, but it seems the wisest and safest course of actions to reduce gatherings. Both churches have done an amazing job at being covid safe since March 2020, but with the end in sight (hopefully!) it would be foolish to take any risks now. It's not a decision we wanted to make, and we will resume private prayer and public worship as soon as we can. We are hoping to set St Peters building up to do live streaming, so that both churches can feel involved.

- In the light of the lockdown, if there is anything at all you need help with - shopping, prescriptions, or just a chat, please do get in touch. Likewise, if there is anyone you have supported previously, either with practical help or a regular phone call, now would be a good time to make contact with them again and see how they are. We helped around 25 households across the parish in the first lockdown with shopping and prescriptions, as well as all the support within the church family, and we may start to get new requests for help this time round.

Other news and links

* For some spiritual input at the start of this new year, Ruth's
*podcast *is still going strong, here's where to find it, for a few
minutes a day of prayer and inspiration <https://anchor.fm/pjs> .
There's also a couple of brief reflections from Doug Beard on the
Youtube channel, which are worth a watch
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS_rhJBAJTIXz3kIXLMN_Xw
* A very big thankyou to all who did stations for the *Christmas

trail,* which was a great witness to our community over the Christmas period. A great deal of work and creativity went in to each one. We've been asked if we'd like to be part of Yeovils 'Window Wanderland' in February,

<https://yeovilartspace.uk/windowwanderland/>, do have a look at the link, it could be a great way to spread some of God's hope and joy.

* This Sunday we begin a new teaching series *'The Very Good Book'* on the Bible - how God speaks through it, how to use it and apply it today, how it changes lives and nations, and how to deal with the tougher passages. The Lent course session from 2020 on 'Is the Bible Reliable' will be also broken down into sections and posted on the Youtube channel in the coming days.

* Wednesday prayers on Zoom continue every week, its 30m from 12 noon and is open to anyone in both churches, Meeting ID: 569 716 4315
Passcode: 836009

* Please pray for our children, young people and families, who have had a tumultuous week, and for our schools and their leaders: Claire Hodgson at Preston CofE Primary, Gregg Morrison at Preston Secondary, and Simon Dallimore at Westfield Secondary.

Today is Epiphany, and there is a tradition of doing a house blessing on this day - have a look at <https://reflectionary.org/2021/01/01/chalking-the-doorway-a-house-blessing-for-epiphany/> for an explanation of this, with a simple form of prayer you can use with all ages. Here's part of the blessing, you might want to pray it now for your home, place of work etc.

Peace be upon this house (school/church/etc), and upon all who enter here.
All: Amen.

Bless this house and all who live within.
All: Amen

May all who enter our home rejoice to find Christ living here.
All: Amen.

Lord Jesus, may we be like the star that guided the Wise Men to you, shining the light of your love to others.
All: Amen.

God, please bless (names of people) who live in this house. May it be for them (us) a place of peace and blessing.
All: Amen.

Thankyou for your prayers, this feels like a very dark and difficult time, but the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never mastered it. Lord Jesus be our strength and our guide.

yours in Christ

David and Ruth

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<http://www.stjamesyeovil.org.uk/>

<http://www.stpeters-yeovil.org.uk/>

St James and St Peters on

Youtube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS_rhjBAJTixz3kIXLMN_Xw/

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