



From Edward:

One day, God will have the courtesy to gift me a quiet week...
... I keep telling myself!

We've had a sequence of fires lit in the church grounds this week: Always in the same spot, by the vestry door – and at night. On Wednesday night I actually managed to spot the perpetrators (a group of teenage boys) at 7pm and called 999.

In this time of Lockdown, the frustration is getting to all of us in different ways and the outworking will be manifested in different ways – no doubt for this group of young men the lack of places to form community and provide activities to keep themselves occupied is being channelled down very negative and irresponsible avenues which are outright dangerous. Please could I ask everyone, especially those who might have cause to pass the church or be near the church grounds after dark to keep as vigilant as possible and do not hesitate to call 999 should the need arise. **Please do not put yourself, or anyone else at risk.**

As most of us remember, it's not easy being a teenager and particularly not at the present time when a number of factors make it very difficult to cultivate a sense of identity and feel a sense of belonging in a positive way, especially for the most vulnerable and where we see an erosion in constructive and creative safe spaces for young people we find that more sinister bodies are all too willing to step up as wolves in sheep's clothing of affirmation and self-esteem – this is how grooming, radicalisation, and gang culture all prey on young people: By latching on to the psychological need for a sense of purpose and belonging in order to manipulate their victims for their own abominable ends.

Here on the London/Kent border, young people locally are particularly at risk from [County Lines exploitation](#): Where children and young adults are used to export drugs, money and other contraband between UK areas. This has a devastating effect on those exploited, their families and their communities and has resulted in a surge in crime and violence across Outer London and the surrounding areas.

This year the Children's Society is devoting its Christmas Appeal to supporting victims and those at risk of County Lines exploitation with its [Hope](#) campaign. Please do have a look and consider submitting a supportive message for a child or donating financially. There is a very moving (and well produced) video giving an insight into the reality of County Lines gangs and the difference the Children's Society can make.

We would normally support the Children's Society by raising funds at our Family Christingle Service on the first Sunday in December, however as we are due to come out of Lockdown four days before we don't know what our public worship will look like then. So please do engage with the Children's Society directly through their website and give generously.

Stay Safe!
Edward

Services are Suspended until 2nd December at the earliest, but St John's is open for individual prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Team Zoom Service: The Bexley Team Ministry will be holding services on Zoom at 10am on Sundays in Lockdown. The login was sent out through this mailing list earlier in the week. Should you need it resent, please contact a member of clergy

Needing Support: Team pastoral support is being coordinated by Assistant Curate Rev'd Matt Hodder. If you, or someone you know, is requiring assistance with accessing food, medicine, essential shopping or other need (or simply wants a chat!) please contact Matt on 07889873125 or matthodder10@gmail.com.

Public Libraries Consultation: Public libraries provide a vital hub for resources and connection for all ages and cuts to library services can have a catastrophic impact on the whole community, not least the most vulnerable. Bexley borough has opened a consultation on the future of library services across the borough, please consider having your say [here](#).

The Real Advent Calendar: Many thanks to all those who bought Advent Calendars, thanks to your generosity we are donating 38 Advent Calendars to Bexley Foodbank this year. Many thanks to Julia for organising this.

Christmas Hampers: To support families in our communities who are most in need over the Christmas period, The Bexley Team is proposing to gift a food hamper to families in our local schools who receive free school meals or have specific needs. Please see the Team News for further details.

Suspended Sermon: Edward's sermons continue to be available [here](#) and become live from Sunday mornings onward. This week's reflection is entitled 'The Fisher King' and will also be preached at the Team Ministry Zoom service.

Lockdown Labyrinth: Attached to this email is the pattern, along with some prayer resources for a *Lockdown Labyrinth*. Suitable for any level of crochet-ability: This is can be a Lockdown Project and Devotional Resource to accompany the ongoing Month of Prayer.

Daily Psalm: Throughout this period, Team Curate Rev'd Matt Hodder will be sending out a Daily Psalm over email or WhatsApp to provide a sense of prayerful togetherness across the four parishes. To participate, please contact Matt on matthodder10@gmail.com or 07889873125.

Situations Vacant: We have a number of roles and activities which require volunteers to assist with the running and growth of our church. Please see the attached 'Situations Vacant' pack and contact Edward on fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com if you would like more information on any of the positions advertised.

Bexley Foodbank: Our Foodbank Donation Point remains open and you can bring your donations when the Church is open on Sundays and Wednesday. You can also give financially [here](#)

Parish Office: Tuesday office hours have been suspended due to Covid Tier-Two restrictions. We will reinstate our usual times when we return to Tier-One, in the meantime, for Baptism and Wedding enquiries, please email Edward.

Church Open: St John's is open during the day on Sundays and Wednesdays for Individual Prayer. Please collect a laminate card from the table by the door and leave it in your pew.

Track & Trace: In order to support the NHS in containing the spread of Covid-19, we are keeping Track & Trace information for those who enter the building. There are three ways to give your data:

- 1: By scanning the QR code displayed in the building using the *NHS Covid-19* App.
- 2: By completing the slip provided and placing it in the Track & Trace box (please use your own pen).
- 3: By emailing Edward (fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) directly with your name and the date and time of your visit. Please mark the subject header: St John's Visitor Track & Trace.

Giving: St John's continues to need your support financially throughout the current emergency. If you wish to give regularly please use the standing order form attached to this email or for a one off giving please use our [JustGiving Page](#). If you have a social media presence please also help us out by sharing this link.

EasyFundraising: If you're shopping online please remember you can give to St. John's by shopping via [our Easy Fundraising page](#). There is also a link from our website.

Social Media: Remember you can engage with us on Facebook (*/stjohnsbexley*) and Twitter (*@stjohnsbexley*).

Talkline: If you're feeling lonely, isolated, stressed or anxious *Counselling Matters Bexley's* new *Talkline* offers free, non-judgemental counselling and support and can also give you information on other relevant services. Freephone: 08000472600 or email mail@cmbtalk.org. The line is open from 5pm-9pm every week day and 9am-9pm on weekends and bank holidays.

Memory Cafe: For anyone in Bexley Borough living with dementia and those who care for them, to offer friendship and support, the *Christ Church Erith Memory Cafe* will take place over Zoom on Thursdays from 10.45am-11.45am. For access details please contact Christchurch Erith Project Worker Jacki Clement at cceprojectworker@hotmail.com.

Rochester Cathedral: Rochester Cathedral have been celebrating Choral Evensong [via their website](#), using material produced prior to lockdown. Please also see the Cathedral website for details about the Cathedral's reopening plans.

Prayers for use during the Coronavirus Outbreak: The Church of England has produced a booklet of prayers to aid devotions at home during the current crisis. It is available [here](#), along with other prayer resources and advice (scroll down the webpage for the booklet).

Daily Hope: The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phonenumber with hymns, reflections and prayers to enable worship from home throughout the lockdown. Details are available [here](#) and you may wish to pass the information on to those you know who cannot access resources online.

Domestic Abuse: As you will have heard, the current situation has seen an unpleasant increase in incidences of Domestic Abuse. Bishop Simon has commended recent advice issued by the national church in response to this and details can be found [here](#)

Bexley Team News: The weekly newsletter connecting us with our sister churches across the Bexley Team is attached to this email.

Toddler Church Fun! We are still considering how to safely hold our Toddler Church in line with social distancing and hygiene requirements. We are grateful for your patience and support during this time. Toddler Church activity packs from last term are still available on our website. If you would like us to produce further resources in a similar style then please email Edward

Devotional Pattern: Readings for November with suggested prayer intentions are attached to this email.

'Not Another Cookbook': The Sidcup Ladies Luncheon Club has produced a charity cookbook (containing over 80 recipes!) with all proceeds going to *Cancer Research UK*. Copies are priced at £7.95 and can be ordered by emailing sandra.vamplew@btinternet.com. Local delivery is free.

Face coverings: Please be aware that it is a requirement that face coverings must be worn in places of worship unless you have a legitimate exemption. Thank you for your cooperation.

This Week Please Pray For:

...children and young people.

...victims of and those at risk from County Lines exploitation.

...the teenagers lighting fires in our church grounds.

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

...all are who continuing to shield or self-isolate.

...the sick in need of our prayers, Gill Rogers, Carol & Peter Amura, Margaret Quick, Gladys Verran, Mavis Johnson, Samantha Pout, Ray Mace, George Berry, Marie Berry, Maggie Rankine, Ann Harlow, Joyce Forrest, Dorothy Samuel, John Beddison, David Watkins, Nicola Johns and any others known to you.

...the recently departed, Tommy Wetton, Suzanne Winnister.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Donald Bolton, Kate Edwards, Elsie Welch, Iain Gaylor, David Spencer-King, Rosemary Baldock, Molly Osborn.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Amen

(Reinhold Niebuhr: 1892-1971)

Our Safeguarding Statement can be read at

<http://www.stjohnsbexley.org/safeguardingstatement.html>

If you or someone you are concerned about is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999

<https://bexleywomensaid.org.uk/>

<https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>