



From Edward:

*"I will not cease from mental fight, nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land."*

Earlier this week Radio 4's *Front Row* interviewed the composer Errollyn Wallen, who has been given the apparently controversial task of arranging *Jerusalem* for this year's Proms. After hearing the interview I'm very excited to hear this new arrangement: Something that must be faithful to the original but also an authentic product of the present day - while also safe and workable within the practical restrictions of our Covid-blighted world. This is a common theme as we begin to rebuild our post-lockdown society (and not least, our post-lockdown church); to revive the traditions we have loved in a way that is relevant to where we are now within the practical boundaries of social distancing and hygiene compliance.

My excitement over the 'New Jerusalem' (pun absolutely intended) has been stoked by an advance reading of *Nehemiah* ahead of the Team Bible Study which we will be holding at St Mary's throughout September. In a comparable position to ourselves the returning exiles had to literally rebuild Jerusalem and revitalise the spiritual life of the community in a way that restored the pre-exilic heritage whilst keeping both eyes fixed firmly on the future direction. If you're going to be free on Wednesday mornings in September please do consider attending, it should be a very pertinent and enlightening study.

The city Blake was writing of in *Jerusalem* was the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation: A city which, whilst in many ways retaining the likeness of the Old Jerusalem would be a place *'where sorrowing, sighing and pain shall be no more'* and ultimately where God will be present in the midst of humanity - This is the Christian Utopia that we pray for when we ask for God's Kingdom to come *on Earth as it is in heaven* and we wouldn't go far wrong in being mindful of this as we seek to plot our church's course into the post-pandemic age.

Stay safe!

Edward

Sunday Services: Holy Communion 8am & 10am, Evening Prayer 3pm.
(Children's activity bags will be available for use at the 10am service)

Family Service: These will resume at 10am on the first Sunday of each month from 6th September subject to social distancing and hygiene restrictions. Please spread the word to anyone who may wish to attend but may not be receiving these emails, particularly any families known to you. This *Climate Sunday* Family Communion will be focused on our world and the impact we have on our environment. You may wish to wear something green.

Gents' Lunch: Has resumed and will next meet on the 2nd September.

Parish Office: Will reopen on Tuesday 8th September, 7pm-8pm in the hall. This is usually the first stop for booking Baptisms and Weddings at St John's. We are very grateful to our parish clerk, Susan Jones for her hard work in this area of the church's ministry.

Midweek: As we consider how best to reinstate our midweek Eucharist Services across the Team, a weekly Bible Study focusing on the *Book of Nehemiah* will be held at St Mary's on Wednesday mornings throughout September. For more details see the Bexley Team News and let Rev'd Clive Wood know if you hope to attend.

Church Open: St John's is open on Sundays from 8am-3.30pm, with services at 8am, 10am and 3pm. Our capacity is limited and social distancing measures are in place. Please read them carefully before you enter the building (a copy is attached to this email), and note that you will be expected to bring a facemask. Please see the Bexley Team News for opening arrangements at our sister churches.

Evening Prayer: Whilst we have endeavoured to produce orders of service that can be used as safely as possible, we would encourage those who can to download the Church of England's *Daily Prayer* app and change the settings to 'Traditional' in order to follow the service when attending Evening Prayer. If you wish to join in prayer from home you can find the services in the Book of Common Prayer, via the Daily Prayer App, or through the [Church of England's Website](#).

Volunteers Needed: We are incredibly grateful to those who have stepped forward to assist with supervising the church during opening hours. If you would like to join this rota please email Edward (fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com). Please do not volunteer if you are currently shielding.

Needing support?: The current global situation is a cause of anxiety and worry for many of us. If you need someone to talk to, spiritual support, or if you are looking for assistance with shopping or collecting medication please contact Edward at fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com or call 01322521786.

Sermon: Edward's sermons are available [here](#) from Sunday Morning. This week's sermon is entitled 'The Scenic Route'.

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 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!: Toddler Church Activities from the past four months are still available on our website. We wish all our Toddler Church members a happy and safe Summer.

Devotional Pattern: Readings for September with suggested hymns, prayer intentions and questions to consider are attached to this email.

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:

...Those preparing to return to school.

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

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

...the sick in need of our prayers, Margaret Quick, Gladys Verran, Amy Jones, Barbara, Mavis Johnson, Samantha Pout, Ray Mace, 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, David Potter, Percy Hicks.

... Irene Burke and Ray Miller whose ashes will be interred this week.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Oliver King, Ronald Holman, Linda Horwood, Kathleen Potter, Edith French, Richard Shears.

...residents living in and around our parish.

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.
(Marty Haugen, 1994)*

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>

You are receiving this email because you or someone you know has given us your email address. If you do not wish to receive further emails from St John the Evangelist, Bexley please let Julia Wickham (julia.wickham1@ntlworld.com) or Rev'd Edward Barlow (fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) know.