

Moreton Hall Letter – May 2020

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing we are expecting to be locked down for at least a further three weeks and the latest news is it may well be for much longer. These are very trying times for everyone on the estate.

While Suffolk does not seem to have been as badly affected as other parts of the country, by now many of you will have friends and family who have contracted the virus and some of you will have lost friends to it. I know of at least two deaths on the estate and one of my friends died around Easter from a village in another part of Suffolk.

Some of you will know that on a daily basis I have been putting up a thought-for-the-day on the Psalms. Very shortly we will be putting up Psalm 23. I think Psalm 23 has some very powerful words for all of us. David sees himself as a lamb and His Father as the Good Shepherd. He sees himself as being totally reliant on his Father God, the Shepherd, to provide him with adequate food, shelter and water. He believes God will lead him through difficult places, but always to safe pasture. The reference to *'behold you prepare a table for me in the face of my enemies'* is a shepherding technique. The shepherd would go ahead of the main flock, find a safe space, light a fire and then go over the ground where the sheep would lie that night. Then by removing all scorpions and snakes so that it is completely safe for the sheep to be there while the shepherd guards them. That is what He is doing for us all.

David then goes on to talk about *'even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because your rod and staff comfort me'*. For some of us Covid-19 will be the end of our lives. For others the tragedy of mourning for loved ones and wondering what would have happened if things had been different. Through all these dark times, God is here to protect us and to guide us. We have the promise that death is not the end and something better is prepared for us on the other side of the grave, if we put our trust in Jesus. Therefore, at these dark times be comforted and strengthened by the promises of God.

Also know the church now has an extensive phone network and we are trying our very best to care for anybody who is vulnerable. If you know somebody who is vulnerable and is in need of some form of practical support please either contact the Borough on 757118 or you can ring me and we will see if there is anything we can do to help.

At the end of this letter you will find a poem written by me on Easter Day which is a summary of the virus and something about the hope we have. I hope it will give you comfort and peace.

Assuring you of our prayers and good wishes,

Revd. Canon Jonathan Ford.
Minister Christ Church Moreton Hall

Poem of faith for the Pandemic

Death emerged from the shadows,
To stalk us all again.
The maker of widows,
With a new name.

Brave, we obey orders.
Masked and gloved repelling,
This unwanted boarder.
Bleach and disinfectant smelling.

We long to be active,
In our passive resistance.
Inhabiting attics,
Waiting and listless.

Church as sanctuary, forbidden.
The church, active, serving, living
Like their Master hidden,
Yet love and worship giving.

Their prayer is our cry.
His answer our hope.
We are faith filled to die.
We are strengthened to cope.

Jonathan Ford Easter Day 2020