

Vicar's Letter #16: 28 August, 2020

Keeping connected

Dear Parishioners

Our Prime Minister announced yesterday that Alert Level 2.5 will continue in Auckland, and Alert Level 2 in the rest of the country until at least Wednesday 16 September. The implication for our life as a parish is that we will not be worshipping or meeting in our church buildings for two more Sundays (6 and 13 September) at least. This is a time for us to keep up our own stamina and well-being as members of this parish, and to help others to do the same.

I am aware that many people are missing their engagement with others in our faith community, and our regular worship and gatherings. Of course, we have our home churches as helpful ways of connecting. If you are not already in a home church, please do join one. To find out more about the home churches, which are groups of up to a dozen people who meet each week either in person in homes or remotely by Zoom, please contact Andy Spence (email: youth.team@stjames.net.nz; tel. 021 2226474) or Guy Benton (email: guy.k.benton@gmail.com; tel. 020 41304283). These groups have helped people so much to grow closer to one another and to God this year, and any new members will be warmly welcomed.

We also encourage you to keep in touch with others by telephone or by meeting with them in your own home or another meeting place. Who can you think of who might appreciate a phone call or an invitation to meet together? I encourage you to be in touch with them, as our social connection with others is so important, and people can feel quite lonely and isolated - especially at times like this.

Many among us are missing the regular communion that is so much a part of our Anglican expression of faith. For those who would like to receive communion during the next two weeks, I have decided to hold a home communion service at the vicarage at 11am on the following days:

- Tuesday 8 September
- Thursday 10 September
- Saturday 12 September
- Tuesday 15 September
- Thursday 17 September

Please contact me by telephone (021 2541354) if you would like to attend the communion service on any of those days, and I will reserve you a place at one of those services. There are a few things to be aware of. First of all, please do not come to a service if you are showing any symptoms of having Covid-19. Secondly, I am limiting the invitation to members of the parish community (i.e. people I know), so this is a personal invitation to our home. I will also restrict the number to 10 invitees per service, so that there is sufficient social distancing within our large lounge. Please do remember to confirm with me by telephone your wish to attend any of these services.

Let us stay resilient ourselves and continue to do whatever we can to help others through this difficult time. And let's continue to pray for all those in our country and around the world who are being badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

With my warm greetings in Christ,

Peter Bengel

Vicar
(Anglican Parish of Lower Hutt)