

Parish Notices Sunday 6th September 2020

Please pray for:

Mon: The NHS, and those working in social care and in our local residential homes;

Tues: Our local schools and their staff teams, and all pupils who have returned to school, as they adapt to a changed environment

Wed: National and Local Government and all those with authority, making decisions about local lockdowns and economic support;

Thu: Volunteer organisations supporting the most vulnerable – FoodBank, CAP Debt counselling, Community Fridge, the FoodLife project, etc

Fri: Small business owners, and others facing redundancy or other particular financial challenges. .

Sat: Church leaders, nationally and locally - our witness in Chesham and the villages; Fintan O'Brien and Alice Spirandelli getting married at St Mary's this afternoon.

Philip Wood, Estelle Foster and Rev Simon Winn are taking part in this year's Ride + Stride on Saturday September 12th, raising funds for Buckinghamshire Historic Churches Trust, and also for Christ Church and St George's. Like to join them as they walk between churches and chapels in the north of the county, or to sponsor them? Please email Philip.R.Wood@outlook.com or rev.simon.winn@gmail.com to pledge your sponsorship.

The Parish Office remains operational, Lynette will be based there. Please contact by telephone or email but please do not come in person.

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Dear friends,

Debbie and I have just returned from a wonderful 10 days in North Yorkshire and Northumberland in the rain and shine (more rain than shine, but we are thankful to have a holiday – and apologies to those who are shielding or haven't been able to have a break)! Our final day visit to Berwick upon Tweed was very wet and windy, but we braved a walk around the town wall – probably the largest and widest wall I've been on! Why so wide? Because the town changed hands between Scotland and England some 13 times in 400 years. The wall was built for security reasons – though with the number of times it was overrun, it seems that it was still not big enough!

It is natural to seek security and safety, from birth we depend on the security of our parents, which provides the stability for venturing out into the world. As we grow up, we start to look for that security in other places – a good job, financial independence, close friends, a loving partner, a church community – all blessings from God to be enjoyed and for which we give thanks. However, if we put all our security in these things, then we will find that we are rather like Berwick upon Tweed (I bet you've never been compared with Berwick upon Tweed before?!). However wonderful these things are, and however many of them we surround ourselves with, like the city walls they can never keep us fully secure. In a moment they can be taken away. We have all experienced loss in our lives of various kinds, and the coronavirus pandemic has served to remind us of how vulnerable all these things are.

One of my favourite verses is Proverbs 18:10, which points us to our only place of true security: *“The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe!”* It is the Lord himself, and not just the gifts he gives, who is our source of ultimate security. There is no relationship more important to deepen and work on, nothing worth investing in as much as our relationship with Jesus; for when everything else is lost, which of course in the end it will be, Jesus will still be there, our security in this world and the next. The righteous “run to the tower” says the Proverb – we're to be proactive, urgent, intentional.

As we move into a new term and head into the Autumn there are many things to look forward to, not least welcoming Edward as he begins his ministry amongst us, and the Real Lives mission in October; however there is also lots of uncertainty – news of second spikes, of local lockdowns, of quarantine periods; we don't know how these might affect our churches in the Parish and the tentative steps we've made in re-opening. In the face of uncertainty and insecurity, let's not be like Berwick upon Tweed, but rather let's be those who run to Jesus, and find eternal security in our fortified tower whose walls are impregnable.

With love in Christ,
John