



St Gabriel's Aldersbrook

Parish Newsletter

Easter 2020



Keep watch, dear Lord,
with those who work, or
watch, or weep this
night, and give your
angels charge over those
who sleep. Tend the sick,
Lord Christ; give rest to
the weary, bless the
dying, soothe the
suffering, pity the
afflicted, shield the
joyous; and all for your
love's sake. *Amen.*

A Day of Prayer & Solidarity

Sunday 22nd March
7pm light a candle in a
front window as
symbol of your prayer
or community
commitment to one
another.



Please take great
care not to leave any
candle unattended
and make sure you
extinguish before
bedtime.

Best Laid Plans

I'm sure that almost every one of us could tell our own story of 'best laid plans'. They are all set to one side as we as a species face up to a global pandemic that has taken on proportions that few could have foreseen. Even ten days ago I'd written an article for a 16 page St Gabriel's magazine that we started printing and have now consigned to the recycle bin, because all has changed, 'changed utterly'. Holy Week and Easter service postcards the same. So, the church has responded with this little leaflet to share with you.

I make no claim to speak for the neighbourhood of Aldersbrook, I'm just grateful to be a part of it. But I do in a sense speak for one part of the church community: St Gabriel's which, like so many of my friends and neighbours of other faiths or none have responded to the crisis we face with the desire to reach out and care for the most vulnerable among us. As a church we have vulnerable in our congregation that we want to protect. But not just among us – like the Good Samaritan story told by Jesus, we want to emulate the stranger: a foreigner who met the needs of the bruised and battered man that he met at the side of the road. We wish to be good neighbours to all, not simply 'our own'.

There are lots of ways to help or to ask for help, and no shortage of people and groups to be involved with. I'm really impressed by the blossoming of neighbourhood street groups coming together, and you will hopefully be able to connect with one either from a flier through your door, or by following up the short article on the back of this leaflet which can point in the right direction. St Gabriel's is keen to support as well, and we have had further offers from neighbours and so are building up a group who are willing to meet local needs and concerns as they emerge over the coming weeks and months. The enclosed postcard is an offer of help for any in need, and for those who would like to help us help others please also be in touch or join your local street group. Together we can be true neighbours to one another.

There's a growing feeling that this is a defining moment for us as a human species. My hope and my prayer is that it will bring an even greater recognition of our need of one another, and that we grow together in a way that reverses the past years in which we seem to have become ever more polarised. My sense is that it is happening here and now, and like the green shoots in the Easter hymn even as we face death on a serious scale: 'love lives again, that with the dead has been: love is come again like wheat that springeth green'.

Martyn

Worship

St Gabriel's along with all Church of England Churches has ceased to offer public worship, but we are keeping our doors open as much as possible and as safely as possible unless we are instructed otherwise. We welcome all who are symptom free, following the hygiene instructions as you arrive.

Weekdays

Daily prayer continues to be offered at 8.30am and 5pm. The doors to the church will be open at this time and although not an act of public worship you are welcome to come in to the peace of the space.

The Church will also continue to be opened at 10am until 12 noon weekdays to allow people to come and pray and light a candle. We are asked not to offer catering of any kind, which is difficult, but we must do what we are asked to reduce the spread of the virus.

At 11am daily a candle will be lit, and a short prayer said.

Sundays

It is hard to imagine Sunday without church worship. Doors of church will be open between 9am and 12 noon with prayers said on the half hour at 9.30, 10.30 and 11.30 as in a place like St Paul's Cathedral where people pause to pray together. The blessed sacrament will be placed on the nave altar between 10am and 11am. So from 9am until noon people are free to enter the church but keep a distance of 2 metres apart. It all sounds and is very strange, and if changes are needed we'll update by email and on the website.

For those who shouldn't leave their homes we are exploring ways that the short prayer time might be streamed. If so, further information will follow.

Mothering Sunday This coming Sunday we are being invited to pray as a country for this situation, and to put a candle in our windows at 7pm as a sign of the abiding presence of Christ in the midst of the pandemic. If that is an appropriate thing you could do safely then please do so. Battery/electric lights of course are good options.

Holy Week and Easter Plans for how we will celebrate Easter are still being formed, and subject to changes in instruction from government and Church of England.

If you would like to be informed please do check our website, or you can be added to a regular mailing list or whatsapp group for church matters if only for this period of time. Please email Nick to request this at aldersbrookstgabriels@gmail.com

Redbridge Foodbank

As we move in to new and uncertain times, one thing that has become clear very quickly is how difficult it is to get some of the food we used to take for granted. And while some of us can work from home, others will undoubtedly lose their work and income, and the demand on the foodbank is rising beyond what can easily be met. As you tramp the high street in search of pasta and paracetamol, we ask that you consider two things: 1) Is there someone that needs the last tin of beans more than you? 2) Can you buy even one extra item as a contribution to the foodbank? While church services are suspended for the time being, the church building remains open at the normal times. We continue to operate our collection point for Redbridge Foodbank and you are invited to leave donations in the porch each morning between 10 and 12, or at any other time at the Vicarage door. We will make sure these all reach individuals and families finding the situation even more difficult than usual. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Covid-19 Mutual Aid.

Hello, we are Redbridge Covid-19 Mutual Aid. Our group was set up based on the model of mutual aid that has popped up around the UK, where local communities organise to support each other and especially the people who are at most risk such as the elderly, disabled, immuno-compromised and those with underlying health conditions during the coronavirus outbreak. We firmly believed there are thousands of wonderful, generous individuals who are eager to step up in this difficult time and help their fellow citizens. We are ecstatic and so proud to be proven right, as in just three days our Facebook group has had over 1200 people join, and we have over 200 amazing volunteers offering to donate supplies, deliver shopping, offer phone calls, and many other forms of kindness.

Our Facebook group has more details on us, our volunteer sign up form, our guidelines and how we work. It's called Redbridge Covid-19 Mutual Aid. However, we will **never** ask for money, bank cards, or any other personal information from those we help, everything is done by volunteers.

If you want to help someone, or need help, please feel free to join us on Facebook, where there are details of how to join our Whatsapp groups for your ward. Alternatively, you can send us an email on redbridgecovid19mutalaid@gmail.com.

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