

Update: 26-3-20

Let nothing disturb thee,
nothing affright thee;
all things are passing,
God never changeth!
Patient endurance attaineth to all things;
who God possesseth
in nothing is wanting;
alone God sufficeth.

This is the blessing at the end of the Northumbria Community Midday Prayer. The language is quaint but it's spirit is timely and relevant. We find ourselves anxious and 'affrighted'. It is certainly good to remember that whilst all things are passing (including this present situation) God never changeth. We are having to adapt to a rapidly changing situation, which is frankly quite exhausting. But we can do that because we have a firm point on which to stand- a fixed point about which we can adapt, - that point is the Lord himself.

It has been really encouraging to see so many people join together for the Prayer at One (PatO) times by zoom. We will continue them next week (if you are not on the email distribution list, drop me or Iain an email and we will put you on).

We were also really encouraged by the responses to last Sunday's streamed service. This week we will have to do things differently again, but I do hope that you are all able to join with us again.

So, here is how things stand:

Church Gatherings:

These decisions are taken in the light of government announcements, and also based on advice from the FIEC.

All Sunday services are cancelled until further notice.

On Sunday morning we hope to 'livestream' a service, this week via zoom. For details on how to access, please send a message via the website or contact details below. We will also have a zoom interview with Tom Wederell at 4.30pm- a link will be sent round for this.

We will cancel our Sunday evenings altogether until further notice.

Weekly events:

These are all now cancelled until further notice

Growth Groups:

We encourage Growth Groups to explore the possibility of meeting 'virtually' through conferencing media, at least for times of prayer. I appreciate that for some people this will be out of their technological reach, but we must do what we can.

Prayer meetings:

PatO 'Prayer at 1pm, every day, Monday to Friday. Contact us for details of how to join in.

Other church events in the building:

Coffee Club, Coffee mornings, Tiddlers, Primetime, Explorers, NRG, Revolution, Adventurers, Craft Club, Book Club, Who Let the Dads Out:

I am afraid these are all cancelled until further notice.

Third Party users of the building:

Please speak to those who organise these groups.

Support and Help:

I encourage us all to think of, and pray for, those who might find themselves isolated and in need of help.

We are establishing a hub of people willing to help out with shopping needs and other errands.

Growth Group leaders will be asked to contact and identify those in their groups who might need help.

If you are not connected to a growth group....now's a great time to get connected! Contact me and we can do that. Or I will simply feed your details to the hub.

Perhaps we can all be ready to phone others for a conversation (doesn't have to be 'checking up' on them) and look to encourage one another whenever we can. Perhaps we can learn to pray together over the phone.

If you are able to offer help in this way and would like to be part of the 'hub', then do contact me, and I will pass this on to Tibor, who is doing excellent work, establishing a hub.

The community around us:

As Jesus' followers we do have a responsibility to shine the light of Jesus around us. You may be aware of neighbours that you can support with an offer of help, or encourage in some way (You might need to push a card with contact details through the door, rather than knocking.)

If you are in our local community and reading this and need help because you are self-isolating, please get in touch, and we will try to help. You can do this even if you don't come to our church. You can leave a message on the church phone, or email me - see below.

Graham Cooke, Pastor, Kennet Valley Free Church

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UPDATE 19 MARCH 2020

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.” (Psalm 94:19)

I discovered this verse at the end of last week and it has become very precious to me since then. I pray that despite all the anxieties around us, every member of the Kennet Valley family will be able to look to the Lord and rejoice. He is control, he is good and kind and merciful, he loves us very much and, in Christ, he will not let us go!

Here is how things are, at present:

Church Gatherings:

These decisions are taken in the light of government announcements, and also based on advice from the FIEC.

All Sunday services are cancelled until further notice.

On Sunday morning we hope to ‘livestream’ a service via Youtube. People are working on this at present. Please watch this space for details on how to access this. We appreciate that not everyone has access to the internet.

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Weekly events:

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Growth Groups:

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Prayer meetings:

It is with great reluctance that we cancel these, given that the one thing we need NOT to do at this time is to stop praying! In fact we need to be praying MORE!

Let’s encourage one another by praying with each other by phone.

Prayer walking is still possible!

It is especially valuable for families to make time to pray together at this time.

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These are strange days- the very thing you want to do at times of anxiety like these is to reach out and actually be with people- that is the very thing we are strongly discouraged to do! Let's try and be creative! We preached a series two years ago highlighting many of the dangers of modern technology. Now is a time to thank God for their benefits- and creatively to make use of them!

I thank the Lord that we have a wonderful, wise, loving God, who knows what he is doing. I thank the Lord also for the wonderful loving Kennet Valley family of believers. I praise God for each one and give thanks for the love and his work of grace in each of our lives. Let us look up to him and look out for each other!

Yours in our very precious Lord Jesus, with much love

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