

Friday 8 May 2020

Dear Friends,

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2

I hope this week has been fruitful, even as we all wrestle with the sacrifices of social distancing and self-isolation. There have been so many sacrifices already. There may well be many more. But we follow Jesus, whose way is one of sacrifice. What are prepared to give up on in order that He will be glorified?

I am very conscious of those among us who continue to work hard in education, health and social care. I am also mindful of those juggling with working at home and caring for family. The stresses can be very great and patience can wear thin! Walking in the way of love is a daily choice, a route best taken in God's strength and knowing we are His beloved.

The terrible human cost of all that is happening hit me forcibly on Monday when I took a funeral service at Warriston Crematorium. The Lorimer Chapel had most of the chairs removed, leaving a dozen individual chairs spread out around the room. No touching was allowed and there was no way to gather afterwards, so many of the things we would do to offer comfort in a time of loss had to be omitted. I reflected on the tens of thousands of funerals in the last six weeks that will have taken place in such a context. It is very sobering. We must pray that the numbers passing away reduce enough to allow people to grieve appropriately with family and friends.

Up until now, we have been taking each week as it comes in terms of what our Sunday theme is. I have decided to begin a new series through the rest of May and into June. One of the things we as the Church so often fail to do is to lament. We ought to lament our sins, our arrogance, our disobedience and our pride. My sense is that the Lord is speaking in current events and that now is a good time to think deeply on these things. For that reason we'll be considering our helplessness and the hope God gives us as we look at the book of Lamentations. You'll find the programme below.

Lamentations- Helplessness, Hopelessness & Hope



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| 10 May | The Broke World and the Holy God – Lamentations 1 |
| 17 May | When It Feels Like God Is Against Us – Lamentations 2 |
| 24 May | Is God’s Love Steadfast? – Lamentations 3 |
| 31 May | Helplessness & Hope – Lamentations 4 |
| 7 June | Restore & Renew Us? – Lamentations 5 |

Online Worship, Gathering and Communications

Please read [beyond my signature](#) at the bottom of this letter for details of our online gatherings this week.

We continue to use Facebook Live for much of our online presence. A reminder that you do not need a Facebook account to participate in our live worship times. You simply need to go to <https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin> and look for a red symbol which says 'Live'.

Online worship is also available live on our YouTube Channel (please subscribe!) at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1r0Eq3PqBmxioDssYXCbGQ>

We are also streaming to <https://www.pscp.tv/StThomasEdin> if you want to try something different!

Most days during the week, I'll publish a short video 'Thought for the Day' during our (early!) morning exercise. These are available on the St Thomas' Facebook Page & Group.

Some serious work has been going on to enhance our website. This is ongoing but please do visit <https://www.saintthomas.org.uk>. Thanks to Angela Benzies for all of her continued effort on this. Angela is seeking to build a bank of photographs to be used online. Please contact her at angelabenzies@gmail.com if you can help with this.

Our Twitter account has also been reactivated. Search for @StThomasEdin.

If you are interested in taking part in Online Worship on Sundays either with reading or praying, please let us know. You'll have to be able to make an audio recording of your reading or intercessions in advance and then send the file to me electronically.

We are thankful for all the work the musicians and technical people are putting in to making videos of the worship songs for Sunday. Please keep those involved in prayer.

If you have prayer concerns or needs, please let me have them by email, text or message. You continue in my thoughts and prayers. Please hold Ali and me in yours.

All love In Christ,

St Thomas' Church Online

Week Beginning 10 May 2020

Online Worship & Gathering

All worship events are available online at:

<https://www.facebook.com/sthomasedin>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1r0Eq3PqBmxioDssYXCbGQ>

<https://www.pscp.tv/StThomasEdin>

Sunday 10 May

Online Worship @ 10.30am –

“ The Broke World and the Holy God” – Lamentations 1

Monday 11 May

@9.30pm – Night Prayer

Tuesday 12 May

@12pm Midday Prayer

Wednesday 13 May

@2-3.30pm Rooted Bible Study

Zoom Meeting: see Church Office email of Fri 8th May for joining instructions

@9.30pm Night Prayer

Thursday 14 May

@ 10am - ‘Zoom’ Coffee Online

Zoom Meeting: see Church Office email of Fri 8th May for joining instructions

@ 12pm Midday Prayer