

Mike's message

Lock Down has been hard!

It's still hard for many. Last time I wrote for Roundabout it was in the early days of lock down. Three months on it seems like another world.

Lengthy periods of separation from those we love has been difficult. People have had times of illness - non-Covid related - and had to attend hospital and out-patients unaccompanied. For some heartbreak has been harder as loved ones, including church members, have died alone.



Lock down is being eased. Shops are opening. Churches can, if they wish, open for private prayer. There will be a time to return for worship although some churches have decided with good reason not to reopen until September.

Everyone is walking on a journey that is unknown. We all make decisions of what to do, how to try and contribute to wellbeing of others. Sometimes we'll get that right, sometimes we'll get that wrong. There will always be some who think that we're doing the wrong things, or not doing the things we should. We need to cut some slack and accept that people are trying as hard as they can - even when we disagree.

This is very important as we move into the next stage. When worship and other aspects of church life return they will be very different. Worship will be a different style. Holy Communion may have to wait for a while. Singing may not be part of worship at first. Services may be at different times and shorter.

There will be a need to give and take. On arrival for worship people will be told where to sit, go immediately to those seats and leave immediately after worship. It sounds cold and clinical. But there will be a welcome and the presence of each and every person will be treasured and valued by others and by God.

During lock down we've maintained one of the largest on-line resource sites I've seen. We haven't used much 'live' content - other churches have - but we've run five courses and, every week, posted bible study notes, readings, worship sheets, and links to worship (recorded and live). I've prepared, recorded and broadcast a weekly video reflection. We've emailed out (thank you Peter Childs) a weekly bulletin and the notice sheet to everyone whose emails we know. On the website and bulletin we've given details of phone lines and tv worship schedules to pass on to those not online.

During lock down we've valued our pastoral links system and I've phoned members when a call has been needed. I've phoned people on the membership list 'at random' too. We've maintained support for B30 Foodbank and we've run Saplings Story Time and Messy Church at Home live on Facebook. The BB have used their own online resources, and the Day Centre has maintained contact with its members.

Thank you to everyone for all that you have done, and continue to do.