

Dear Friends

Welcome to week 15 of our letters. Goodness it seems a long time since these strange times began. We wonder what your plans are moving forward? Angela has been thinking about holidays.

With further easing of the lockdown many people are beginning to think about taking a holiday, and at the time of writing, it's a distinct possibility that these holidays could be taken abroad as well as a 'staycation'. Planning a holiday is almost as exciting as the holiday itself, especially for the children, who don't have to worry about getting the washing and packing done, making sure the car's in good shape or the tickets aren't lost and the passports up-to-date!

Throughout all my growing-up, until I got married, all our summer holidays were taken on the Isle of Rum in the Inner Hebrides. We'd go up for the whole six weeks. Dad only had a fortnight off work, so sometimes he would drive us up (Mum in the front, 4 little girls, all prone to travel sickness, in the back of the car), leave us on the island and we would come back on the train; other times it would be the other way round. This involved leaving Chesterfield station around 8.00pm, travelling overnight in crowded, dirty trains pulled by steam engines; changing at York, Glasgow and Fort William, on to Mallaig, where the last leg was MacBrayne's ferry boat and the 2+ hours sail across to Rum, arriving around 3.00pm the next day. But, oh the bliss of arriving, all thoughts of sea sickness forgotten, as we were reunited with our Scottish family and six whole weeks to spend running wild on an island with barely 30 inhabitants and only one clapped out van on the unmade roads!

Getting away from the routine of daily life to go on holiday will be even more precious this year for those lucky enough to manage it, especially for our families who have been cooped up, home schooling, home working, trying to keep everyone safe and well. For those of us who have been shielded even the thought of sitting in someone else's garden is something to look forward too!

I think the lockdown will make us all appreciate the simpler pleasures of going away, being out of the same four walls, no other demands on our time – just relaxing, sunbathing maybe, enjoying a freedom we didn't realise we had, until it was taken away.

As Neil referred to in his reflection on Sunday, we need to start thinking about what we want our future lives to be like - what have we valued most, what can we do without, where were we able to find God in places we didn't expect? How can we hold on to those things without before being swamped again with the materialism and schisms we experienced before? When people ask, 'where is God in this pandemic?' I think He's in the way we choose to answer those questions, and that's something for us all to pray about in the days ahead.

Liz and Neil were due to go on holiday next week with the family but this cannot go ahead even though this weekend will see yet more lockdown restrictions eased and more businesses and holiday homes and destinations open up. Two households (but not three, hence the cancellation) may now meet indoors and have a meal and even stay overnight (whilst still observing social distancing). We wonder if this is something you are planning to do? Let's hope that whatever your plans, the weather is a little better than recently. We do ask you to remember the people of Leicester in your prayers as they are lockdown again just as restrictions elsewhere are being eased. It is certainly a stern reminder that this pandemic is far from over and we should all continue to be vigilant and heed the advice on distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene.

Churches and other places of worship may open from this weekend and the PCC considered this but have decided that currently we are unable to meet the COVID secure requirements to allow this to happen. There are a great many things that need to be addressed before we can consider this. We are sorry if this is disappointing to you but the safety of everyone must be our top priority. Unlike larger places of worship like Cathedrals, All Saints relies solely on volunteers and goodwill and even meeting outdoors would require us to comply with COVID secure regulations and currently we do not feel confident that we are able to meet those. The church and church hall remain closed and no one should be entering the premises apart from the weekly maintenance check that is being carried out. We would remind everyone who has keys to the buildings that they **must not**, under any circumstances, go into either the church or the hall. Please respect this for the safety of the person carrying out the weekly check and also for yourselves.

Vivien Filleul sent us this beautiful picture of the rose trees on the south side of the church.



They really do look magnificent and the smell (when the sun shines!) is beautiful. God's creation reminds us once again of His glory.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. [Isaiah 40:8](#)

“Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. [Luke 12:27-28](#)

We enclose the answers to last week's Dingbats (was it just us that found them tough this week?) and a new quiz (a bit easier we hope).

Take Care and Stay Safe

With love

Angela and Liz

