

Thursday 23rd April 2020

Dear Friends

As we write to you today the sun is shining, the birds are singing and it is hard to imagine that we are under threat from something we cannot even see. Many people have remarked that they are glad we are not having to go through this period of enforced isolation in the depths of a long cold and dark winter. Even from the confines of the inside of our homes it is far more pleasant to look out and see nature in all her majesty. It is a daily reminder of the Glory of God and of His wonderful creation.

In my (Angela's) UCB 'Word for Today' Bible notes I read this, ***'The moon and stars you can see on a clear night are mere drops in the vast sea of the universe. Our sun is one of more than 100 billion stars that make up the Milky Way galaxy. And there may be as many as 100 billion other galaxies – billions of which may have hundreds of millions of planets like ours. The Hubble Space Telescope relays images of galaxies as far away as thirteen billion light years – that's thirteen billion x six trillion miles!! And all this was created because God uttered one sentence: "Let there be" (see Genesis 1). But there's something even more amazing: The One who created it all loves you and cares about every detail of your life. When you are weak, He is strong.'***

Many people have been quick to blame God for sending this 'plague' on to mankind, but so many of the 'bad' things that happen prove to be of our own making. We've just about held our hands up to causing climate change, and it appears this pandemic has come about through our mistreatment of animals and poor hygiene.

We have just gone through the strangest period of Easter ever, but that doesn't change the truth of the Easter story – that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life.' God's love for his world and everything in it, including you and me, has been manifest in so many ways over the last few weeks. We have discovered that we are capable of more love and compassion than we ever dreamed was possible, and we must pledge, not just personally, but globally, to not lose sight of this when we eventually return to 'normal' life. God has shown us a new 'normal' - one in which his love must continue to flourish and grow.

He has given us a tiny glimpse of heaven come to earth, the way he intended it to be when he created it all.

We wonder how everyone is filling their days now that normal routines are changed? Of course, some of you will still be working, either from home or on the frontlines or perhaps a combination of both. Many of us are volunteering, either in a formal way as part of the "army of volunteers" or individually by helping family, friends and neighbours. This only serves to emphasise how much we all depend on others to do what they do and how much we should value *every* job. The weekly "Clap for the NHS" now seems to have grown into a national appreciation of all those who are working to allow life for a country in lockdown to carry on. Please remember in your prayers all workers and volunteers without whom our lives would be even harder.

You will no doubt have seen the media coverage of the outstanding achievement of Captain Tom Moore who, at the time of writing, has raised over 28million pounds for the NHS by walking 100 times around his garden. People from all over the world have contributed to the just giving page

and also sent birthday cards. He will celebrate his birthday on April 30th. So far there have been over 44,000 cards sent for him. His birthday will certainly be special this year, quite apart from the fact that he will be 100 years old!

We hear talk every day about lockdown restrictions being eased but it seems very clear that if and when they are, churches will not be allowed to open until it is safe to do so and this may yet be some months away. The church however is not just the building, as we have seen over the last few weeks, we are the church, the people of God gathered and scattered. We are called to make a difference where we are and at the moment, we are making a difference simply by staying at home. We are making a difference by praying for people, by keeping in touch with each other, by saying thank you to our delivery drivers or postman or postwoman. We must never feel that our part in this time of crisis is insignificant. We are all part of the solution individually and as a church. ***“In this life we cannot always do great things. But we can do small things with great love” St Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)***

Jo Collie has let us know about some musical performances by Simeon Wood, a talented musician. Simeon plays a variety of instruments ranging from the flute, bagpipes and even occasionally the walking stick flute and the digeridoo! He has been posting mini concerts on You Tube and Face Book. He has made some of his performances available online and has also done one especially for people in care homes. If you would like to see him perform there is a link to his You Tube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVQWk1mijxjW-tF20XI0WGw>

Don't forget that you can watch our “virtual church service” on our website from 10 am every Sunday. Don't worry if you can't be there at 10 am as the services will still be available on the website so you can watch them at a time that suits you. Thanks to Chris Musther and Phil Woodcock for their technical “knowhow” which enable this to happen. Thanks also to Ali, Claire, Neil, Chris and Phil who have all agreed to lead services online. Our online services are reaching far wider than just the All Saints family so this is a really important Frontlines ministry.

Attached is another quiz and the answers to last week's anagrams. We hope you enjoy them. We are always happy to hear your news so please do let us know if you have things to share.

With love
Liz and Angela.

PS. We had the following letter from David Kereto which we thought you would like to read.

Dear MEA U.K Trustees & Prayer supporters,

I wish to bring to your attention that MEA has so far received £500 from Harbour Ministries (Andrew Greenbank) and £600 from MEA U.K Trust bringing to a total of of £1100. Maasai Evangelistic Association has used that money in buying food for 200 Maasai families who are among the many Maasai people who have been affected by the lockdown due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. The beneficiaries are orphans children, the elderly, the people living with disabilities, widows and MEA rescue girls. MEA feeding program committee has plan to increase the beneficiaries number if more funding can be received. MEA plans that each household receives a packet of maize, cooking fat, sugar, salt and a bar of soap to maintain basic hygiene.

According to the MEA feeding program Committee it has seen to it that the vulnerable people in the Maasai community will not succumb to hunger after the Corona Virus pandemic that has led to the closure of quite a number of businesses in Narok such as livestock sale yards and open air markets that are highly relied on by the Maasai community.

In the Maasai Mara region the people has been heavily relying on tourists that visit the Game Park but with the closure of airports as a way to control the pandemic acquiring the most basic of needs such as food has become a challenge. One of the Maasai women with a brim on her face carrying a gunny bag filled with food enough to feed her family for a whole week joined a streak route of other brimming women from the Loita community said that she can now sleep at night comfortably knowing that God through MEA have provided food for them. "For us we depend on selling our cows and sheep but with the closure of our markets, we had nowhere to turn to, but MEA stood with us, we are forever grateful," she added.

MEA is asking for more support from friends, Churches and well wishers to support in helping to feed the most affected people in the Maasai community during these difficult times.

Due to the social distance measure the Government of Kenya will not allow us take any photos of distribution exercise.

Thank you. David.