

OUR NEWS

APRIL 2020



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‘THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT’

May I speak in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE RT REVD PHILIP MOUNSTEPHEN BISHOP OF TRURO

At times of crisis we can tend to default to what is familiar and secure, to ‘go home’ as it were, and I guess many people have done that in this strange season and gone back to what is familiar and secure and, indeed, in many cases gone home.

For people of Christian faith there are few words that are more familiar and more secure that feel more ‘at home’ for us than the words of Psalm 23: words that proclaim with confident assurance that the Lord is our Shepherd. And yet for all that they are familiar words to us I do think that they have special resonance and extra depth in this current crises that we face.

So what is it that this Psalm tells us? What indeed does it call us to do?

There are four simple things I think of which it reminds us, and there are two specific calls that it makes upon us.

The first thing that it reminds us of is that the Lord is a shepherd. It’s a very deliberate image, a very deliberate picture: the Lord is a Shepherd and he is a Shepherd who cares for his sheep. David of course, who it’s believed wrote this Psalm, had been a shepherd himself: he knew all about a shepherd’s life; he knew what it was to care for his sheep. And taking his own experience he applies that to his own understanding, his own experience, of how the Lord has been a shepherd to



Picture credit: Pawel Czerwinski, Unsplash

him - and so he writes ‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, he makes me lie down in green pasture, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul he leads me in right paths for his names sake’. Our God, our shepherd God, only wants the best for us so we can and we must trust him - always, but especially now.

The second thing that this Psalm reminds us is that the Lord is my Shepherd: not any old shepherd but my shepherd. On the little silver column that is around the top of my pastoral staff, or crozier, is written ‘John 10: 11’ which is a reference to the words of Jesus which say ‘I am the Good Shepherd, the good shepherd

lays down his life for his sheep’. And I have those words etched here on my pastoral staff to remind me that the Lord is my Shepherd. I can only be a shepherd to others in as much as first of all he is my shepherd. And we in this time must let him shepherd us, we must let him look after us, care for us: and for him to do that, we need to trust him and depend upon him.

The third and sobering thing that this Psalm reminds us is that the Lord being our Shepherd does not prevent us from walking in the dark valley, the valley of the shadow of death.

‘Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and staff they comfort me’.

Walking through the valley of the shadow of death is a present reality. It will be a sad reality in the coming days if the predictions are to be believed. But we do not go into that valley alone. The Lord our shepherd walks there with us: ‘Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil for you are with me’. And with our God with us in such circumstances, in such situations, we need fear no evil.

And then finally the Lord being our shepherd reminds us that better things await us.

READ MORE

<https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/bishops-blog/my-sermon-from-mothering-sunday-march-22-2020/>

CARRYING ON WITH ONLINE & DIAL-IN SERVICES

These are challenging times indeed but our clergy and churches are doing everything they can to make sure all our communities stay connected and cared for.

We may all be sitting in our homes, possibly fearful, certainly pondering on how we got where we are so quickly, but there are many ways to join in and worship collectively, even though we are all apart. From lighting a candle in your window and joining in prayers at a set time each day, to flipping open the laptop and clicking on links to take you to streamed church services.

Below is a list that we will keep updating to let you know what, when and how you can connect to services. You can see the latest information on the [diocesan website](https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/live-streaming-services-2020/) here: <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/live-streaming-services-2020/>

One happy thought in these worrying times, is the image of so many prayers, so much love and so many words of God are now streaming across the internet.

Dial in services

For those who cannot access the internet, churches like **All Saints Hightown** are offering dial-in services. Just call 01872 306996 to hear the latest weekly sermon for the cost of a phone call.

CHURCHES IN CORNWALL STREAMING SERVICES

The Atlantic Coast Cluster are recording their services and making



available service sheets for their congregations across the cluster to view and take part in at home. Full details are available on their website.

Fowey Churches are live-streaming and are available to view on their Fowey Church Facebook page and YouTube channel from 10.15am on Sundays.

Godrevy Team Ministry will be livestreaming from their Facebook page (@haylechurches)

St Kea are hosting a weekly pre-recorded service every Sunday at 10.30am. It will be a mixture of interviews, teaching, prayers and music. On Sunday, March 29 they will be talking with Foodbank and hearing from mission friends in Madrid and Kenya, to see how life is for them at the moment.

The Lann Pydar Benefice will be continuing with their livestreaming of services, accessed from their website.

St Martins Church in Liskeard livestreamed their church service from 11.00am last Sunday and are posting videos on their Facebook page for evening and morning prayers.

New Street Church have also set up

their own Youtube channel, called, not surprisingly, New Street Church. They will be streaming services each week and including links to the lyrics for the worship. You can access the content through their [website](#) or via the link above.

The North Cornwall Cluster are making their pre-recorded services available via their Youtube channel. They are also making available service sheets through a link from that site so people can follow the service from their own homes.

The Penlee Cluster will be sharing their services from their website and Facebook page [PENLEE CLUSTER](#)

You can still see the Eucharist service led by Bishop Philip at Truro Cathedral on Mothering Sunday by following this link [TRURO CATHEDRAL EUCHARIST](#)

A CHURCH NEAR YOU

Have a look at [A Church Near You](#) for further ideas of which churches are streaming and when.

For more ideas of how the clergy in Cornwall are caring creatively, click on the link [CLERGY CARING CREATIVELY](#)

PASTORAL SUPPORT GUIDANCE FOR PARISHES AVAILABLE

With the closure of churches and government advice to stay at home, we are all looking for new ways to be and do church.

The diocesan team are here to support you in continuing to deliver the sometimes vital, and always helpful pastoral support to those in your communities that you know to be in need of support, and to those who may newly find themselves in such a situation.

However, churches with pastoral teams will find that they are no longer able to visit in the way that they used to, different support needs are emerging and new volunteers stepping forward.

We hope the information in our **Pastoral Support in Parishes Guidance** will provide some ideas and inspiration on how to offer the highest standards of safe pastoral support over the coming months as well as highlighting some areas that will need more thought.

As things seem to change on a daily basis, please make sure you continue to keep up to date with the latest [government advice](#).

More information and advice regarding Coronavirus is available on the [diocesan website](#) here: <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/covid19/>

GOD'S STRENGTH ENDURES

REVD CANON SIMON CADE ACTING DIOCESAN SECRETARY

I made a joke that on my first day as Diocesan Secretary I closed Church House, on the second day we stopped public worship in all our churches, and on the third day we closed the schools. It's a good line and got plenty of likes on twitter. It got worse, because then we told the over 70s, clergy and lay, that their public ministry had to cease until the isolation policy for vulnerable groups allowed otherwise. There aren't any jokes about that one.

Last Friday afternoon I was on my own in Church House putting things from my desk into a box, I turned the lights out, turned the alarm on, and locked the door. A memorable first week. I haven't cried yet, but there is a sadness about some of this, and I think that in time I may well weep for what will not now be. I am sad that my year as Diocesan Secretary will not be what I hoped. And that is before the news starts getting really bad, there may well be much more weeping before this is over.

I admit to that sadness, those who know me well can see it anyway. I also admit to fear, as always fear of what is yet unknown. How bad will it get? What more will we lose and who will we lose? Will I be strong enough? Will I make mistakes? Will I be faithful?

On the Saturday, the church remembered Thomas Cranmer. The martyrs of the church put some perspective on my year not panning out as I thought it was going to. Then the readings at Morning Prayer included Hebrews 8 and the idea of the earthly sanctuary being a "sketch and shadow" of the heavenly sanctuary. Sometimes God has to try unusually hard for me to get God's point.

My strength will not be enough; God's strength endures. I will make mistakes in these difficult days and it will be too hard for me; God's mercy is without limit and God's grace is freely and abundantly given. I will ask "why?" and struggle to find an answer; my fragile faith and ministry will be just a sketch and shadow of the faithfulness of God in whose name I serve.

As we refrain from embracing and find new ways to be distant, God reaches out to us and holds us close.

As the church changes out of all recognition, God walks with us.

As we lock things up and close things down, God unlocks and unfolds a new future and is faithful in love.

Thanks be to God that we are called to serve and to worship in times such as these.

CHRISTIAN ECO-LIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Thankfully spring is here and we can remain active and think about wonderful things we can do at home to make ourselves a little more resilient (Pledge 2 & 3) and consider what we might wish to plan for when we return to our church buildings.

Pledge 2 asks you to try having two meals a week that are seasonal and locally sourced. Now is the time to be sowing seeds in a yoghurt pot on your windowsill, however small, to ensure you have some readily available vitamin C. Even if you do not have a garden, your windowsill or doorstep can host a potato bag or plant pot of lettuce. If you don't have any seeds, get in touch with the diocesan environment officer Luci Isaacson via luci@climatevision.co.uk

Pledge 3 asks you to educate yourself about climate change. To be honest, this has always been code for 'get yourself resilient'. This is worth doing as you can plan for things you might grow longer term, that are positioned and chosen well to be hardy to rain and wind, achieving Pledge 2 at the same time.

You can apply this to the Green Church Awards, around church and something you can write to your PCC about and start planning, even if you are not in a position to start yet.

Fresh air is great for all, even if it is only in your garden. Where might you plan to plant a fruit tree in the autumn (Community 6)? Can you think about where you might set aside an area of the church grounds as a 'meadow' to encourage wildlife (Community 9)?

PRAYERS FOR ISOLATION

To help you pray and for ideas on how you can worship even if not gathered, we have collated some resources on the diocesan website. To see the daily prayer visit <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/covid19/prayers-for-use-during-this-period/>

+ READ MORE

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

The diocesan website is being updated constantly with the latest information so please do visit <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/covid19/>



If you would like to see Truro Methodist Church receive their Bronze Green Church Award, you can watch here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnr_ceqxL9Y

If you would like to know more about these items, climate change in general, new exciting policies and the Church of England's great target for 2030 net zero emissions, sign up to one of our Environment Champion Events. These will still be held but **online** here:

**Environment Champion Event (3)
30.05.2020**

**Environment Champion Event (3)
12.06.2020**

We will continue to work together on these issues, at the same time, giving us chance to still share stories and discuss highlights and obstacles together.

To hear more about resources for grandchildren, grants and funding for trees, or watch a great film about biodiversity, get in touch with Luci.

TRAUMA AND TRAGEDY IN CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS

This is part of a three-year project on trauma and tragedy in Christian congregations.

First thought: context is everything.

You will know better than anyone else how your particular community is likely to react.

Second: this is a trauma to communities, the nation, the world.

It's not a shock-event like a fire or a terrorist attack, but slowly there has built, and is still worsening, a crisis that shatters people's assumptions that the world is generally safe and reliable, and that all that we have worked for in businesses, churches and communities will be fruitful. The loss of those assumptions, the breaking of connections between people, and the overwhelming of people's ordinary resources – all of these are characteristic of trauma.

Some of the wisdom that has been gained about trauma recently can help us:

- People's whole selves are affected – they may feel all sorts of strange symptoms because the body is reacting to the fact that they are not safe. Emotions will be all over the place in surprising ways. Concentration may be difficult. Sharing this information – that

it is normal to be up, down, energetic, exhausted, afraid – will help people to cope with it.

- People react very differently depending on different backgrounds and experiences, including past traumas.
- People respond best when they have clear, reliable information; when they have something to do – 'agency' of some sort; and when they are cared for in warm and authentic ways. Even phone calls can be reassuring.
- We make sense of things by being able to integrate the experience into an overarching story. But it is much too soon to assemble a coherent narrative out of all this. Even the process of meaningfully gathering together to lament what has been lost is very hard. The trauma is unfolding and there are many losses yet unrevealed

Community responses to disaster typically show a 'heroic phase', full of energy and self-sacrifice, which burns itself out and is followed by a 'disillusionment phase', which may contain much mutual blame and suspicion. Only as the

disillusionment phase loses its force can realistic, hopeful re-making take place.

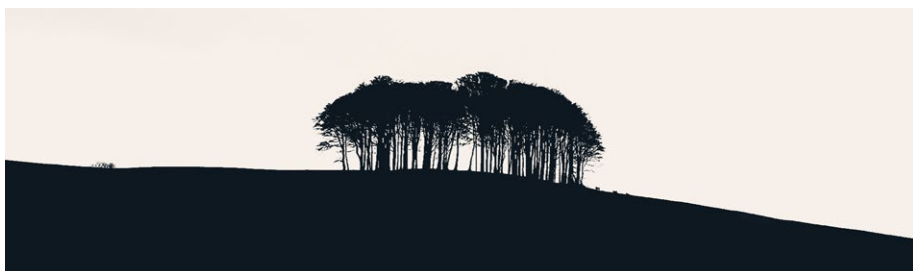
Many of the responses in communities can be celebrated and affirmed. It is worth thinking about what, over and above the generous and heroic actions of many in the secular world, Christian story and practice can contribute. That is particularly true in this time approaching Holy Week and Easter. Public worship may be suspended, but these great transformative moments in the whole human story need some sort of marking.

Lastly and in a way most importantly, this is a very confusing and draining time, a time when ordinary healthy rhythms are lost. Trauma professionals are disoriented! You may be feeling in yourself and your body the impact of trauma – feeling low and anxious one day and hard to get your brain in gear, energetic the next, and all at a time when we are needing to be creative and adaptive in their approach. So self-care, attending to your own well-being, is vital. That includes the basics of good rest, eating, and exercise. It also includes having people you trust whom you can share with, and making sure you are in touch with them.

AVAILABLE ONLINE

<https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/covid19/diocesan-guidance/>

Christopher Southgate, Carla Grosch-Miller and Hilary Ison
Tragedies and Christian Congregations Project
www.tragedyandcongregations.org.uk



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