

Encouragement for us all

from our Saint Swithun's family

FEAR NOT
— for I am —
WITH YOU

Richard has shared a couple of
Bible verses with us:

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on
toward love and good deeds



We will have many feelings as we continue to worship as a church in physical isolation. Many of us have been riding rollercoaster emotions finding joys as well as lows in these isolated times.

Some of you have been working so hard you feel exhausted. I know that many of you are desperate to regain the focus of work as you feel detached from helpful routines. We know that there are some of us in the depths of grief at the loss of a loved one. Many are able to enjoy quality time with family. Some of you are feeling so isolated it is painful. For some, life in lockdown is fraught with complicated relationships and feelings of entrapment. Some of us will feel many things in just one day going up and down like a yo-yo simply coping with all we currently live through and all that feels different from our normal lives.

Being honest about how we feel is important and recently I shared with you my own 'lockdown wall' and the need to be encouraged. Thank you so much for any personal messages—it was overwhelmingly encouraging and I hope in this booklet we can all feel a little encouraged.

My encouragement today for you is an ancient prayer by *Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)*:



**O Holy Spirit,
breath of all creatures,
purifier of all souls
and healer of all wounds;
be fire to our heart,
light to our path
and friend for our journey.
Amen.**

Please find many encouraging words in this booklet to help keep us together in faith and hope and love.

God Bless,
Mother Juliet

Sean says that perhaps we can take comfort in the knowledge that the church is also a spiritual place that is not bound by walls and locked behind doors but one made by all of us and we all reside there connected by the Holy Spirit as a family in Christ and God's love, hope and grace. Sean finds this a comfort when missing church and church family. He says, we still have other means of connecting. Phone calls, social media and email are great and it is important that we make use of these.

It's so important to keep in mind that this is temporary and by God's grace WILL pass, we WILL see each other again and things WILL return to normal. ..Party time then!!

"So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

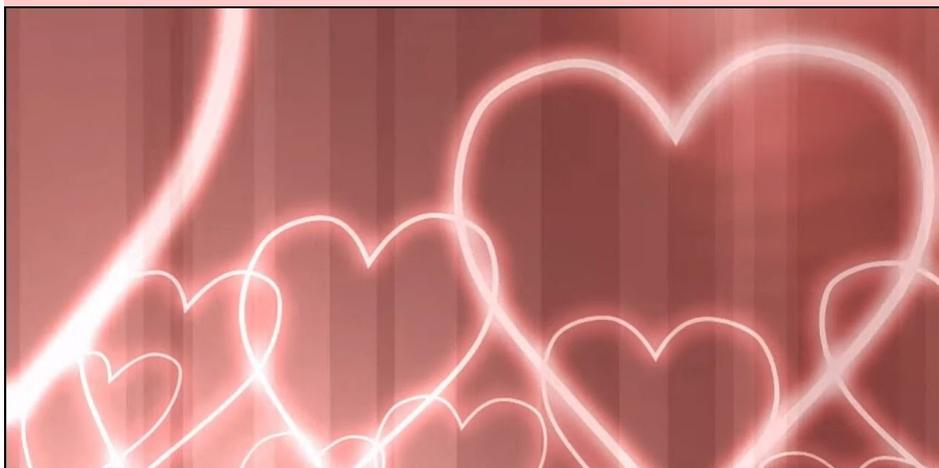
John 16:22

Remain faithful even when things seem bleak it's important to keep hope and dreams alive.

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

Romans 12:12

We hold each other in our prayers and offer those prayers to God whom by his grace will hear them.

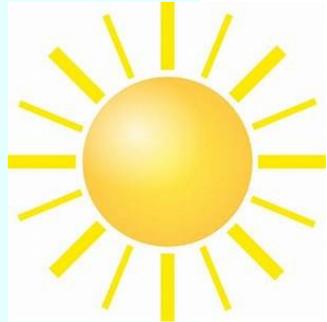


A poem to encourage us all sent by Bridget Lee:

A Blessing For The Interim Time

When near the end of day, life has drained
Out of light, and it is too soon
For the mind of night to have darkened things,
No place looks like itself, loss of outline
Makes everything look strangely in-between,
Unsure of what has been, or what might come.
In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.
In a while, it will be night, but nothing
Here seems TO believe the relief of dark.
You are in this time of the interim
Where everything seems withheld.
The path you took to get here has washed out;
The way forward is still concealed from you.
“The old is not old enough to have died away;
The new is still too young to be born.”
You cannot lay claim to anything;
In this place of dusk,
Your eyes are blurred;
And there is no mirror.
Everyone else has lost sight of your heart
And you can see nowhere to put your trust;
You know you have to make your own way through.
As far as you can, hold your confidence.
Do not allow your confusion to squander
This call which is loosening
Your roots in false ground,
That you might become free
From all you have outgrown.
What is being transfigured in your mind,
And it is more difficult and slow to become new.
The more faithfully you can endure here,
The more refined your heart will become
For your arrival in the new dawn.

John O'Donohue





**May the God of hope fill
you with all joy and peace
as you trust in him, so
that you may overflow
with hope by the power of
the Holy Spirit.**

Romans 15:13



**The rainbow is a sign of hope
and new beginning.**

**It reminds us that things will
soon be better and brighter.**

**God bless,
Susan Ng**

From Diane—I was working the other day & to make the task go quicker, found myself humming a few tunes which I realised were hymns & the recurring theme was "trust". The top of a ladder is a strange place to have such a moment of clarity so I've decided to change the things I can and leave the rest to Him, to trust that by His grace all that I have no control over will be sorted out. As my granddaughter sang to me the other day I've "Let it go" & having done that, I feel better as a heaviness I've been dragging around for a while has gone.



We are living in perilous times, but we are comforted by the fact that we have a "merciful" God.

"He calms the seas, heals the sick, raises the dead" among his many other miracles.

So we can rest assured that in the storm of the Corona

Virus he has been, and will continue to keep us safe.

My sincere condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and may we continue to remember them in our prayers and remain a united force in the name of God.

Patricia



I saw this bible verse and thought
it will give us the courage to carry on.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our
affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any
affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves
are comforted by God.

God bless! Olivia



I have in my heart that soon all this catastrophe will end.
Better times will come along. I pray for the loving times ahead in
the church. I know the feeling of being loved by the church.
I felt so some years ago and I still do, remember that our best love
is Jesus, and he is looking after us. I want to share the poem

I wrote in my book-The Princess and the Poem

(...)

Rhyme

With peace and love

Just rhyme

See over there in the mill?

Flying up high dear dove (...)

Feel my pulse, beat and soul

And you will, for sure you will

Remember where your poem is hide!

Be the dove hope and be the poem strength...

With love, Elisabeth

The current situation has actually made me feel closer to our lovely St Swithun's family ~ because we're all in some way facing difficulty, challenge and loss ~ and I sense such support and solidarity, visible, for example, when we 'get together' for the Zoom coffee mornings. I know all our circumstances are different, but I have a real feeling of everyone looking out for one another and wanting to help, pray and support anyone who asks for help or is in need. And I feel that also extends to those who can't be there. So to me, this has re-enforced how much St Swithun's is the right church for me ~ and times like this do tend to reveal such things.

Sending much love,
Frances xxx



It is most definitely a difficult time for us all, in different ways. Our faith will see us through and bring us together again. A call, text, video call or letter means a great deal to those you know. A donation means a lot to those you don't. And a prayer covers us all. Be strong. We will overcome this.

From Taneisha x

My word of encouragement is taken from
Philippians 4 Verse 6:

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your
request to God.**

Blessings

Pam xx



Hopefully it will not be long
before we can all meet up in person.

Praying for our Church family

Much love

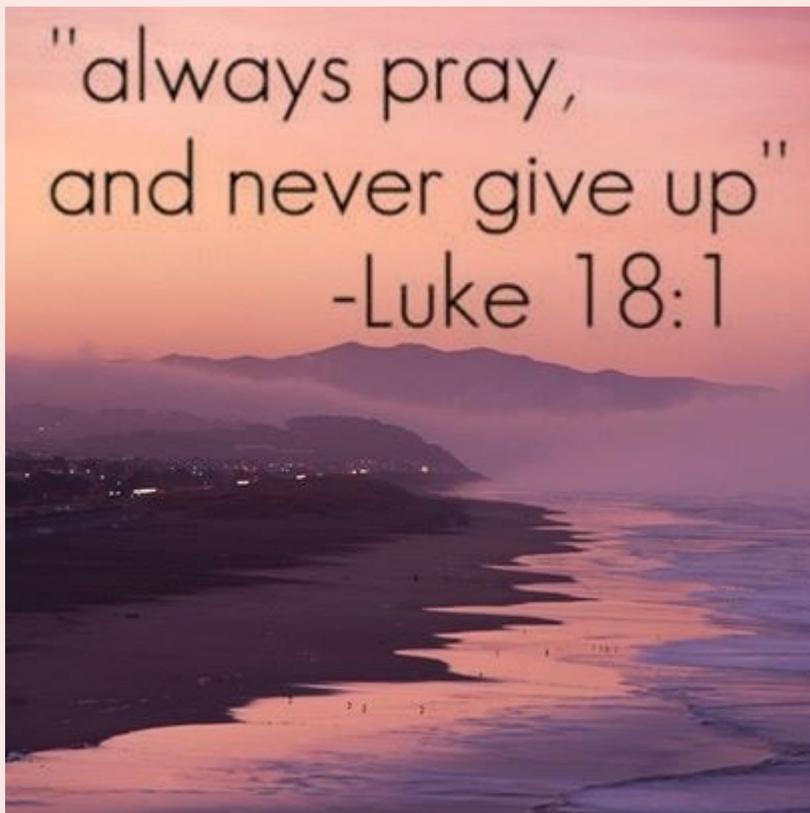
God bless

Elaine X

Form Kath: Church is such a huge part of our life and I am desperately missing everything about it, the service, the people and just in general feeling part of such a caring community.

Every Sunday we look forward to listening / watching the service which brings us such great comfort.

Times are so turbulent at the moment but we are all keeping our connection to God which will keep us all going in even our darkest hour.



Christine sent a song .
 Here are some of the words:
 May your troubles keep you near the cross.
 May your troubles show you
 that you need God.
 And may your battles
 end the way they should.
 May your bad days prove that God is good



BEATITUDES

FOR A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAY INDOORS



FOR THEY HAVE PROTECTED OTHERS

BLESSED ARE THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED



FOR THEIR NEED OF GOD IS GREAT

BLESSED ARE THE CORNER SHOPKEEPERS



FOR THEY ARE THE PURVEYORS OF SCARCE THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE DELIVERY DRIVERS AND THE POSTAL WORKERS



FOR THEY ARE THE BRINGERS OF ESSENTIAL THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE HOSPITAL WORKERS, THE AMBULANCE CREWS, THE DOCTORS, THE NURSES, THE CARE ASSISTANTS, AND THE CLEANERS



FOR THEY STAND BETWEEN US AND THE GRAVE, AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS SURELY THEIRS

BLESSED ARE THE CHECKOUT WORKERS



FOR THEY HAVE PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE IN THE FACE OF OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION

BLESSED ARE THE REFUSE COLLECTORS



FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD DESPITE THE MOUNTAINS OF WASTE

BLESSED ARE THE TEACHERS



FOR THEY REMAIN STEADFAST AND CONSTANT IN DISTURBING TIMES

BLESSED ARE THE CHURCH WORKERS; THE DEACONS, PRIESTS AND BISHOPS



FOR THEY ARE A COMFORTING PRESENCE IN A HURTING WORLD AS THEY CONTINUE TO SIGNPOST TOWARDS GOD

BLESSED ARE THE SINGLE PARENTS.



FOR THEY ARE COPING ALONE WITH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND THERE IS NO RESPIRE

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALONE.



FOR THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD AND WITH HIM THEY WILL NEVER BE LONELY

BLESSED ARE THE BEREAVED.



FOR WHOM THE WORST HAS ALREADY HAPPENED, THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ISOLATED WITH THEIR ABUSERS

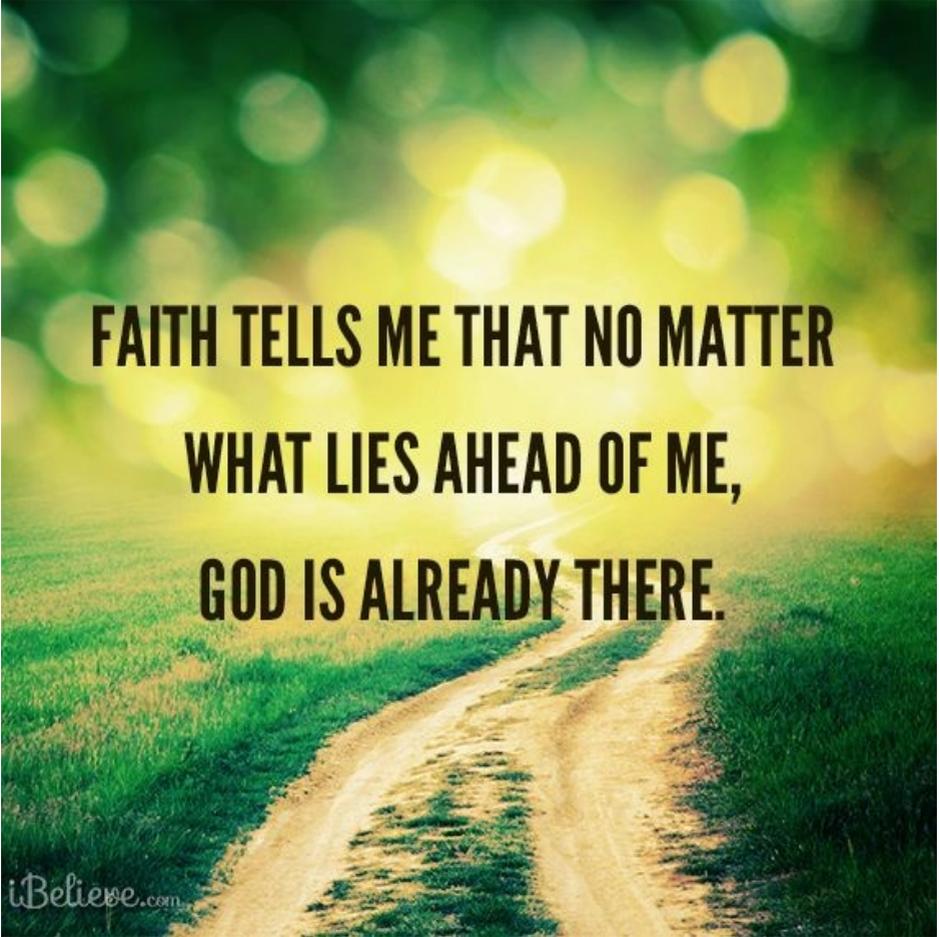


FOR ONE DAY - WE PRAY - THEY WILL KNOW SAFETY

BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS; ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY



MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN



**FAITH TELLS ME THAT NO MATTER
WHAT LIES AHEAD OF ME,
GOD IS ALREADY THERE.**

iBelieve.com

We are thinking of you and sending a few words of encouragement. We continue to pray together and be strong in faith in this unprecedented time, sometimes our emotions can get the best of us, but we hold onto our faith and continue to trust in God.

Shonnet and lily xxx