

Thank you to so many people for putting the “Love your neighbour as yourself” into practical action. These may be extraordinary and very strange times, but there is good that is coming out of this as well, of course, as feelings of anxiety and hardship, sadness, and grieving.

Holy Week (the period between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday) was an incredibly strange time in the church this year. Holy Week is the busiest time for the church: with services every single day; a time of coming together and reflecting before then being able to celebrate once again together on Easter Sunday. But the church building was closed. This included personal prayer for the priest, which whilst understandable was very sad; we had to find other ways of worshipping together and marking Holy Week. We may not have met physically, but the busyness was very much still there. We still maintained our daily services through Holy Week, but this year by recording them and uploading them to YouTube (now that was a learning curve!) the church family managed to ‘join together’ at the same time for our services. Because of the technology, we were also joined by folk in South Africa, Singapore, and New Zealand. Whilst the building was closed, the church was alive ... and reached people further away.

At the time of writing, it has just been announced that we are in for at least another three weeks of lockdown. We are more fortunate in our villages than many other people in our country and we need to remember that and be thankful. But now is the time when things, even for us, will start to feel harder as we face up to the reality that this isn’t going to end soon. So the plea is even more important this month: think of your neighbour. If you are going out for essential shopping, or to collect medication, or you’re doing an online shop: give them a call, ask them if there is anything they need. Help your neighbour. The work that is being done by BAT (Benenden Action Team) is incredible; thank you to all the volunteers. Help is there for you. You just need to ask; please, do not be afraid to ask for help. This is caring for your neighbour in action.

These remain very strange times, and they are anxious times for many. There is a piece of scripture, in Philippians, about anxiety which might, at first reading, seem out of place: “The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” I encourage you to give it a try. Make your requests known to God; pray to God. The next verse says: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

May you know God’s peace and blessing.

Revd David Commander, Rector