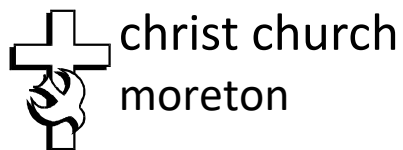


May 2020 at



Dear friends at Christchurch

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

It seems strange to write about what is happening this month at Christ Church, because all of our usual activities continue to be closed down. It is now 7 weeks since we last held a service in Christ Church, and as I write there seems no prospect of a return to normal church life any time soon.

It would be easy to become discouraged, and to wonder why God is allowing this to happen. And, of course, we can't always know God's purposes, but we can know that God has not abandoned us, that he is still at work for our good.

One of the ways in which God works for us is through one another. The New Testament is full of encouragements to support each other – *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.* Galatians 6:2 At the moment many of us feel the burden of isolation, of not being able to meet with family and friends as well as missing our church family. But all of us can share in carrying that burden. It has been good to hear how many have been phoning each other up or keeping in touch in other ways. We can't alter the situation we find ourselves in, but we can assure one another that we are in it together.

Another way in which God works for us is through our prayers for one another. We have our daily Morning and Evening Prayer times, which have been well attended and given us a chance to connect with each other and together bring our prayers to our heavenly Father. But if you have a special prayer concern you can send it to our prayer chain (via the church office) or use the 'Sayoneforme' form on the website (you'll find it on the Covid-19 section). We keep on praying, because we know that God is at work in answer to those prayers.

God works for us through his word, which is why our service on Sunday and our Midweek Meditation are important. I do want to thank all those who have been involved in them, especially Phil Jones, who has handled all the technical side of things.

So even though much of our usual routine as a church has closed down, Christ Church is still alive, and God is still at work. In fact, through our services we are connecting with new people. Maybe you know someone who has started joining us online, maybe you have a friend who has started to ask about your faith. Maybe you want to reconnect with the heart of the gospel for yourself. Christianity Explored Ministries have made all their courses (Life Explored, Christianity Explored, Discipleship Explored and Soul) freely available on You Tube until the end of June. Just search for Christianity Explored on You Tube. It is also possible to run the courses online – if this is something you'd be interested in attending, please let the church office know, and we'll try to get it set up.

Above all, let's keep reminding each other that God is at work, and that we can trust him. The American pastor and author John Piper has written, "This pandemic is showing us—graphically, painfully—that nothing in this world gives the security and satisfaction that we find in the infinite greatness and worth of Jesus." May we all know the truth for ourselves.

Yours in Christ

Graham Cousins

