



PRESENCE

Dear Friends,

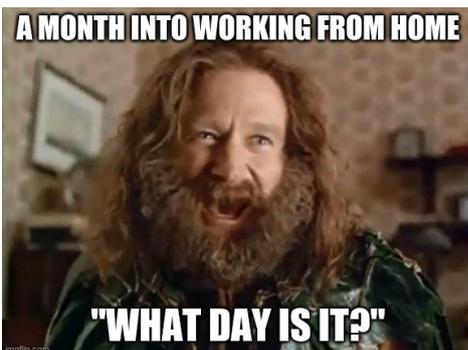
Do you find that this is a complicated time... emotionally?

It's hard to comprehend the scale of the impact of this virus on so many lives across the world. As I'm writing this the total number of cases has passed the three million mark world wide and the number of deaths has passed two hundred thousand. We will all know someone who has had the illness; we will know people who are mourning; people who are isolated; people whose livelihoods are at risk or even lost. We are united across the world in our shared experience of this.

LIFE GOES ON

At the same time, for most of us, life goes on. Our movements are restricted and we can't socialise like we're used to, but life goes on nevertheless. It's been a time for projects, houses painted, gardens planted, books read, pictures painted... a strange sort of forced holiday. The days filled with necessary distractions as the numbers around the world escalate and we wait for that curve to reach the right point.

Work is different too. The often-blurred line between home and work is even more fuzzy for those based at home; the usual tasks of daily occupations have been transformed into heroic feats in the face of an invisible enemy.



We're in awe of Captain Tom, shocked by President Trump, worried for Prime-Minister Johnson, moved by the Queen, impressed with Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Our carbon-footprints have dropped off the scale, the air is cleaner, nature more relaxed. We wonder, "what will happen next?" A new normal? (Whatever normal means!)



My experience of the last few weeks, against this strange background, has been an emotional mixed-bag too. There have been the worries of family health as several of the children displayed symptoms - but then thankfulness at the prayers and kindness shown to our family. The need to provide ways in which we can talk, pray and worship together has provided a focus for activity and we've all learned some new skills along the way. Looking out of the window in the morning across the island has been a joy to see the spring flowers in all their glory and it is difficult not to be thankful that I'm in lockdown with my favourite person in my favourite place!!

But as I reflect on what I'm learning from this time, one aspect is emerging above all others. And that is how important physical presence is;

how, for even the most introverted of us... we need to be together sometimes! Many of us have commented how the proxy of Zoom worship and the reality that we are worshipping at the same time with the same prayers, together and apart has been a moving experience. I agree. And I think what moves us, in part, is the realisation that we need each other and we miss being together. As with our families, our church family has the same need to be together. And our best proxies, however good, invoke the underlying sad reality - we can not be together and we miss each other.

GOD UNDERSTANDS

This idea of presence and being together caused me to reflect on how God understands this need for presence that is inherently part of the human condition. It is possible to imagine that God could have devised the spiritual equivalent of a Zoom encounter! Some virtual experience - a vision or a dream - through which He could have communicated something of His Grace to all of us. He could have even just dropped a couple of tablets (carefully) on Moses as he sat praying one day. He could have shown a clip of himself on the sky or created an illusion to tell us of His Kingdom. But he didn't. He came to us. In the flesh. Bodily present in His Son. Presence is important.

Jesus Presence (deliberate capital) with us is what has kept many of us going when we connect virtually. We know that the Holy Spirit is literally present with us as and with each other. He is our mode of connection. It is ever thus. It's another reason why we are moved when we connect together; because we know that we are one in the Spirit. Jesus is Present with each of us even if we are not present with each other.

But Jesus didn't call us, the church, to be His Body separately... but to be together. *Ecclesia*, the word we get ecclesiastical from - means gathering... coming together. Even the great hermits, the desert fathers of old spending years in isolation, were always considered part of the community of the church. Ironically, you can't be a hermit on your own!! You need to be apart from the people you are a part of!

And we are the Body of Christ in a particular way when we gather together in worship. He is with us always, but He promises to be with us in a different way when we are *gathered*. It's why it makes sense to me that when we are together as His Body, we break bread and He is Present there in our midst in the bread, with us, in a unique way. Physically and spiritually; physical bread and spiritual presence. His body for His body. It's why the sacramental Presence of Jesus needs His gathered body. There is no true substitute for presence; for being together. Some things are vital in time of need... but they are not the same.

So as we begin to hear rumours of change and we begin to work out how we are going to meet together physically again, I pray that we will all be changed for the better through these unusual times - that God will work these for our good. I pray that we will value each other all the more; have a deeper understanding of our connectedness in and through the Spirit; have glimpsed possibilities for better living that we may not have imagined before... and... that we look forward to being present with our Lord's Presence in our midst.

With every blessing,
Jules.

HTC On-Line

Home Pulse Sunday Worship from home Special Services for Good Friday Teaching Series Daily Prayer

'TOGETHER and APART'

We will continue to provide online 'Together and Apart' services during May, as well as the live Sunday service. There is also a Monday 'virtual' home group and prayer meetings on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Please contact us, if you would like details of how to join us.

<https://sites.google.com/view/holytrinitycorfuonline/home>

PULSE PRAYERS



Lord Jesus wrap us in your love and light so we may overcome our fears. But for the joy set before you, you endured the cross, and so encouraged us and give us joy in the hope of abundant life with no death. Hallelujah! Thank you Jesus.

No one and nothing can put out the Spirit's fire, so we give thanks that through all this we have continued services, P.C.C., pastoral and prayer meetings thanks to technology. And especially pray for Peter and family in Holland who has been a big help setting up and connecting us through Zoom. Equip us to shine your light in new ways needed.

No gatherings for Greek Easter, but services were held in some villages by loud speaker and at midnight we lit our candles on doorsteps and balconies, the sky lit up with fireworks and big bangs in celebration of our Risen Lord!

We pray for the continuation of ICS mission plans to continue; the approval of Cafe Logos development to be completed; development in our online worship and other opportunities and protection and provision for Sabina's Kitchen in Yemen.

We thank you for the recovery of Gary, Steve's brother and Jules and Trish family from Covid 19 and continue to pray for continued strengthening and protection. We pray for Joshua W. and others to be completely healed and restored.

We lift to you all those who are sick and going through cancer treatments.

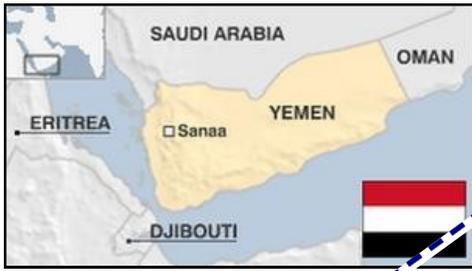
You promise to bless those who mourn with your comfort, so we lift to you Lynn on the loss of Jerry, Jackie's family on the loss of Aunt Audrey and John Moore on the loss of Eileen.

We pray for all those on the front line that they may be protected and strengthened, and there will be time for rest and refreshing. We thank you for bringing Doug back to Corfu from UK; Clare's daughter, Bryony, from Nepal and continue to pray for Anne to get back from Singapore and Danny from Switzerland.

We pray for wisdom and timing for governments around the world as we come into the next phase and alleviation of lockdown. Pray for generosity of heart towards developing countries. We ask for more love to share in the world, freedom from debt, the building of a new hopeful future for young people.

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
sustain and support the anxious
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low:
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
In Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.*

A FORGOTTEN CONFLICT?



UPDATE



Dear all , Holy Trinity Church in Corfu

In Yemen , we have one case of corona virus so far. If it spreads it is going to be very bad . Our health system is limited . Over 80 % of hospitals and clinics have been destroyed .

But even in this difficult situation our charity kitchen is still providing food every day. We supply our kitchen staff with face masks and gloves and spray the kitchen with disinfection regularly .

We would like to thank you for your continued [sic] support and help and that you didn't forget us even in this risky situation of corona virus pandemic .

Thank you sincerely from all of us, here in Yemen, Sabina



Cartoons (with thanks to Reverendfun.com)



(See Matthew 7:3) 04-28-1999
 HAVING A BEAM IN HIS EYE ALMOST CAUSED QUENTIN TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS



(See Exodus 14) 04-20-1999
 I THINK THAT YOU HAVE SOME SERIOUS FAITH ISSUES

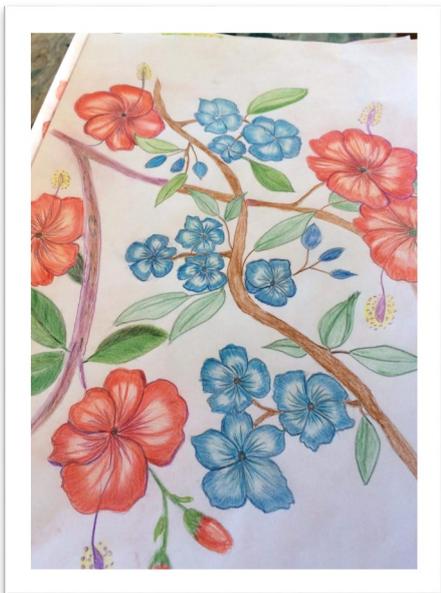
Arts & Crafts Corner



'Me First'
Cross-stitch. Mary Hyder-Smith, Corfu



3D art
Mark & Shirley, Corfu



Coloured pencils. Cindy Watson, Corfu



'Pantokrator from St Spiridon Lake'
Oil on canvas. Mark Hyder-Smith, Corfu



'Umbrella Girl'
Rita Alamanou, Corfu



Rural water colours –Rhona Barker, Corfu

Fond Memories

ICS Family News have reported that Eileen Moore died on 27 February; she was 82. Eileen was married to John Moore, Chief Executive of ICS (1996-2001). Eileen was diagnosed with Alzheimer's ten years ago. During that time, John has been wonderfully supported by his family.

John writes: 'Overall, it is as though some hidden hand and influence has been there all through this time. I have felt the force of people's prayers and the truth of the words from Lamentations: "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning*".

John and Eileen used to visit us and help during interregnum. Eileen was full of joy always caring and helpful. I'm sure she will be dancing in heaven too!

I found these pictures taken in September 1999 during Stuart and Kathryn's time here in Corfu. They were taken at a joint gathering for Vera Woodham's 80th and Brian Chapel's 75th birthday celebrations, (both now with the Lord).

Some in the photo are still here, some departed to an "Above address" and some departed to the UK, Canada and Ioannina, in mainland Greece.

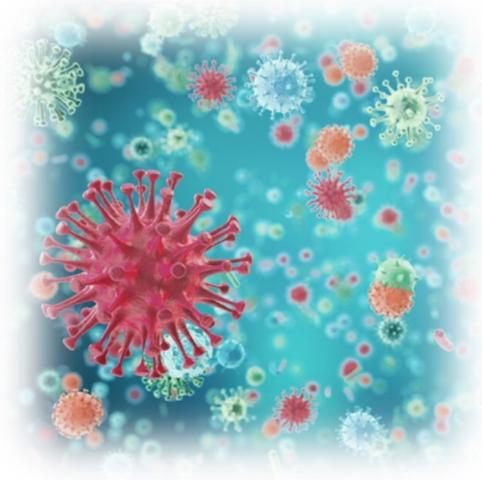
We give thanks for Eileen's life and pray for comfort for John at this time of loss.

Lorraine.



John Moore is in the man in the yellow shirt, Eileen is the lady in blue, with short white hair.,

Dr Ruth Valerio and Gideon Heugh explore the questions that Christians might be wrestling with during the coronavirus crisis.



How to beat coronavirus:

Stay at home. Keep your distance. Wash your hands. Have a good theology.

Wait, a good what?

Theology is our understanding of the nature of God. This in turn influences the way we see the world. In times like these, when life as we know it has been turned upside down, it's crucial that we have a good Bible-based theology.

To help, we've put together answers to some of the questions that Christians might be wrestling with at this time:

Will God protect us? Why is this happening? Is the virus God's judgement? Does sin cause illness? Are these the end times? And, how should the church respond?

And the church, of course, means all of us. We are one in Christ, and no amount of social distancing can sever that connection. Speaking of which...

[READ the complete article at TEAR-FUND's website](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

CALLING ALL ARTISTS & CRAFTERS...

As our water colour group won't be meeting for a while, we will be missing some pictures for next month's PULSE.

How about **YOU** filling the gap?



Send us a picture of some of your arts and crafts, not just painting, any crafts that you enjoy.

Come on... let's see YOUR God given artistic talents!



How to “aim for peace with all people”

Aiming for peace with all people is the last of our series of five challenges arising from our Beautiful Lives course.

Our starting point for thinking about how we “aim for peace with all people” may sound strange but if you stay with me, I hope you will see it makes sense...

The last few weeks have given us a crystal clear view of how important leadership is and especially the values that our leaders hold. Without naming any names it has become very clear where leaders have sought to care for their people, above all else and where personal agendas and political posturing have cost lives. The truth is that, as human beings, we always choose to follow our heart’s deepest desire; we always reach after what we really want, deep down; we set our priorities by what is in our hearts and our sense of direction in our lives and in the daily situations we find ourselves comes from what we really want. Our deepest desire is our compass bearing, our direction, what we are ultimately aiming for.

Sometimes we experience conflicting desires but we find out what we really want by the choices that we actually make. Actions, as they say, speak louder than words. If we would like to know what we really want, look at the choices we have made and the actions we have taken... our desires are written in the books of our lives.

Which means that if we are to aim for peace with all people - i.e. making peace with all people *our direction*, we first and foremost have *to desire* that peace within ourselves. Peace with people has to be something we want - something that drives us and directs us. Peace must be within us, setting its course in our lives.

So what do we mean by peace? It’s very easy to list what peace isn’t! War, violence, anger, strife, frustration, revenge; the stuff of all good action movies. Surely, peace is something more than an absence of these experiences? If peace is to be our aim, our direction, then it must be a positive aspect of our living, not simply a question of avoiding certain feelings. It needs to be more than counting to 10 and hoping we calm down!



In the Bible, peace has a rich meaning indeed! “Shalom”, the Hebrew word for peace, invokes thoughts of “completeness, soundness and well-being of the total person” (Nelson Bible dictionary). It is wholeness. There are overtones of prosperity and contentment. A sense of being fully alive and having an inner tranquillity in life. This state of living was the aim of Torah:

Psalm 119:165 (NRSV): Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble

and the prophets saw this as a hope for the future that God’s anointed One would bring to fruition:

Isaiah 9:6 (NRSV): he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus, not only promises this peace, this shalom, to his disciples before the cross:

(John 14:27 (NRSV): Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you

he proclaims it to them after His resurrection

John 20:19–21 (NRSV): Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you”. After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them *again*, “Peace be with you...”

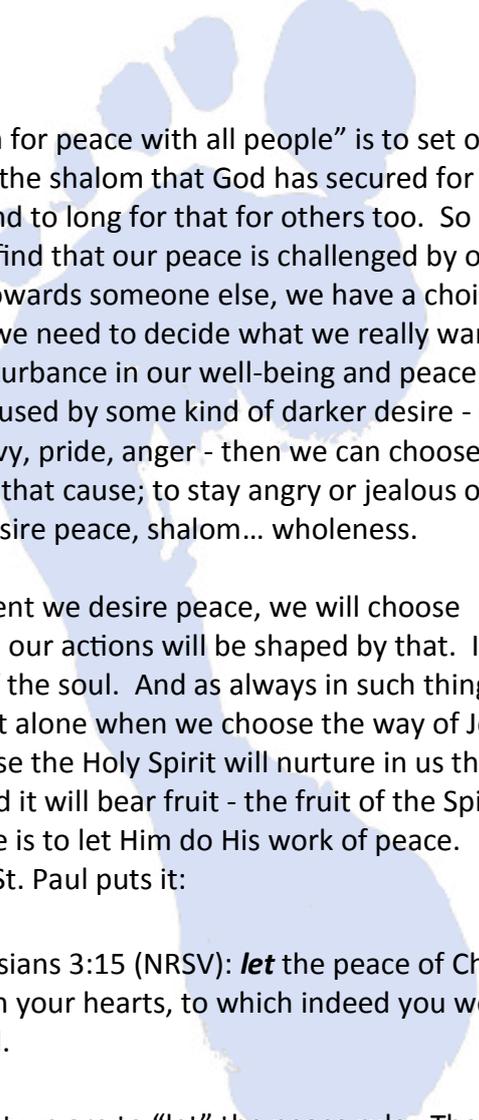
St. Paul, years later, claims this peace, this wholeness of life, as the gift of God that comes through faith in our Lord Jesus. This peace is an authentic Christian experience:

Romans 5:1–2 (NRSV): Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand.

Peace, then, is fulfilment of life; wholeness and well-being. Many things can detract from peace - such as war, anger, envy - but it is for peace that we have been made and for which Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself to draw us towards Himself. This understanding of peace makes the words of our usual prayer of blessing at the end of our worship rich in meaning:

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing...

Now it makes sense to make such peace our aim in life, knowing that it is a gift of God through faith in Jesus. It makes sense to long for this for others too and to ensure that nothing we do detracts from another’s journey towards this peace with and from God.



Walking the talk



So to “aim for peace with all people” is to set our hearts on the shalom that God has secured for us in Jesus and to long for that for others too. So when we find that our peace is challenged by our feelings towards someone else, we have a choice to make; we need to decide what we really want. If that disturbance in our well-being and peace of mind is caused by some kind of darker desire - revenge, envy, pride, anger - then we can choose to hold onto that cause; to stay angry or jealous or... we can desire peace, shalom... wholeness.

The moment we desire peace, we will choose peace and our actions will be shaped by that. It is a battle of the soul. And as always in such things, we are not alone when we choose the way of Jesus because the Holy Spirit will nurture in us that desire, and it will bear fruit - the fruit of the Spirit. Our choice is to let Him do His work of peace. Again, as St. Paul puts it:

Colossians 3:15 (NRSV): **let** the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called.

Notice that we are to “let” the peace rule. The choice is ours. The gift is His.

At times, of course, the cause of dis-ease and our lack of peace is not negative feelings within us but feelings others have towards us. St Paul knew this too when he said

Romans 12:18 (NRSV): If it is possible, **so far as it depends on you**, live peaceably with all.

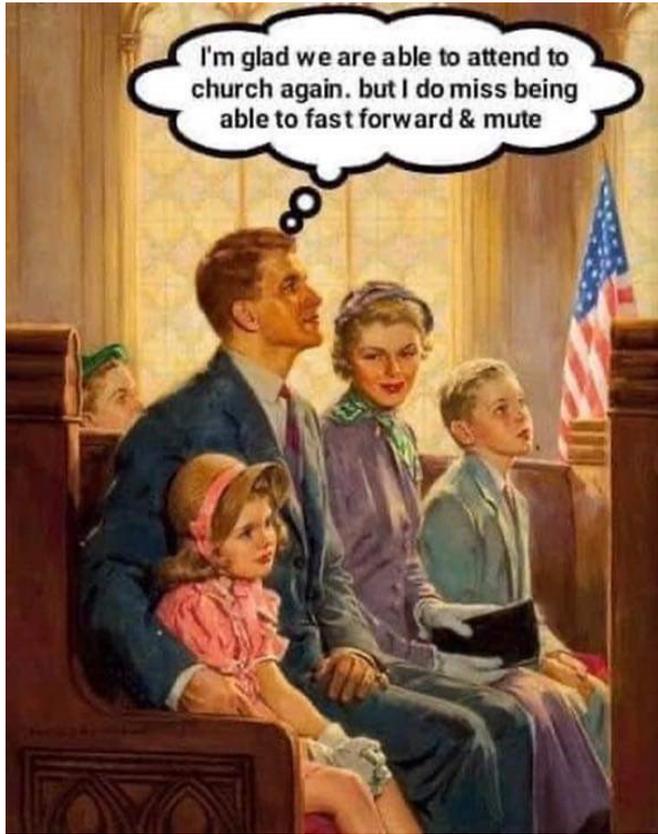
But even here we can do what we can to understand what it is that is causing another to miss out on their shalom. If we can do something to put right what we have done then our path is clear. If there isn't anything we can see to do then we can pray for the person. And when we do, we walk as the children of God we are:

Matthew 5:9 (NRSV): “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

So, understanding how we “aim for peace with all people” starts with an understanding of the meaning of peace, shalom. With this understanding, shalom can become our compass bearing, our aim or goal. With that peace as our direction, our desire, it becomes more straightforward to choose to act in ways that secure this gift of peace for ourselves and others.

As always, I am aware that many of us have experience and insight after many years of walking faithfully with Jesus. If you have any thought or wisdom to share, please do let me know -

julesjwilson@gmail.com.



The not *too* distant future?



🔗 **Links** 🔗



<https://europe.anglican.org/prayer-diary/prayer-diary>



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We are happy to accept prayer requests for inclusion in Pulse or in the morning service. If you are requesting prayer for someone other than yourself please make sure you have their permission to be mentioned publicly.

*Please remember the submission **deadline for PULSE is 25th of each month.** Articles, news, information etc. received after this time may not be included and will be carried over to the next edition if appropriate. Thank you.*

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