

Church Family Newsletter 24th July 2020

Dear Church Family,

As you may know, we will soon begin tentatively resuming services! We hope to do this slowly and carefully. Our main service will continue online.

To begin with we will have a **simple service resuming on the 9th of August** in both churches (9:30am Frant, 11:15am Eridge).

This will be a simple said service with prayers and time for reflection, but not singing or a full sermon (which will be online to watch at any time) or communion (which hopefully will resume from September). It will also not include Sunday School at Frant and the service will not be designed for children. If you have been shielding and are especially vulnerable, we also understand it may take some more time before you feel like you are able to join us. As I say, services continue online also.

From September we hope to move to a "new normal." Next week look out for a survey as part of our newsletter, where we hope that we can get feedback from you about what September might look like.

In light of the Government guidance on **wearing facemasks** in enclosed spaces, the Church of England "strongly advises" the use of facemasks by all those attending church, and including those leading services. We are taking that advice very seriously, as we recognise that in order to safely meet to worship, it will inevitably mean changes in how we do things.

This Week:

Matthew 6:19-24 - Treasure that Lasts

This week's online service continues our series on ***The Sermon on the Mount: Living Faith***, looking at what our hearts are treasuring. Jesus wants us to treasure in our hearts, the things that we can never lose, treasuring God in heaven, not the things on earth.

From 9:30am:

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDtsdqyqX6S8yZZI5S-pK6Q>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/frantchurch>

Reflection for Today from Reader Roy

During the summer we will keep to just one email to you a week, and include our much-appreciated Reflections from Reader Roy as part of them...

FAITHFUL TO THE END

Although we may not have studied history in the course of our education, I am sure we would agree that some knowledge of history is desirable and in particular that we should be well informed about some of the major figures in our own history.

I would like to mention Horatio Lord Nelson who lived from 1758 to 1805. He was the famous British vice admiral commanding the fleet at the battle of Trafalgar when the combined forces of France and Spain were defeated. This is part of Nelson's diary entry on the eve of the battle. After he seeks God's favour in battle he says – 'For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause, which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen'.

He sent a signal from his flagship on 21st of October 1805 when the battle was about to commence with these famous words 'England expects that every man will do his duty'. Nelson died at the battle of Trafalgar and what are believed to be his last words were 'Thank God I have done my duty'. You will notice that these quotations display a common theme – being faithful and doing your duty.

These days duty seems to be regarded as a rather old fashioned and out of date notion. Whether it is fashionable or not it is an important part of how we live as Christians. We talk of faith and we seek to increase our faith – but the emphasis is not on the measure of faith we might have but who it is we have faith in and much of what it means to exercise faith is simply being faithful – sticking to what we know is true and serving God through thick and thin right to the end.

We read in Matthew 25.23 'Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much – enter into the joy of your master'. Whatever we are given to do the focus is on doing it well and doing it faithfully. It is the faithfulness of a man or woman which is to be valued. Proverbs 20.6 says 'Many a man proclaims his own loyalty but a faithful man who can find?'.

In the Old Testament this quality of faithfulness was regarded as an essential qualification for serving God. An example of this is found in Nehemiah's reforms on the reconstituting of Jerusalem. Many people were assigned to various tasks. In the new order at Jerusalem treasurers were appointed over the storehouses and they were selected because 'they were counted faithful' Nehemiah 13.13.

Of course, the patriarchs and the prophets were faithful – 'Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant to testify to the things that were to be spoken later' Hebrews 3.5. We are not only to be faithful in what God has given us to do we are to be faithful in holding on to and standing up for the faith.

The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4.1,2 'This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be faithful'.

In the book of Revelation 'the Lamb' is described as 'Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful' Revelation 17.14. The 'Lamb' is the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world – John 1.29 - and those gathered with him are the believers who have been faithful. Ephesians 6.13 says 'Therefore take the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand'.

Every blessing,

-Rev Brendan