



RBC Newsletter

September 2020

Dear Church Family,

Amazingly, one month has now passed by since we re-opened church for worship with all the new health and safety procedures, the new seating layout and a rather different experience of worship. Thank you so much to all of you who have braved it and come along, and been willing to comply with all we have had to ask you to do to make the church building as Covid-safe as possible. We are so encouraged and heartened by the attendance numbers most weeks, and the way you have all helped to ensure everything has gone smoothly. A special thank you to those who are coming early to be on duty for stewarding, and to those who are giving up time in the week to ensure the building is properly cleaned between services. So far, praise God! we have been able to accommodate all who have come, and we are hoping to facilitate an overspill area soon too, with an audio/visual link.

I know everything has felt different and strange, but hopefully we are all relaxing now into the 'new normal.' I am very aware that there are still several in our fellowship who have not felt able to return to church yet, for good reasons, and I would encourage you all to keep in touch with those folk by phone, just as we did during the lock-down. Indeed, because we are not yet able to have proper fellowship times in church before and after the services, it is still very important that we keep in touch with each other in other ways during the week. We are still the Body of Christ in Rye, and as a 'body' of believers in covenant relationship with one another it is essential that everybody feels connected to one another. So please pray through the list of members regularly, and do phone each other for a chat, or just to see how people are. Everyone appreciates a call like that from time to time – even me! It makes you feel valued and special and shows God's love. Maybe if you ask Him, God will prompt you to call someone in the fellowship who is a bit down and really needs some contact to uplift them that day. Your call and possibly an offer to pray for them might really make their day!

I am aware that some churches are concerned that, as the pandemic continues, especially for those churches that have not yet been able to re-open, some of their members may be starting to feel disconnected. We really don't want that to happen with RBC folk. Modern technology has been a huge blessing for many during this season enabling our online worship services, and housegroup and other meetings by Zoom, but I am very aware that some who don't have the technology may feel excluded. Geoff is still able and willing to produce and send out CDs of the services to any who don't have online access. If you do have the internet and are not in a housegroup that meets by Zoom, then please contact me to see if you can join in with one of the groups. If you are feeling excluded then please do let me know so we can try and help improve things somehow for you.

With the current situation, even though we have started church services again we are sorry most of our 'normal' church activities will still not be able to resume for a while. Every activity would need a risk assessment carried out, and extra health and safety procedures implemented, including rigorous cleaning and disinfecting after each activity, and at the moment, taking into account the

BU advice to churches, the leadership team have decided the risk is just too great for both our own people and for any other organisations who normally use our buildings.

However, we want you to be assured that church is active and moving forward. Although many of our usual outreach events cannot happen, as a church we are still engaging in Mission, in three main ways:-

Firstly, by hosting Foodbank in our hall, and with a number of our members on the Foodbank team, we are helping to provide for the needs of many families in our community each week. Please pray for these folk to sense something of the love of God reaching out to them through this ministry, and for them to develop a spiritual hunger to find out more. (Don't forget you can also still contribute financially or with food contributions brought to the church).

Secondly, despite starting our in-church services up again, the numbers accessing our recorded services online remain high (1100 on one week alone). It is amazing to think that through this service we are reaching far more people with worship, prayer and teaching about the Christian faith than we have ever done through church in normal times! Please pray for these folk – especially pray for any who are seeking Jesus to find answers and spiritual support, and for them to come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Thirdly – on your Front-line – in your neighbourhood, family, or workplace, as you live out your faith and love your neighbour, keep praying for people around you, and look out for opportunities to show God's love, or share some thing about your faith. God shines His light through His followers, remember, and who knows whether your neighbour may be just waiting to ask you a question about Jesus. Pray that God will help you be ready to answer them when that opportunity presents itself.

This month, we have three special events to note.

1. We are planning to have our **AGM** (which had to be postponed due to lockdown) after the service on **Sunday 13th September**.
2. On **27th September**, we will be celebrating Harvest with a **Harvest Service**, focussing on this year's BMS Harvest Appeal. (although sadly this year, due to Covid restrictions - no Harvest Supper of course!)
3. It will be **Harvest with a Splash!** We are planning to have **a baptism as well**, on Harvest Sunday – in the baptistery but (as recommended by the BU) by effusion (pouring) as full immersion is not currently permitted.

Finally, we would like to thank all of you for your continuing to give generously to the church during this difficult season. This has enabled us to meet all our commitments, pay the bills and also to bless others through the church tithe – for example over the last few months we have sent donations to Samara's Aid Appeal; to Foodbank and to the BMS Appeal for Beirut. Thank you all so much.

Praying for God's richest blessings on you all,
Fiona & the RBC Leadership Team