

Eden Churches letter 28th March 2020

From Graeme Skinner

Greetings to you, I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well.

What a couple of weeks... so much has changed. Each of us are trying to respond as best we can in these extraordinary times. We are individually and collectively aware of the present losses and concerned for what will follow. Every aspect of life is being challenged, mental, communal, financial, physical and indeed spiritual. Just before the lockdown, someone reminded us in a prayer time of a time when King David said 'You are with me'... following the words, 'Even though I walk through the valley...' (or 'The darkest valley' in our pew bibles in church). Yes, we are having to rely on our faith in the Lord's presence to guide us in this time. I hold on to the hymn 'Great is your faithfulness', and the line, 'Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow'. I'm praying that for you. We are setting up Telephone Companions across the church family to help us strengthen each other through this uncertain tunnel.

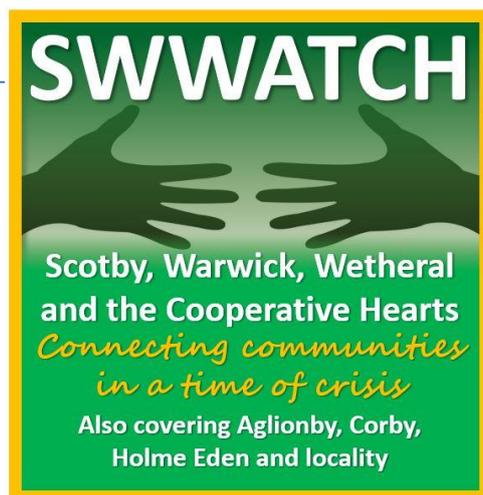
This is a letter to keep you in touch with a few things that are going on in church life. We kept the churches open for a few days and people from church and community were appreciative of the quiet spaces. But within a few days, the church buildings needed to be totally closed in accordance with instructions so that every risk, however small, is addressed. This is a hard thing for us to accept and I felt a great sadness pinning the relevant posters on the church doors. Be assured that although we are not meeting in one place on Sundays at present, we are still supporting each other and have an active presence in the community, on paper and online.

1/ Our presence in the community

During this last week I have been very involved in setting up a community wide 'Mutual Aid' group called SWWATCH (pronounced Swatch) on behalf of our churches and others.

We are recognising the levels of support already given by families/friends and by local neighbourhood groups. The support has been fantastic. I am representing Eden Churches and Eden Wild Goose in a new initiative to run alongside these where further help is needed. Publicity will be arriving through doors in the next couple of days. We are not only inviting volunteers from those who can deliver food and prescriptions but also others who can be of support through telephone conversations.

Here is the information on the leaflets that will be delivered in our area very soon.



How can we help you?

Food and prescription deliveries, conversation, pet support, other practical needs.

How can you help others?

Contact SWWATCH If you are able to leave your home to help with essential deliveries, or if you are self-isolating and would like to be a phone supporter.

Telephone 07401 328516
or email SWWATCH@yahoo.com
or messenger on Facebook Swwatch

Please tell us your name, address, postcode, tel number, email, along with what you are able to offer or what help you require.

Many people in our community have good support during the Coronavirus emergency. SWWATCH is trying to make sure that no one is missed. We don't want anyone to be lonely, isolated and without someone they can turn to.

We are a group set up for this time with cooperation from the local businesses, community groups, charities, churches, local government and others including, Eden Churches, Eden Wild Goose, Oak Tree Animals' Charity, Co-op, Brampton Medical Practice, Intro, Posting Pot Wetheral, Wetheral Village Community Hall, Warwick Bridge Flour Mill, Wetheral Parish Council and several neighbourly individuals.

A personal from Rev Graeme Skinner.

We are here for one another at this time.

Self-isolation and social distancing can, ironically, bring us closer together through all the inspiring initiatives that have been set up.

This pandemic is challenging our way of life and what we value and now is a moment to work together as best we can to work for the common good.

This is about our connected hearts and communities.

I'm inspired by a line from a song I often sing,
'Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.'

Be well and stay well, we need never be alone.

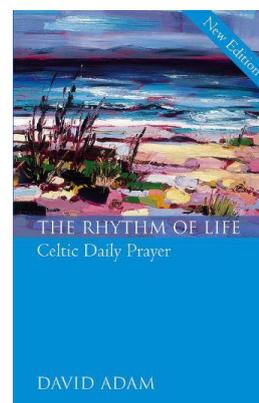
Our volunteers will be given instructions on the correct safety precautions.

If you contact us, you are allowing us to keep your details for the purpose of this support group only until life gets back to normal.

2/ Our presence on paper

The 'Eden Wild Goose Pray' community was to be started later this year. It is designed to bring people together in prayer without needing to be in one place together. Anyone could join by using a short time of worship, or part of it. All six churches in our community of churches and those not linked to a church could all access the same rhythm of prayer and be a vital part of connecting to God at any time, any place and anywhere.

I have bought copies of the book by David Adam called, 'The Rhythm of Life' (SPCK) for this purpose, in readiness for the launch in the summer. When the lockdown happened, this idea was suddenly more relevant, so I'm working out how to bring this forward. I may be able to get books out to people who ask for one, in the meantime I am putting some of the prayers on line (see below). Although the books are free to those who want one, due to a very generous donation, I'm suggesting people may like to give £8 to cover the cost of giving the book to another person (this is totally optional).



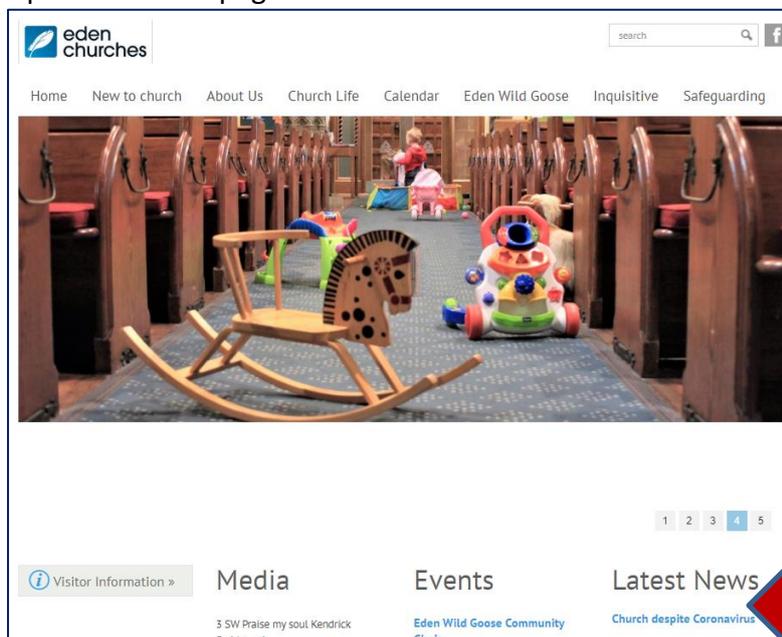
The books seem to be out of stock in several places. If you do get one and join in using it, it would be helpful for me to know who is joining in. Suggestions are in a leaflet on the website under '2 A community of Prayer'.

<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/the-rhythm-of-life>

3/ Our presence online

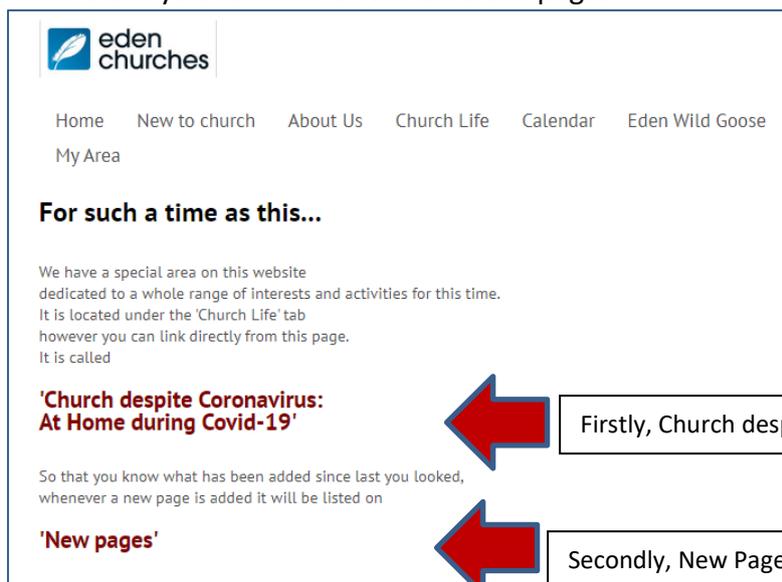
You might like to head to the section of our website dedicated to our online presence called 'Church despite coronavirus' on our website www.edenchurches.co.uk

Open our home page and look in the left hand column for 'Church despite Coronavirus'



Church despite Coronavirus

From there you can link to two different pages



Firstly, Church despite Coronavirus: At Home during Covid-19

Secondly, New Pages

Firstly, if you go to the link

Church Despite Coronavirus; At Home during Covis-19'

you will see a range of different items

- 1 Church and Community new – updates of important news.
- 2 A Community of Prayer – using 'The Rhythms of Life' book.
- 3 Sunday worship, wherever you are – something for every Sunday.
- 4 Engaging the family – activities from Callum.
- 5 Telephone companions – a scheme linking us by phone.
- 6 Thoughts for these days – ideas to help us think and pray.

- 7 Quiet spaces – This was about the church buildings – but they are closed at present.
- 8 Practical Support – SWWATCH: being part of helping our community.
- 9 Extra help – some other thoughts to help us at this time
- 10 Media links – where to go - radio – social media – websites.
- 11 Focus on Eden – our church and community magazine (which is not on line yet).

So, do explore the 3 Sunday worship pages and listen to 'The rhythm of life' being used, you can join in as I have supplied words and recordings.

Several people have told me how much they have enjoyed online worship and I will be adding links in the coming days. You could join the worship at All Sous Langham Place for example?

Secondly a 'New pages' page – where I will place anything new going online.

...it will be dated so that you don't have to trawl through the site to find new material.

Thanks all.

We'll meet again, be sure of that

God bless, keep well and stay well.



01228 561358

graemevicarofeden@gmail.com

Response

Would you like to be on a list for the prayer book 'The rhythm of life'?

If so, please let me know and we will deliver the book as soon as we can.

Please familiarise yourself with the webpages as they will be a key means of communication.

Please could you pass on the information to anyone you regularly relate to who is not on line.

Would you like to offer your services to SWWATCH?

If so, please contact SWWATCH directly via the details provided.