

Wrington & Lynch Chapels Minister's Website Article February 2021

It's funny how the National Lockdown at the moment makes you realise the important things. People unable to see parents or grandparents have suddenly realised how much they form part of their life. You may have fought with your siblings, but now you worry about their health. And so it goes on.

In some ways, that is a good development. Some people talk about trying to make sure we don't go back to the selfish, grabbing lifestyles we had, but holding family and relationships in a more precious way. That is admirable, although the cynical part of me wonders how long that will last once we're back to 'normal.'

But the same affects the church. The rhythm of church life has been thoroughly disrupted. We have all had to adapt, extremely quickly, to a new way of being church. And what comes to the fore for me is the fact that church isn't services. It's not singing, even though we miss it a lot. It's not the building, even though it's useful. It's not all the fripperies of church life. Instead, it's Jesus and the people. In all our discussions about what we do as church, the crucial pointer has become, 'How can we care for the folk? How can we support the community? How can we help people through loneliness and isolation? How can we support others through prayer and action?

Again, that's admirable. And I think Jesus would smile. He referred to the believers as 'church' long before they had a building of their own. When the early believers met in homes, they were still church. It was the church that gathered, the church that sent people out.

I wonder if, as we continue to develop and change to meet circumstances, we can make sure we don't lose that emphasis. Every believer is an essential and precious segment of the church. You don't need 'official' permission to reach out to your neighbour, but you still do that on behalf of the church. You don't need to be commissioned or inducted to tell people what Jesus has done for you. That is the church at work. It is the church of the Holy Spirit of God working through each and every one.

Our place, as we meet through Zoom, or sharing thoughts and concerns through email, Twitter, WhatsApp, and all the others, is to support all those moves. We are called to love each other, encourage each other, hold them up when they are down, give wise counsel, remind them of their faith and their Lord, and all those other little things that help us know we are not alone.

The truth of the gospel is that God is love and cares for each and every one with an unending love that wants us to fulfil all we were meant to be as his children. The more we let him lead us in that love as we reach out to each other, the more we truly be the church he has longed for, whether we have buildings and formalities or not. That is the church for which Jesus died and rose again. Let that guide our days.

Every blessing

Duncan