



Bulletin 9

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:23-25

With the tentative easing of some of our lockdown restrictions, the church at national and diocesan level is beginning to ask itself what we could aim to do and when in terms of meeting in our church buildings again.

With such conversations and edicts from parliament it's important that as congregations at Emmanuel and St Paul's we can be assured that we will stick together as the body of Christ as we **'hold unswervingly to the hope we profess'** and that we will **'not give up meeting together'**.

As a leadership team we're very aware that over sixty percent of our congregation are not so much limited by lockdown as by shielding and their vulnerability. In other words, when the church can meet physically again, even in modest numbers and activity, they will not be able to join in for a while yet.

So, I wanted to give assurance that our two churches travel as family, not as individuals. The writer to the Hebrews nailed the issue in the verses above. We're here to stick together and to encourage each other through the adversities each of us face. Thus, our daily 9.00am and weekly 10.30am times together will remain until we're *all* through this and out the other side. What we may do is introduce, in conjunction with our continued prayer times, some additional opportunities to gather together in modest numbers, as and when we are allowed to explore how such meetings can be conducted and also be as free from risk as possible.

The first opportunities for meeting might simply be to have the building open for private prayer and contemplation. Thought this alone invokes the need for the formation of cleaning teams, clear demarcation of allowed areas of the building to move about in and limited places and space to sit in. We might later progress to a prayer meeting and, once we're allowed to sing (!), something more resembling a service – perhaps in the afternoon to avoid clashing with the Facebook 10.30. An afternoon service could be both live streamed and recorded to be available later too

More news on all this as regulations from government and diocese release and allow us to consider them. In the meantime, we *"press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us."*¹ And we will 'not give up meeting together'! Our times really do seem to be blessing us and holding us firm in the grip and grace of Christ. Hardly surprising when we consider that he promised us as much I suppose! *"Those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*²

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¹ Philippians 3:12

² Isaiah 40:31

Also, prompted by people's generosity in wanting to offer help to those in a material need of goods and money and by our Bible reading this morning from James 5:1-6, we are setting up a Hardship Fund on the Church Website through the ['give.net'](https://www.give.net) scheme.



For the time being ALL DONATIONS given via [give.net](https://www.give.net) to the Emmanuel PCC account will go into a special [Covid19 Hardship](#)

All the believers were together and had everything in common.

[Fund](#). The fund will be distributed at the discretion of the weekly staff meeting, acting on behalf of the PCC, to those in our church family who have fallen on times of financial need. This will enable us, whether out of our abundance or poverty, to support brothers and sisters in our family³ in an anonymous way.

Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need...

This giving is something I hope the congregation will consider contributing to, even in modest quantity, in addition to their regular giving because of the unprecedented circumstances we find ourselves in. By giving through [give.net](https://www.give.net) we are also able to claim gift aid from taxpayer's donations, which will, after their minimal admin charges, mean an extra 22p for every £1 donated. Please consider a donation and giving another gift every now and again as you feel able. Perhaps when you do your weekly or fortnightly shopping.

Finally, may I just say what a joy and privilege I find it to be part of a church who, in so many ways, have found both natural and very deliberate means of deeply loving their neighbour – whether that neighbour be in or out of the believing community. It is so wonderful to experience how faith in the midst of adversity is refining and fortifying our belief and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in the midst of hard times, but not without hope, certainly not without purpose and never devoid of Christian joy. Let us continue to hold out the love of Christ to one another and those outside our family that our neighbours may come to know his love and our God be glorified in Christ Jesus.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

And now,

“To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” Jude 24

May you know every blessing in Christ and you lean hard upon him, Rev Karl, May 28th

³ Galatians 6:10