



Bulletin 22

Dear Church!

Well here we go again! Although we've already done this once and under the Lord's hand, we can do it again, our minds are probably not so much focussed on our own plight but on that of those whose livelihoods and businesses are threatened and whose frailty of mental health will be further assailed. As a church we must address that, both in prayer and in a practicality.

I want to look at some ways we can work towards that.

Where do we start? The first two commandments surely have it in a nutshell – put your God first in everything and love your neighbour as you would yourself.

Though it ought to be a natural thing to put our God and our neighbour first, we have to confess it often (even usually?) isn't! Our natural inclination is to put ourselves first. So, at the outset of our endeavours to keep the first and second commandments there surely needs to be an admission that we are going to need our Lord's strength and initiative if we are to prevail. ***That's where not just believing but belonging comes in!*** Belonging to a church community in a real and interactive manner keeps us in the 'kingdom frame of mind'. It persuades and motivates us to good works 'which the Lord has prepared in advance for us to do'¹.

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So firstly, may I exhort you to keep availing yourself of whatever means you can to remain part of the Emmanuel and St Paul's communities. For now, that means online via Facebook or smart phone or landline phone². The writer to the Hebrews urges us:

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 approaching³

Also, the After-Church-Zoom-Coffee-Lounge⁴ will be relaunching after the Sunday Service.

So, what about loving our neighbour as we would love ourselves?

¹ Ephesians 2:10

² 9.00am weekdays & 10.30am Sundays on [Emmanuel with St. Pauls Facebook page](#) or later via the recordings on our [Facebook page](#) or [parish website](#).

³ Hebrews 10:23-25

⁴ Zoom after-church-coffee-lounge will be on Zoom Meeting ID: 813-7344-3619, Usual password. [Email me](#) if you've forgotten it!

In Matthew 25:33, in the sorting the sheep from the goats at the end of time, Jesus depicts the faithful as those moved by their faith in him to love their neighbour...

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matt 25: 40

Here are just a few things which we could do as individuals:

- Make a consistent effort to pray for our City, Nation and indeed the world that we might know restoration to more normal times.
 - Our archbishops have suggested Thursdays a specific day each week for fasting and praying for the nation.
- Make a list of people who would appreciate some regular contact with you for their encouragement and company.
- Invite a friend to try out the online Facebook services. If we really believe Christ holds the future for us, we ought to be commending him to our friends! Digital evangelism is so simple, and the great thing is that people can be free their inhibitions by attending anonymously!

And as church communities:

- Be part of the Christmas Hamper scheme for families struggling with income, gathered by the parish and distributed via Jo & Nick Connett at St Paul's. They're after the following for the hampers and anything else for general grocery packages:
Family size Christmas puddings, Tin of Gammon Ham, Box of biscuits, Bow cheese biscuits, Tubs chocolates, Mince pies, Custard, Chocolate Yule Log, Christmas cake, Pickled onions, Gravy granules, Box Christmas crackers. Good can be dropped off on Barrie Bannister Evan's doorstep (See Yellow Pages).
- Make a contribution to the [Hardship Fund](#) via Emmanuel & St Paul's [Website](#). This enables the staff meeting to make cash donations on behalf of the church to those who are financially struggling.
- Notify any of the clergy of someone you feel might be in need of receiving a donation from the [Hardship Fund](#) . Please don't be hesitant! People have donated money because they want it to be given to those in greater need!
- If you have a gift you think you could use in the life and ministry of the church, please [get in touch](#) with me for a conversation as to how you might serve.
- Participate in the online activity of the church – on Zoom and Facebook! It's so encouraging for others when we meet in numbers and we can either speak together or share comments on Facebook.

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In short, we want to be there for each other and to be Christ for those outside our church communities, we want to travel faithfully together as the people of God. All being well this should turn out to be the last round of adversity before the vaccines start to be distributed towards the end of this year and begin to yield their effect in 2021.

Hang on in there! Our faith was well designed to see us through times such as these!

[\(karl.freeman@emmanuelplymouth.co.uk\)](mailto:karl.freeman@emmanuelplymouth.co.uk)

Every blessing in Christ be upon you!

Rev Karl