



Bulletin 28

Dear Church!

10th February 2021

Welcome, almost, to Lent!

Which starts this Ash Wednesday (17th Feb).

Hence, I am very pleased to announce the Lent Course,

What do we mean by 'church'?

We're going to be looking at ten chapters from the book of The Acts of the Apostles as set out below:

17 th February	Ash Wednesday	Biblical Lent Reflections and Prayer
25 th	Unleashed Power	Acts 2:1-21
4 th March	Unleashed People	Acts 2:42-47 & 4:32-37
11 th	Unleashed Presence	Acts 5:12-25
18 th	Unleashed Potential	Acts 8:4-8, 26-40
25 th	Unleashed Participators	Acts 12:1-17
1 st April	The Last Supper...	...from the Upper Room....

Over the past year, our church life has taken quite a beating and we have, albeit rather assuredly, found that our activity has boiled down to Bible, Prayer, supporting each other and those in our local community.

By no means has everything been positive. Our children's work has been difficult to maintain in a meaningful way; our onsite services have been supportive but frustrating in terms of celebration; significant numbers of us have had little physical fellowship; evangelism and growth have been hampered.

But although there is much to be recovered, not everything has been negative. We now have considerable on-line presence which has brought us new contacts and is an investment for future ministry; we have seen some innovative children's work and now found a children's worker at Emmanuel (but still in search of a part time Pathfinder [11-4 worker!]); our financial positions at either end of the parish are strong; we've developed new pastoral links and support networks, new habits of prayer and Bible reading; work is going ahead with refurbishment at Emmanuel and extended premises at St Paul's; we've been joined by an extra minister in Robin and look forward to Pippa's ministry as a reader as routines open up.

In our Lent course, we will be looking at what the book of Acts commends to us regarding the essential qualities of a church that is sharing, caring and growing. What should the footprint of our witness look like in our local communities?

Hopefully (and prayerfully!) this will inspire us to re-double our efforts in striving to maintain and achieve what we can while restricted and also to guide us towards anything new that we should be aspiring to once we are back to 'normal'.

I think the secret of life during Covid 19 has been to realise that although things *look* relatively normal around us, they can't *be* normal. Whatever we attempt brings frustration with it. We are not able to achieve as much as we previously could. We have had to learn patience and trust, that to do a job less well, is still worth doing if it's all we can do for now. That is hard and annoying! But we're approaching the end of our frustration and can now start thinking about our recovery. Churchill's words of November 1942 come to mind, "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

The course will be live on Zoom¹ at 7.30pm.

It starts with a gathering on Ash WEDNESDAY (17th Feb)

and thence every THURSDAY (25th Feb – 1st April Incl.)

Meeting ID: 814 1327 1336 Passcode: Godwithus

- Each session will last just under the hour led by Revs Karl, Tony or Robin.
- We will record the meeting, edit out personal conversations and prayer, etc. and then post it on our website as a video for those who can't make 7.30pm on a Thursday.
- Each session will be a mix of
 - Prayer – both personal and corporate.
 - Bible Teaching.
 - Space for personal, prayerful reflection.
 - Discussion.
 - Identification of anything our church leadership or we as individuals need to take on board.

As with all our Lent Courses, there will be opportunity to ask question/s and speak or alternatively, just to receive, absorb and respond in our own time as the Lord leads!

I look forward to joining you on Thursdays – please come if you can!

Every Lenten blessing!!
Rev Karl

¹ <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81413271336?pwd=TTB3bG9pYU0t0SnI3RmR4a1JPTEQydz09>