

St. Mary's Article

Date: 28th April 2020

**Make the most of
every opportunity in
these evil Days.**

Ephesians 5:16

Make the most of every opportunity in these evil Days. Ephesians 5:16 (NLT)

I am sure that there are many things about not currently being able to meet together that we are all missing: our fellowship with one another is such an important part of our meeting together, not just, but especially, for those who live alone, singing praise to God for his goodness and love, for me, is something that I really miss, (while I do listen and sing along to worship songs every day, it's not the same as doing it together in the church, God's house, where so many have gathered in worship over many years). And, of course, we miss the sharing together in the Christian family meal, the Holy Communion. I, along many of you, am praying that it won't be too long before the current restrictions are lifted, and we can once again all be able to meet together.

On a personal note, while I am pleased to be able to offer a short service via the Facebook site each week, I do find it hard, not least because I cannot see those who are listening, so I am not able to judge whether what I am saying is hitting the right note. So thank you for your feedback.

Having said all of that, good is coming out of this situation. God is very clearly at work. Many people are suggesting that something significant is happening; that as a result of the coronavirus the mood in the nation towards the church is changing from one of antagonism or agnosticism. Those who, up until now, have not given a second thought to God, have been confronted with new realities: that life is fragile and that we are not masters of our own destiny. There is a new openness which many of us have longed and prayed for in our nation. It is now ok to talk about prayer; politicians and celebrities alike have spoken more about prayer in the last few weeks than they have done in a lifetime. Already, stories are emerging of people who have come to faith during this time.

Like lots of churches we are now in contact with lots of people who we were not in contact with before this crisis began, via social media. And perhaps there are lessons for us to learn for the future about how we reach a new generation that spend so much time accessing everything via the internet.

This gives us all some amazing opportunities to share our faith and to touch lives with the good news of God's love. So I want to encourage us all, every

day, as part of our regular prayer, to ask God to show us someone he would like us to reach out to that day and then to look out for the gentle prompting of the spirit, unexpectedly bringing someone to mind. And then be willing to contact that person via phone or some form of social media. It is so easy at the moment. All you have got to say is, just thought I'd call you to see how you are. And having listened to their answer be willing to offer to pray for them. I'm sure if you are prepared to do this on a regular basis you would be surprised at the way that God can use you. For more details of how to share your faith in this way see Michael Harvey's video how to keep a locked down church on mission.

Suggested songs for this week's 12noon prayer times.

Tuesday:	Endless Hallelujah
Wednesday:	Praise is rising
Thursday:	It is well with my soul (Redman)
Friday:	These are the days of Elijah
Saturday:	Unbroken praise
Monday:	The lord's my shepherd (Townsend)