



## Bulletin 17

Dear Church!

Sorry! I couldn't resist it! There's a band called The Rend Collective who, when speaking to the congregations they lead in sung worship, address them as 'Church!' "**Come on Church!**" is their clarion call of exhortation! I guess I'm a bit of a sentimentalist, but I love that expression! It has a collective, team spirited, spurring, friendly lift about it! "**Come on Church!**"

This month of August is traditionally a low season for churches. A time when many are away on holiday, or at least taking a break from work. A change can often be as good as a rest. Change and change again has been the 'norm' for our patterns of collective worship of late. I think that's been very good for us. It's helped us identify the common denominator of church activity, what our membership of church is all about. It's about focussing our trust, our hope, our purpose, our endeavour, our joy, our fulfilment, our love, our future on the person of Jesus Christ!

In Christ we are brought together, to walk in fellowship, through both the joys and adversities of this life, as we strive together to reach our heavenly goal. Rightly runs the baptism liturgy, "*We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.*" Coming together in Christ does not just commit us to Him, it commits us to each other too. We need each other. We need to work together as a team.

Church is sometimes casually mistaken as a place where one can pay one's respects and homage to God and receive assurance of heaven. **No, Come on Church!!!!** It's about coming together as the body of Christ.

Being physically forced apart has reinforced how much we cherish being together. Facing adversity together has proved how much we rely on and need each. No wonder then that the writer to the Hebrews, when talking about perseverance, concluded,

*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 10:24-25*

Church is about being inspired by the Lord as we meet with his living presence through this Word, sacrament, prayer, praise, repentance and adoration. We've experienced and learned that afresh these past few months! Thence it's about **encouraging each other as in the verse above** so that we play together as a team. We really do need each other in this earthly pilgrimage!

So, as these Covid19 and Summer vacation days pass, let us not become complacent and think in any sort of isolationist manner about our faith or church life. We need each other. Our present facilities for worship together now may not be ideal but they are all we can do for the time being – whether present together in very restrictive circumstances, or online with Facebook, having that joy of feeling at one with each other even though not actually present together is the key. Never

was the adage, *'Improvise, Adapt and Overcome'*<sup>1</sup> more relevant to our life together at the moment. It has served us well. So too has the call to *'cheerfulness in the face of adversity'*<sup>1</sup> not just from our commandos, but also from Scripture:

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:1-2*

These times *are* shaping us in our faith. Difficult times have almost always prospered individual faith and the life of the church. No one wishes for such days but when they come, as James says, there is rejoicing to be had amidst the adversity if we come to it with a faithful, positive and Christ-centred mid-set.

So how has the Lord been shaping you in these times? I would like to invite you to an online Zoom meeting<sup>2</sup> if you are able to do such things on your mobile smart phone or your computer (you almost certainly can if you have one!). It's to meet with other members of the church fellowship to discuss and recognise what the Lord has been doing in our lives as individuals and as a church. Thence to try and capitalise on it. The meeting will be in a month's time on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of September at 7.30pm. That seems a fair way away at the moment, but it will give us time to reflect on the journey we have travelled since March and bring something considered to the meeting.

**These questions may help you in your personal reflections:**

- 1. What have you found yourself doing now, that you didn't do before lockdown?**
  - a. Are there things which have benefitted your faith and lifestyle?
    - i. How might you ensure they continue to enrich or grow your faith?
  - b. Are there things you've stopped doing?
    - i. Do you need to recover them or are you better off without them?
- 2. Have these past six months taught you anything which you want to hold onto or cultivate?**
  - a. How will you endeavour to make sure these aspirations are reached?
- 3. What lessons do you think we have learned as a church community?**
  - a. How might the past six months change what we do in future?

Take your time to consider and jot down rough answers them. Some answers may emerge through your personal prayer time, others in your idle thinking over a coffee or while out for a walk. For me it's most often in the bath – that Archimedes moment! Hopefully things may also emerge as we chat together in September! Obviously, there will be no pressure to share anything we don't want to!!

In the meantime, I trust you enjoy something of a rest this month at some stage or another. Remember, taking a rest is a sign of trust in your Lord, trusting in Him that things can happen without you!

*... because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he (Jesus) said to them,  
"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*

Enjoy the rest of the remaining summer!

Praying every blessing in Christ upon you,  
Rev Karl

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed variously to the Royal Marines and others.

<sup>2</sup> <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86984201693?pwd=STFzNOlWS3EvWFRsRndKaFhWaHhaQT09> Ask Tim Lyddon if you want to come to the Zoom meeting but don't know how – he'll sort you out!! [atlyddon@gmail.com](mailto:atlyddon@gmail.com)