

Dear Friend

It is another beautiful sunny spring day here in Park Hill, although it is also eerily quiet. Very few if any planes overhead or cars on the street. I hope we all heed the call to stay at home, and stay safe, just going out for our permitted one daily walk. One positive sign in this crisis is hearing more birdsong!

Tomorrow is Palm Sunday. Don't forget to tune in to our [YouTube](#) broadcast of our Palm Sunday service (on the front page of this website) and hold a palm in your hand for it to be blessed at the beginning of the service. There are instructions online to make your own palm cross, if you don't happen to have one at home!

As Bishop Jonathan reminded us the other day, death is abroad trailing fear in its wake. If you are feeling anxious or afraid, and we are all to some extent bound to feel some degree of fear, if not for ourselves, then for our loved ones, can I offer some suggestions? On the principle of a problem shared is a problem halved, if you are alone then why not pick up the phone and give someone a call? If you don't know who to ring, why not ring me?! 020 8688 5055 is my number. I am trying to keep in contact with as many of you as I can, and have started using Facebook for the first time, but there is nothing quite like hearing a friendly voice on the phone, so if you are alone and feeling that you need someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to call.

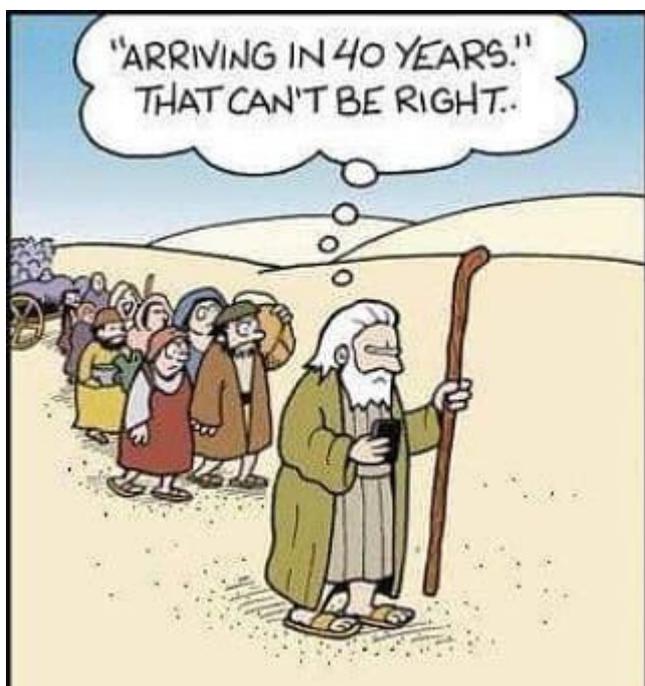
Secondly, we all need to try hard to remember that though we may live alone, or feel alone, we are not alone! Our God is with us, to help, sustain, comfort and strengthen us. Here is a quote from yesterday's 'This Day's Thought': thisdaysthought.org

"God puts his ear so closely down to your lips that he can hear your faintest whisper. It is not God away off up yonder; it is God away down here, close up—so close up that when you pray to him, it is more a whisper than a kiss." *Thomas De Witt Talmage (1832 – 1902)*

What a lovely image to ponder - God's ear right next to your lips so he can catch your faintest whisper! Of course he sees your mind as well, so even unformed and unspoken words are heard by him.

I have no doubt that for the vast majority of the world's population these are the most stressful times we have ever lived through. We can let stress, fear or anxiety push us down, or we can allow these negative and potentially destructive forces to drive us into the arms of God. Next week is Holy Week, when the weight of the cross on Jesus' shoulders becomes unbearable. Just as Simon of Cyrene was forced by the soldiers to carry the cross, we can be Simon of Cyrene to one another, as we pray for each other and hold each other up in this way, we are helping to carry one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6.2

None of knows how long we will be in this situation, so here's a cartoon, from the "Mustard Seed Budget" website, to encourage us to be patient!



Anteater to Noah as he entered the ark: "You only brought two ants?"

May God give us patience and enable us not just to survive, but to thrive under his grace, mercy and protection, and may we know deep in our hearts that he hears every whisper and loves to answer our prayers.

With my love and prayers - and don't forget to pick up your phone!

Simon