

Sunday 24 May 2020



St Chad's Church & Community Centre Hunter Street, Barton upon Irwell

# St Chad's & St Mary's



[www.stchadstmary.org.uk](http://www.stchadstmary.org.uk) and our Facebook page: **Strettonchurch**

**Videos will be uploaded this week as follows:**

**Sunday 24 May:** 10am Holy Communion live streamed; and sermon

**Daily:** Parables of Jesus through art meditations

**Wednesday 27 May:** A Long Obedience in Self Isolation

**Sunday 31 May:** 10am Holy Communion live streamed; and sermon

Many of you, since Jess Davison's visit with us earlier this year, are familiar the work of Middle East Media (MEM) sharing the Good News in some of the hardest parts of the world through creative media and technology. A while back, I heard the story of one of the MEM project workers, a team member who worked on one of the first Bible apps available in the Middle East. One afternoon he was commuting home by train after a long working day. As his journey progressed, a man dressed in the clothes of a Salafist came and sat next to him. Now, Salafism is one of the strictest, ultra-conservative forms of Islam and so the MEM worker felt particularly uncomfortable when he noticed this man looking at his hand.

There, like many Christians in the Middle East, he has a small symbol tattooed on his hand the letter , ܢ known as the mark of the Nazarene. The Salafist nudged him. Fearing trouble, he tried ignoring it, but the man nudged him again and so he looked over. The Salafist showed him his phone. Looking down, what did he see there, the very Bible app that he had created. Of course, this was a massive 'coincidence,' but this man who outwardly at least looked to epitomise the very essence of Islam leaned over and simply said, 'this book has saved my life.'

There the exchange ended, but it is a powerful reminder for me that the technology that we are grateful for in this context and has been a lifeline to us, is for many Christians much more than this. Outwardly this man was still having to conform to Salafism, whether this was so he could reach others in that movement or because it was unsafe for him to leave we don't know, but somehow a small technological innovation had allowed him access to the Word of God he would otherwise have been denied.

Many, in places like the Middle East, are only able to share in all that we may so easily take for granted in the church because of technological innovations like this one. Maybe one of the good things to emerge from our current situation is to recognise that our brothers and sisters in the persecuted church, rather than just being people we pity, are actually light years ahead of us in the West in finding ways to creatively share the gospel and disciple believers.

I encourage you, if you have a free moment this week, take a look at some of MEM's work, their website is [www.mem.org](http://www.mem.org), and think about what we might learn from Christians around the world in how we reach and disciple the people in our local communities.

Ben.





In the present circumstances you may have missed the fact that Christian Aid Week ran on 10-16<sup>th</sup> May. If you would normally give to Christian Aid that week and still would like to, you can do it via their website, or if you don't have access to the internet, donations can be given by phone on 020 7523 2269.

### Your Music Group



First of all a big thank you to everyone for the feedback and expressions of appreciation that we have been receiving as a music group. As a group we have a real sense of the anointing of the Holy Spirit as we prayerfully choose what songs to record and who and how we each sing, record, play, compile and add video, whilst isolated and working remotely. We praise God for how each contribution under His anointing produces such powerful and anointed worship.

We would love to hear from you of a song that we have produced that was particularly meaningful, especially if you can tell us how it was timely, the arrangement meant something special or had a real impact for your situation at the time.

The group could then use this to guide their future song choices.

Thank You  
Your music group



### Message From An Ex Warden

It's now several weeks since I stepped down as a Church Warden, which has allowed me the luxury of looking at current church life through fresh eyes. I have to say I am mightily impressed. The work of the leadership teams in our churches and also the worship group's has been innovative, tireless (at least it seems that way), and steadfast.

However, I hope they won't mind my focus today being on another aspect of our covid 19 challenge. This is the support to the church membership (and beyond) by our very own volunteer army. What is even more impressive is (alongside the crucial work of Helping Hands) much of this is not an army which was called up, but has formed naturally from members own Christian responses to the challenges people are facing.

Our own household, which owing to Amy's high vulnerability is in long term total isolation, has been blessed with regular calls from several church members checking how we are, and also offers of help fetching shopping and medications. Unexpected gifts have also appeared intermittently in our rear porch (designated safe place!). Given the strains placed on Mel in particular of having Amy permanently at home to care for, these interventions are all welcome blessings.

I am becoming more aware now, that we are by no means isolated cases as contacts and support are in fact widespread. So I want to thank our volunteer army (you know who you are...) for their selfless work, constantly thinking of others, and putting themselves out there in our churches respective communities, whilst ignoring the increased risk to themselves. Know this, when the Siner family (and I am sure others echo this) clap the NHS on Thursday nights, you are very much in our minds as our very own Key Workers in the community.

God bless you.


Thanks  
Mark

## Readings and Prayers

	Daily readings	Streets to pray for	Prayers for our Deanery
Sunday 24 May	John 17:1-11	Western Park Avenue	Growing together as a Deanery. For mission outreach.
Monday 25 May	John 16:29-end	Wetmore Lane	For all our schools. Colin Hopkins, Diocesan Director of Education
Tuesday 26 May	John 17:1-11	Wetmore Road	For retired clergy and their ministry: Tony Barnard, Derek Dolman, Timothy Ganz, Philip Jeffries, Tony Wood, Eric Towlson, Geoffrey Willett, Fred Roeschlaub, Alan Wheale, Frank Finch, Frances Shepherd, Hamish Ferguson-Stuart, Paul Skillings
Wednesday 27 May	John 17:11-19	Wharf Road	Members of Parliament in our Deanery: Kate Griffiths, Michael Fabricant
Thursday 28 May	John 17:20-end	William Shrewsbury School	Ecumenical working. YMCA, BYFC, Burton Street Angels, Winter Night Shelter.
Friday 29 May	John 21:15-19	William Street	Industry, business, and commerce in our area.
Saturday 30 May	John 21:20-end	Windsor Industrial Estate	Ministry to nursing and care homes.

## Useful Contact details

### Rev George Crossley


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### Pastoral Visiting Co-ordinator & Helping Hands contact

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### Church Administrator and Helping Hands contact

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### Newsletter submissions:

Please send your submissions for the newsletter to Kas by **9am Thursday morning** to

**parishoffice@stchadstmary.org.uk**