

Crowmarsh News Extra, The Vicar writes...

Whilst we are living through this “lockdown” stage of the pandemic, our physical separation does not mean that we have to be lonely. Relationships in and around our community have grown in new ways as we come together, united in our efforts to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus whilst taking care of the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Whilst in towns, the numbers of official referrals have reached 3 figures, it is testament to our village neighbourhood networks that we have only had a handful to date. We have 135 individuals belonging to the village’s COVID-19 response group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/crowmarshresponse/> and even more in local WhatsApp groups, quietly and efficiently doing shopping and collecting prescriptions without publicity or fuss. However, we should celebrate this, so on behalf of us all: “Well done, Crowmarsh!”

Can I also encourage anyone who is feeling isolated or trying to make do without their usual groceries to ask for help? If you are not aware of your local neighbourhood group, then feel free to contact me and I’ll do my best to put you in touch. People are standing by to help you. I know my parent’s generation seem to have a “blitz” mentality of hardship and self-sacrifice, but this is not WW2 and there is no rationing needed, other than plain common sense. (N.B. rationing comes from the Latin word for reckoning: a sensible decision to balance what is bought in ratio to need, and the opposite being “irrational” which may describe those who find comfort in a hoard of toilet rolls!)

Many of our relationships are strengthened through the internet, using social media and the now ubiquitous Zoom app that few of us had even heard of before March. Our “Virtual Community Café” is now a weekly fixture at 11am on Saturdays. Of course, we also have spiritual needs as well as physical needs (“*Man cannot live by bread alone*”) so the Wallingford Church of England Team has also come together for shared worship online via a YouTube video at 10am each Sunday, followed by Post-Worship Coffee and discussion. Please call or drop me an email if you would like the Zoom Meeting IDs or links to any of these activities or just need help to connect. Whilst giving thanks for modern communication, of course must not forget those who can only be contacted by phone.

We remember too, those who are directly affected by the Coronavirus, those who have lost loved ones and those on the front line of our care services. We pray for hospital staff and medical researchers, using one of the prayers shared by the CofE during the coronavirus outbreak:

*Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work
many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Blessings, Rev Kev
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