

February Message for website

Dear Friends,

This is turning out to a rather mixed message this month. Restrictions are remaining in place for the whole month because the earliest that some school children will return is 22 February.

On the more positive side, some of us have received our first Covid-19 vaccination and it should be well established in our systems by the end of the month. However, until more people have received them and we know the effect on transmission, social distancing and travel restrictions will have to stay in place.

Our most difficult problem is our lack of being able to meet and speak to people face to face. We are having to rely on the telephone and other electronic methods of keeping in touch.

The pastoral work of the parish will continue in being. The elders are there to help in their districts and our Locum, Rev Gerald Moule is continuing his pastoral work by telephone. If you wish to contact him, his number is 01683 220667 and his email is: gmoule@hotmail.co.uk.

The website has contact details for Fiona Sloan and myself if you cannot contact anyone else.

We continue to have people contacting us about access to the Cross to visit and view it and experience its aura. This is something we're missing too and we're finding that pictures and our memories are not enough.

It's worth thinking about its origin. When it was first carved and erected it was meant to be a Preaching Cross, probably on a Pilgrimage Trail between Lindisfarne and Whithorn. There still remains a sister Pillar at Bewcastle. It's purpose was to be a place where people would stop and gather to remember their Faith. For all that it is made in stone, it is not passive – it is also a Teaching Stone, proclaiming the message of the Faith to all who will see and read it.

It does this in several ways. First by displaying pictures of important times in the Life of Jesus. Then by appealing to people's minds through the art of the Vine carvings and creating a bond with the Creation and all Nature. The third way was using Runes which were readily understood by people when the Cross was first put up. In more recent times scholars have been able to decipher them and give us the benefit of their insights.

I want to finish by reminding ourselves of one of the panels which is on the front side that we normally see. It is of Jesus healing the man born blind and can be read in John 9:1-12. This is a reminder to us of the power, the humanity and the compassion of Jesus. He is with us in everything that is happening to us and he seeks to support us so that we can enjoy the best of health and of living. In particular he takes us out of our spiritual blindness and helps us to see ourselves as children of God – who are important to him and loved by him. The message of Christmas is still relevant. Jesus is IMMANUEL – God is with us.

Stay safe.

God bless us all.

Bill Holland
Interim Moderator