



**Weekly newsletter from Richard Howlett,
Team Vicar with special responsibility for
St Benedict's, Bennett's End and St
Mary's, Apsley End.**

**Edition 20 Week beginning 13th September
2020**

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Dear Friends

The announcement last Wednesday of the 'Rule of Six' from the Prime Minister created some uncertainty and concern whether this would affect what we do in church. The answer is no. The Bishop of London made the following statement on behalf of the Church of England *"I welcome confirmation from the Prime Minister that places of worship can still hold more than six people in total, despite the new restrictions on gatherings, and the reassurance that public worship can continue. "We will continue to work with the Government on specific areas relating to our churches and church-based activities."*

I included the decision makers in local and national government in Morning Prayer on Thursday. They really have such a difficult task, and it is so tempting for us to join the media's critical commentating. Yet we are not in the unenviable position of having to balance the economy and civil liberties against the lives of vulnerable people. They will make mistakes; we are all human, and unparalleled situations continue to present themselves as the autumn and winter unfold. They need your prayers. Praying is not useless; on the contrary, it brings us closer to the mind of Christ and enlarges our love beyond our own personal concerns. I also happen to believe that concerted mass prayer can and does affect events (witness the outcome of the transition from apartheid to black rule in South Africa, which was heavily underpinned by committed and widespread prayer by the churches there and around the world).

Please also pray for those who are affected by the 'Rule of Six': not least those whose plans for gatherings after weddings, funerals, baptisms and other events will now have to be radically revised.

This Sunday morning worship will take place at St Benedict's, and we shall be welcoming worshippers from St Mary's and St Benedict's, while others will join us on line, including the congregation of All Saints, King's Langley. Father James McDonald and Revd Lizzie Hood are on leave; please pray for good rest for them and their loved ones.

Please note that Evening Prayer for this Sunday will take place at 6.30pm on Zoom from the Vicarage. Joining instructions are on the calendar, and the order of service can be found at the Church of England website 'Daily Prayer' section.

Now that we are in September can I appeal for more to make a special effort to gather again as the 'Body of Christ' I know some of you have taken the opportunity sometimes to worship at other places on line, but we know we are in the Pandemic for many months ahead, and we will prosper if we work together to be the 'Body of Christ' I hope we can welcome you back in person, or on line? Some fund-raising activities are planned ; please look out for these, and if you have other ideas-please share them! Both churches are facing substantial deficits and we need everyone to give support by prayer, volunteer time, worship and financial giving as their circumstances allow, so that we can thrive as the people of God in Bennett's End and Apsley End.

*With our love and prayers, **Richard and Katherine.***