

Cranmer Group Newsletter

A Call to Pray!

Dear Cranmer Group Friends,
I hope you're all doing as well as we can in these continuing difficult times. You may have seen that Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, our Archbishops, have issued a call to the nation. They write in their open letter, "As we reach the terrible milestone of 100,000



deaths from COVID-19, we invite everyone in our nation to pause as we reflect on the enormity of this pandemic. 100,000 isn't just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God. We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, & ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness. We therefore encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God." They continue, "Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care & kindness. One thing we can all do is pray."

Pray every evening (or on whichever you can!) during February...

So, I really encourage each of us to join in prayer with the Archbishops, & thousands of others across our nation, at 6pm each evening this February. As Christians, we believe prayer has the power to change things for good. Let's put this into practice alongside our brothers & sisters in Christ!

...and join us in prayer this Sunday, 7th February, at 8pm

We're continuing our 'First Things' informal intercessory prayer gathering (the first Sunday of each month, 8PM). Spend time with us in God's presence this Sunday, 7th February, at 8pm, on Zoom (join here; Meeting ID: 813 3894 9288; Passcode: 995591). I look forward to seeing you there!



A Huge Thank You!

The response we've received from you and your fellow villagers to our appeal for the Cranmer Foodhub has been amazing - thank you all so much! Do please keep your donations coming - leave them at your churches as you have been doing, so that we can continue to support the most vulnerable in our communities.



Journey with Us through Lent



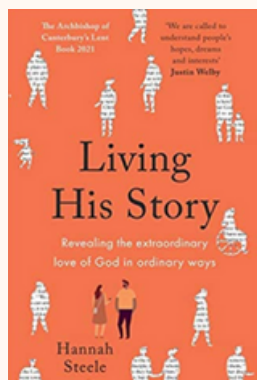
The way in which we can mark the season of Lent this year is of course different from 'normal' times. However, you can still join in, in a number of different ways - we're still meeting as church!

First we'll mark Ash Wednesday, February 17th, with an online service - join us [here](#) at 10AM, and then catch up with others at 10.45 [on Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 896 7267 1672; Passcode: 815850). If you wish to mark the sign of the cross on your forehead, as an act of penance, we'll be distributing small quantities of ash (from palm crosses, as is traditional) and also devotional prayers,

to enable you to do this at home. Contact Jade, our Administrator, at thecranmergroup@gmail.com or on 07526 603766, to receive these.

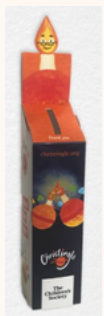
Do also let Jade know if you'd like a copy of the Church of England's excellent daily devotional for Lent, "God's Story, Our Story", and/or if you also wish to receive an olive wood devotional cross to hold as you pray, & we'll ensure you receive these. If you have a smartphone, the #LiveLent devotional will also be available as an app, - details [here](#).

Maybe you're thinking about what to give up for Lent, but that might seem especially hard this year. So why not *take* up something instead?



In this time when we're missing connections with others so much, why not commit to write a card to a friend, family member or neighbour every day during Lent, and bless them in this way? Or join our Lent Group - we'll meet on Zoom [here](#) (Meeting ID: 876 2423 1285; Passcode: 550189) for our first session on Ash Wednesday at 2pm or 7.30pm, and thereafter every Tuesday (choose which of 2pm or 7.30pm suits you best) from February 23rd to March 30th. We'll be reading together the Archbishop's 2021 Lent Book, "Living His Story", by Hannah Steele. Get your copy [here](#) - and email or call me to let me know you'll be joining us!

A Final Reminder ... and Chocolate!



If you still have a Children's Society Christingle collecting box, please do get it to Katie Senior within Sunday 14th February. Katie's also now taking orders for the Meaningful Chocolate Co.'s 'Real Easter Eggs' (now plastic free!). These are not stocked in supermarkets this year, but are available from Traidcraft via Katie (katieesenior@hotmail.com (note the two 'e's!); 01949 850384; or 07870 147037). Milk chocolate are £4.50; dark chocolate £5.25.



There seems to have been a great deal to tell you about, and lots going on, despite the lockdown. In many ways that's great! But my encouragement to each one of you at this time is not so much to 'do', but to 'be'. Take time, where you can, amidst all the pressures each of us faces, to *be* with your Heavenly Father. I pray that you will know His peace and comfort on you and your loved ones, and - despite all the hardships we face - that you will know His joy in your hearts. May God bless you all greatly,