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Dear Friends

The last few days have been momentous. The guidance issued by the government will as you will no doubt have gathered from the news have a huge impact on life in general as well as for life for our church communities in the Sid Valley.

In recent days I've been fielding enquiries from a number of couples due to get married in the months ahead and it has drawn me back to 1 Corinthians 13, a passage often read at weddings but really to do with church community more so than married couples! At the end of that chapter Paul speaks of Faith, Hope and Love. In a time such as this these are important things to hold onto as we seek to live through challenging times.

Faith

*So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:3)*

The antidote to dismay and fear is faith in God who is with us, whatever we face. Prayer is important as it has ever been. Whatever our circumstances whether we are out and about or not let us continue in prayer. We are making various resources available online, if you have access to it do please keep an eye on the Sid Valley website (sidvalley.org.uk) and also All Saints (allsaintssidmouth.org.uk) where we will be posting various worship resources. In this pack you will also find materials we can use at home. Can I suggest while we cannot meet maybe having the discipline of worshipping on a Sunday at home at the same time that you would at church? Radio programmes are also available on a daily basis.

Hope

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:38)*

Whatever the future holds the most precious thing, Jesus, can never be taken away from us. Over the next few weeks we have a great gift we can give to the world, the gift of hope because

of what Jesus has done for us which we will celebrate at Easter in whatever way we can. This is Good News that changes lives.

Love

Jesus replied: ‘ “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’ (Matthew 22:37-40)

In the midst of all that is going on it is important that we do not turn inward but rather keep our love of the Lord Jesus alive, worshipping by those means that are available to us, hence the materials being provided locally and nationally in print and by other means. It is also essential that we love those around us, looking out for neighbours, phoning those, maybe like ourselves who cannot get out and praying for one another. Already this week I have been humbled by the initiatives that people have been starting and I trust that we can continue to do this in the weeks ahead, the best place to start is often with our neighbours but if you have something to offer that you have not been able to pass on do please contact your churchwardens or myself.

I hope those of you receiving this in paper form will find the information contained herein helpful and for those reading it online will benefit from the links on the websites that we will update.

With my love and prayers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.