

## A Message from Paul

*“Paul, called to be a servant of Christ Jesus by the will of God,*

*To the churches of Holgate and Leeman Road, sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-their Lord and ours:*

*Grace and peace to you  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
(Adaption of 1 Cor. 1.1-3)*

I couldn't resist starting my message as the Apostle Paul begins his first letter to the Corinthian church, as during this lockdown, receiving the grace and peace of God, I think, is key to keeping us all on track. Also, there are many challenges that facing each of us, and living out that calling to be holy - living lives committed to God - draws us continually back to Jesus. Finally, it encourages us to be asking daily for the equipping power of the Holy Spirit so that we can love those around us - even when they might be driving us crazy! - and reach out to those in need.

It is odd to write my first communication to you during these unprecedented times and though it is very frustrating not to have had a proper farewell from Clifton, or welcome from St Paul's and St Barnabas, I am most delighted to join you at this time. As a family this has been challenging on many levels, as before lock-down we were getting ready to move home and schools and now have had everything put on hold - I am so thankful for the internet! Please pray for us as a family. It would be great if we could move house as soon as possible so we can start getting settled in.

Yet I am here now and am looking forward to getting to know people and working with the great team of leaders and volunteers from both churches hoping to see God's kingdom grow. I'm so thankful for all that has, is and will be happening together with the help of God. And I think that we have already seen how this pandemic has drawn both churches together naturally as our new partnership begins.

I wanted to let you know a few practical things that I am hoping to put in place in the short-term with our inability to meet in person (more information will follow in the coming days for points 1-3):

1. I am hoping to set-up Zoom meetings for various ministry teams as a way for me to get to know some names and faces and a feel for the way the various groups work together.
2. I am planning to set-up some Zoom “drop-ins”. These will be a bit like an open house where there will be a period of time where I will host a Zoom meeting and people can come along as and when they want to and introduce themselves and ask questions of me. Perhaps you might want to have a coffee and biscuit with you!
3. Rowena has already sent a message asking about how people are connecting during the lockdown, and we are considering as a staff team how we can encourage more people to join temporary Small Groups during this time. This may mean joining an existing one, where possible, or starting new ones. This could be within each church, or cross-church. I would really encourage you to consider being part of this during the lockdown. Also, if you are already part of a group of any description then why not invite others to join you?
4. I am aware that some members of our churches will not be online, but being new I don't know them all. If you think there are some people who might appreciate a call from me then please do pass on names and details to Ian (St Paul's) or Anne (St Barnabas) and I will do my best to get in touch.

Finally, I would encourage you to remember that we are in this together. Together in our humanity and geography, but more importantly in our faith as Paul reminded the Corinthians, we are... *'together with all those everywhere who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.'* We are together spiritually so we can continue to call on God: for ourselves; for those whom we love; for our city; for our nation; and for this world at this time. We may not be able to do much physically together, but we can unite our prayers as believers knowing that God hears his children as they cry out.

God bless

Paul