



“Showing Jesus is
Lord in our
worship, witness,
prayer and care”

SPSJ UPDATE

May 2020

Monthly Newsletter

I hope you have been enjoying the online services that, I am delighted that the Director of Communications for Hereford Diocese would love to work with us long term to use Wednesday Worship as a way of sharing good news stories from around the Diocese.



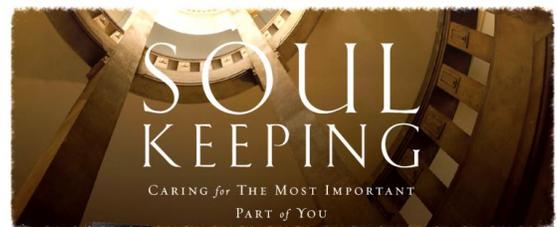
I have also been pleased with the response to SPSJ Kids, St James School are now using it as part of their collective worship and have a dedicated page

for sharing the videos on their website. St Thomas Cantilupe School are also promoting it on their community page. Both Elliot and I are excited to see what this might look like post-lockdown.

We do recognize that as this lockdown continues it would be good to start to communicate more with each other again. Many of us have been learning to use an online video chatting site called ZOOM, and we will be using this to run the SOUL KEEPING Course. We will also be introducing more opportunities to pray together online, again using ZOOM. If you have never used it, it is thankfully easy to download and then you receive a link to the meeting room which you simply click.

I am also grateful to the work of Jenny Brooks and others to put together a new Pastoral Care Structure to try and ensure everyone in our church receives a phone call to see how they are. This was a big piece of work and because we started from the church electoral roll, there is the possibility of some being missed out. So if you haven't received a phone call from someone please do let me know.

Despite being in lockdown God continues to work and open doors. On the last page of this newsletter you will find some exciting new things that you may want to get involved in, as well as some useful contact numbers if you find yourself struggling during these difficult times. Please do continue to stay safe and I look forward to that day when we can all join together in worship again.
Rev'd Andy Morgan



SOUL KEEPING COURSE by John Ortberg

You can be sure of two things. One: you have a soul. Two: you need to look after it, because you won't get another. Our souls aren't theological or philosophical subjects. They are the most real yet mysterious, evocative, fragile and eternal dimension of our existence. Jesus said our souls were worth more than the entire world itself. Join us on Zoom for a six week course that explores what our soul is, what our soul needs and how to take care and restore our souls.

Sign up to the course at

<https://www.spsj.org.uk/online-courses>

The course is free and you do not need anything, but if you want to you can purchase the study guide or the original book.

NEWS FROM RWANDA

We continue to get regular news from our friends in Rwanda. We hear from Rugendabari and Muhanga that life is very tough for them at the moment. Although so far, the impact of Covid-19 seems to be small, the country has been in lockdown and this will continue until at least the end of April. Like us are only allowed to go out to buy food and for emergencies and everyone has to wear a mask in public. This means that many have no income, and although there is food, prices have risen steeply and is sometimes in short supply. And because of the way life works in Rwanda, “social distancing” is almost impossible. If the virus does take hold, it will be difficult to contain and put overwhelming pressure on their limited health services.

Also, it is now their main rainy season and persistent, heavy daily rain will continue until the end of May. This is vital for crops to grow throughout the summer dry period, but it does dampen the spirits (we know that from our experience this winter!). I had a message today from Jonas, the head teacher of the school in Muhanga, who says “Here life is so sour as the lockdown goes on. Heavy rain also comes to make life confusing”. Many, like Jonas, are planting up their gardens to grow food for their families, but it takes time. In the country areas, our friends usually have some land on which to graze animals and grow food, but for many in the small towns, this is not so easy. This is particularly true for some of the pastors and teachers. The pastors also rely on offerings from their congregations for part of their income, but with churches not able to meet, there is some real hardship, not only for them, but also for their communities.

Grassroots Rwanda, through whom we channel our support have exceptionally, put out an appeal for funds to support pastors, teachers and families in Shyogwe diocese. We have sent £500 from SPSJ. This was money initially earmarked to go towards the electricity project, but this need is more immediate. I know others have made individual donations, but if any of you reading this would like to make a gift, however small, get in touch with me (on Tel 268585 or email to jandpstrevens@tiscali.co.uk) and I can tell you how you can do that.

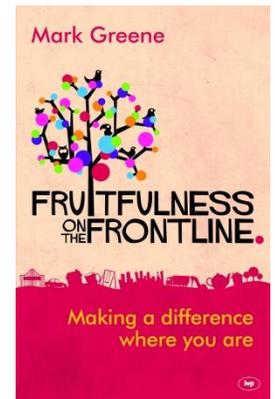
Our friends in Rugendabari and Muhanga are safe and well, and despite their difficulties, their faith in Jesus is strong and shines through in every message we receive. And we know they are praying for us too.

They really do care about us and are a great example to us. Just this week, Janet and I had a lecture from our “grandson” Yvens about taking care and keeping safe, because of our age! But they do need our continuing prayers and support. Please keep praying for Bishop Jered and all the church leaders and people at this difficult time, and for pastor Sylvestre and all our friends in Rugendabari.

We are all one in the body of Christ.
Peter Strevens

BOOK REVIEW “Fruitfulness on the Front Line”

The author, Mark Greene, is Executive Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), familiar to many of us from studies such as ‘Life on the Front Line’, used in our housegroups over the last few years.



FROM THE BACK OF THE BOOK:

“Will help you start to celebrate where you are already bearing Kingdom fruit, as well as gently encouraging you to look for new opportunities to share the Jesus life on your front line.”

This is a book that is easy to read and one which will encourage and challenge each of us in equal measure. The author takes characters from the Bible, some less well-known than others (even un-named such as Naaman’s servant girl in 2 Kings 5.3) and expands on their story, looking at what they did in situations where they found themselves. Amongst this, are mixed in many stories of ordinary believers in our own time, who have stepped out, listened to God, and changed things around them. People at work, home, school, the list is a long one. The lesson from this book is not to write your own situation off, but, instead, to ask God what you can do, and then go and do it....

This book is published by Inter Varsity Press, £9.99, and can be purchased from The Good News Centre in Newent, Amazon and online. Highly recommended!

Geoff Loynes

If you would like any further information about any of these initiatives please get in touch with me at vicar@spsj.org.uk

Telephone Support for the 'housed homeless'

Vennture is working with Herefordshire Council to provide a volunteer network to support the homeless people who have been provided with emergency accommodation for this crisis. Daily 'safe and well' phone calls from a volunteer 'buddy', who is only phoning because they care, could make a huge difference to one homeless individual and to the safety of the whole city.

Money Advice Centre

A new South Wye Community Money Advice Centre is being set up, the old Christians Against Poverty hub sadly closed a couple of years ago now.

The advantage of CMA is that they can train volunteers to become advisers and they can run drop ins at multiple locations e.g. OUR CHURCH. There is even scope to set up a satellite base North WYE if necessary. We really want this to be a citywide project that the CHURCH can as one show the love of Christ to our communities which will signpost people to the God who wants to restore WHOLENESS into individuals and families lives.

Baby Bank

Baby Banks are popping up all over the country, but there is nothing like it in Herefordshire. Baby Banks are as the name suggests like a Food Bank but specifically for Baby items. Someone who is interested in setting one up in Hereford would love to work with us at SPSJ to make this happen.

Food Bank

Please do continue to remember to donate food to the Food Bank, there is a donation point in most supermarkets where you can do this. For those who are self-isolating and so receiving food deliveries, we are exploring the possibility of offering a pick up service so that you can leave the food parcels in a bag outside your home and someone will pick it up for you.

Practical Support

Herefordshire County Council have set up a COVID-19 Community Support Team. The response team is made up from volunteers based around the county so we can reach people no matter where they are located, or how isolated their location. If you do need any help or support then please go their website and complete the online form - <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/xfp/form/243>

