Vicar’s Musings number 14.

I enjoyed my brief overnight trip to catch up with my family bubble in Portsmouth. Thankfully although windy the rain held of for afternoon tea with my aunt in Fareham, and a trip to my brothers’ allotment bringing back childhood memories of my dad’s allotment in Weymouth, it also gave me some inspiration so grilled him about what veg / fruit might grow in the vicarage garden.

I have also been recalling a blisteringly hot day 20 years ago on July 1st. When along with 34 others gathered expectant but excited in the crypt at St Pauls Cathedral about to be ordained deacon. The following year I was ordained priest at St Matthews Bethnal Green. So much has happened in those 20 years some of which will be in July’s magazine. Over the years one thing I have learned is that for some reason people seem to think the Vicar can answer a wide variety of questions! Thinking back to Theological college I seemed to have missed the lectures on pandemics, social distancing and making buildings COVID safe at.

The government announcement last week has prompted a flurry of questions that sometimes start with ‘when’ or how. When will the church be open? Can I have my wedding? what about baptism? How can we have a service without singing? Along with other questions like When can I get my hair cut? How many people can come into my garden? (Sometimes I get asked things that are not in my remit!) And often the answer is I am not sure but - I do know we are working on the church related stuff, the joy of which is reading through guidelines and looking at risk assessments etc etc….and hairdressers are working on the haircut thing. I admit I have an appointment booked in! so much is still unsure, being with my brother and then going visit my aunt was almost a little slice of normal. We long for things to be ‘normal’. But if the past weeks have taught us anything, it is that some aspects of normal are not nice. We have been reminded of injustice, inequality, and poverty. Reminded that many are vulnerable and lonely or are struggling. And we have been reminded how selfish some people can be with the amount of litter left in parks and on beaches. For some people, these issues are their normality. Some of us now have a chance to go to church, go out to eat, and tame our unruly locks – we can’t wait. But as we rush towards our ‘new normality’, let us be mindful of those who for whatever reason can’t. I pray that we will not forget what we have learned. That we will resolve that part of our ‘new normal’ will be to address the issues that were not good in the ‘old normal’ in or own lives as well as challenging the wider issues.

The standing committees of both churches are putting together proposals for PCCs to discuss regarding opening for worship. Rest assured that whatever we do decide we will continue with ZOOM for some time yet.

Rev Fiona.