

## Boiler and driveway update

We are now without any means of heat for the time being as the boiler was disconnected on Monday.

Work on the new boiler and heating system is due to begin on Monday September 28.

Please pray for an Indian Summer over the next two or three Sundays so we won't be cold.

Also as many of you know we have been wanting to sort out the driveway for a number of years.

There's good and not so good news. The Diocese has again recommended the work (as they did in 2018 when we included plans to replace the front doors) and a notice will go up on the board giving people the opportunity to respond.

However the District Council, or more specifically the conservation officer, is

again being unco-operative and, as he did in 2018, is objecting to the work. But thanks to submissions from members of the church and those who use our hall, the application looks set to go to the planning committee in October.

We have had considerable help from John Archer who was a member of the church in the past, and as a Result of his help, the case officer is now consulting his senior officers and we may hear something on Tuesday. Could I ask you to pray that they will give favourable consideration to our application, and weight to the submissions in support of getting us a drive that is fit for purpose.

It would be so good to get a new drive after all these years of trying to make it happen.

### TANGO

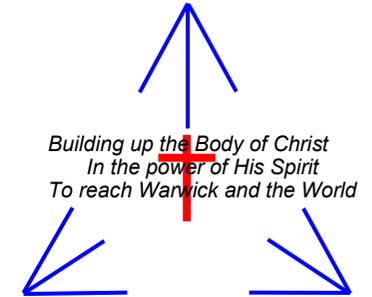
**Sadly it has been decided that TANGO will no longer take place at St Paul's.**

**With all the Covid restrictions it would not be possible to run it safely in the Hall.**

**Thank you to everyone who has supported TANGO, donated and/or bought items over the last three years and to all those who have helped with the set up and take down at each event. I am very grateful for all your support.  
Jo.**

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**St Paul's Church, Warwick**



**September 13, 2020  
Trinity 14**

**Rev Jonathan Hearn**

**Today's 10am Service - Holy Communion**

If you are a newcomer to our Church, or a visitor to the area, please introduce yourself to one of the welcomers, or to the clergy. There will be no Sunday club until the third Sunday in September.

This week - September 13	Next Week - September 20
10am Holy Communion	10am Holy Communion

Readings	
September 13	September 20
Exodus 14:19-end Matthew 18: 21-35	Exodus 16:2-15 Matthew 20:1-16

### Praying for the Persecuted Church

Open Doors welcomes the news that Sudan's transitional government has agreed to end 30 years of Islamic law, under which Christians and churches were severely persecuted.

In July, Open Doors reported Sudan had scrapped the death penalty for people who leave Islam, as well as other reforms that repealed laws that violated human rights. At the time, there were concerns from many that reforms did not go far enough. Open Doors has said it welcomes the latest news that 30 years of Islamic law in Sudan are now going to be ended.

Sudan's transitional government has agreed to a separation of religion and state, as Islam is removed as its state religion. This is part of a peace deal the government signed with rebel groups in late August.

The move comes after 30 years of Islamic law which was implemented under former president Omar al-Bashir, who enforced a strict interpretation. Churches were confiscated or demolished, and leaders were harassed and arrested. He was ousted in April 2019, after months of street protests, and the transitional government was installed.

The declaration signed by the government and rebel groups includes: "For Sudan to become a democratic country where the rights of all citizens are enshrined, the constitution should be based on the principle of 'separation of religion and state', in the absence of which the right to self-determination must be respected." Jo Newhouse, spokesperson for Open Doors in sub-Saharan Africa, said: "Open Doors welcomes this significant development in Sudan.

"We share the church's careful optimism over the transitional government's efforts to rid Sudan of laws discriminating against non-Muslims."

Many Open Doors supporters are among those around the world who have been standing with Sudanese Christians and praying for a long time for Sudan, which is number seven on the World Watch List. This is a wonderful answer to prayer! The peace declaration is intended to end years of war in Darfur and Sudan's southern South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, which have left at least 300,000 people dead and displaced a further 2.7 million people in Darfur alone, according to the UN.

However, Newhouse said there are issues that still need to be addressed, including the repeal of the blasphemy and public decency laws, as well as problems around church registration and building, and of confiscated church properties.

She said: "A move to allow representation of religious minority groups in the Ministry of Religious Endowments with delegates they have chosen themselves, is also necessary."

Islamist groups loyal to al-Bashir have challenged recent government decisions, insisting Sharia (Islamic law) should remain in force and calling on the army to step in and 'defend the law of God'.

There are nearly two million Christians in Sudan, which is less than five per cent of the population. While the news of these reforms is very positive, many believers who have converted from the majority religion, Islam, face intense opposition from their families and this is unlikely to change soon.

Source, Open Doors UK.

### Thought for the Week - welcome back

Welcome to St Paul's for our second week back. I trust it is still good to be here.

There was a time this week when I wondered whether having just returned after 25 weeks away we'd be told to leave again – did that thought cross anyone else's mind as we learned of the Rule of Six? I was relieved to learn places of worship were exempt! Obviously it is all very different and it may take a bit of time to get used to it. I've been asked by various people (not all from church) how it was and I find it quite difficult to answer because I'm the one leading it and able to be a bit more "active".

The Leadership team says it's a bit hard to say as we have been involved in thinking about what we need to do and how we need to do it to be able to get back into church for worship.

I am very happy to receive feedback as to how it is for you so if there are things we can tweak to improve the service for all, I can see what can be done.

I'm conscious that asking something like this, it's always possible to get contradictory comments. It is possible too that any suggestions or comments will have to be filtered by what we are allowed to do. However I think it would be helpful to know how people are finding it and you may come up with things we hadn't thought of in the planning stage.

Whilst it is very strange not to be allowed to sing out loud, and even difficult to refrain from singing, can I encourage you to think about other ways to praise God.

The old hymn, "Now thank we all our

God" continues with the line "*with hearts and hands and voices*". If our voices need to be silenced, we do still have hearts and hands and feet and bodies and minds with which to express our praise.

Whilst no one except God can know what's going on in our hearts and minds – though behind our masks our eyes might reveal something of our thoughts especially if we smile with them, we can use our physical bodies. One suggestion last week was about learning to use sign language and someone said it doesn't have to be a recognised sign language – invent your own – some of us may have had to do that in the past if we were in a foreign country and tried to make ourselves understood.

But if that is not easy try to imagine what it might be like to be a "secret believer", where you have to find ways to express your praise and worship so as not to attract attention of neighbours, colleagues, friends or even family.

My prayer is that these current limitations will enable us to discover more about what it really means to worship our God.

#### Our Bible verse for the year

**Never doubt God's mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, our most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for his miraculous power constantly energises you. Ephesians 3: v20.**