

Café Explore – August 2020

We have all been locked away.

Away from our families.

Away from our friends.

Away from our Church.

Tentatively we are emerging, some faster than others, may be looking at our surroundings with fresh eyes and with wonder and joy, it's like breathing fresh air, wonderful!

Some of us have been able to enter our church again, masked, sanitised and very quiet! No excited chatter, no joyful singing although there may have been some quiet humming behind the mask – that is a little confession of mine as some favourite songs and hymns were played!

Try to picture the inside of St Laurence's whether you have been able to go in recently or not. I wonder what you will see in your mind's eye? Imagine taking a walk around the building (one way system - so follow the arrows). After your walk, take a seat in a pew – one without a cushion for easy cleaning! Focus on one thing, the lectern, the pulpit, an altar, a candle, a cross or a window. Or close your eyes and let silence envelop you or listen to some quiet music such as from the Northumbria Community. Listen for God's voice, He is always ready for a conversation.

The first time I went back into the church was on a Thursday morning 10am -12 noon for quiet prayer, I looked at the window in the side chapel above the altar – angels asking 'Why are you here?' Tears came to my eyes, they were tears of joy and at first I couldn't explain to myself why, then I once again realised I am never alone and certainly over the months of lockdown I had my Lord by my side as we all have had.

So let us go forward and share our moments of joy and hope as we gradually meet once again with each other.



Joy reawakens Hope. Perhaps the following verses could be used to focus on our re found joy and hope.

Psalm 30:11-12 New International Version

¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
¹² that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.
Lord my God, I will praise you for ever.

Isaiah 12:2 NIV

² Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid.
The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defence;
he has become my salvation.'

Psalm 31:24 NIV

²⁴ Be strong and take heart,
all you who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 42:5 NIV

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Saviour and my God.

As we come to the Lord in prayer, let us give thanks for His enduring love.

**Lord of life, I come to you;
Lord of all, my Saviour be;
Lord of Love, come bless us
With the light of your love.**

Catherine Walker

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid;
Lift up your voices: the Lord is near,
Lift up your voices: the Lord is near.**

Taize Community