

Dear Northgate friends,

Rev Barbara reminded me recently that I would have been leading your Anniversary service on the 24 May. I would have taken as the theme of my sermon a verse from the Acts 1 reading, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky?' The occasion was Jesus' ascension: having just promised the disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is taken up and a cloud hides him from their sight.

I think we are often caught in the same way; when someone we love has visited and left to go home by car or train don't we stand looking to see them disappear from view before we turn away? Looking to hold onto a very pleasurable experience for as long as possible before re-joining our 'world'?

This question was put to the disciples by 'two men dressed in white'. We take these to be two angels of God, speaking for God. As if to say, you can't stay here, you need to move on! There is work to do.

The same message is right for us today; in our current situation I don't see any point in holding onto how things were before Covid, because I don't think that version of 'normal' will exist again. For us as individuals or us as the Church. The disciples had to get ready to receive the power of the Holy Spirit; it would be like nothing they had experienced before. Let's not forget, as the body of Christ in the world today, that the power Jesus promised, and then gave to the disciples, is available to us today.

When Warwick comes out of lockdown we should be ready to show how the Church, equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit, is better shaped to meet the new needs that will be there. Take the time before then to pray for God to do big things through the Church, ask God to give you the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to do those things. Then don't be afraid to take the first steps towards doing those things; because it's only then that God sends us the help we need. Let's not be caught looking up to an empty sky.

Now to how Ann and I are. First of all we want to thank those of you who have generously donated to MNDA through the fightback fund page, which now totals just over £18,000. My reverse triathlon event raised over £8,000 and received more than 250 donations, which meant it was impossible to thank each donor in person. Chris has moved this total on recently by running 100k in May.

I'm feeling OK in myself, just that my hands don't work properly any more and walking is hard work. I bought a travel scooter the day before the lockdown started so am keen to use it. I feel very fortunate that I don't (yet) have any speech, swallowing or breathing problems. I'm doing seated Pilates using Zoom every Thursday and singing in 2 virtual choirs. We've just placed the order to have our bathroom converted to a wet room which will be very helpful to me. Ann is well, able to work from home and starting to restock the garden. Becky and Matt and Chris and Hannah look after us very well too.

We still feel very connected to Northgate as we get Trevor's Happenings at Warwick Methodist Church email each week, but miss just bumping into friends in Warwick, as many of you surely do too.

With much love to you all

Ann and Andy