

# St Mary's Church Knowsley Village

Team Vicar: Rev Hugh Lea-Wilson, St Mary's Vicarage  
Tithebarn Road, Knowsley Village L34 0JA tel 0151 546 4266  
[www.knowsleychurch.co.uk](http://www.knowsleychurch.co.uk)



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Dear Friends at St Mary's

## Back to the Future?!

One of my recent letters was entitled 'Daily Hope; Weekly Connection; Regular Worship'. Well, it's been great that a good majority have continued to join us for weekly worship, and a dozen or so have connected weekly with each other and God's word through *Connect Wednesday*.

Others have not been able to join us for online services and meetings. But my sincere prayer for each of you is that you will have been sustained in daily hope, and that you will have known that you're not on your own. My last letter highlighted the reopening of the church building for private prayer, to which you are all still most welcome, Tuesdays 10am-noon and Thursdays 2-3pm.

It's now almost the end of July. Schools have just broken up and although not everyone can join in, it is officially the start of the summer holidays! Whether you are still confined at home or are able to go away, I trust that you will all have a happy and hope-filled summer, and that many of us will gradually be able to meet up more with family and friends.

And I wonder – what are your hopes for us as the body of Christ as we approach autumn? Will it be back to everything as it was, or back to a new future? What will church look like? So much has changed, and much of it has been hard, hasn't it? There have been real 'lockdown lows,' but also 'lockdown highs', and many see real opportunities ahead. The Archbishop of Canterbury expresses the longings of many to go back into their church buildings but he also says "the church will never be the same again". Does that make you feel nervous – or excited – or both?!

If you're like me, there's a bit of both – both qualms about the future but also real excitement about the opportunities that are already with us. I really do believe that this a time for seizing some of these opportunities, and – in the middle of reflecting on your own 'lockdown lows' and 'lockdown highs', also asking ourselves the question "What has God been teaching me?"

On the back of this letter, I've also selected a few quotes from 24 Christian leaders from different traditions, sharing their lockdown highs and lows, and reflecting on what God has been saying to them during this time. For it's good to be aware of how the Spirit is moving across the churches.

But I end by asking you to ask the same questions. Maybe you could make some space and time to honestly ask God what he's been saying to you. I'd love to hear from you – please ring me, write back or email me on [hugh@4saints.com](mailto:hugh@4saints.com). We need to keep listening and learning from each other.

Wishing you God's richest blessings – till we meet again!

Rev Hugh Lea-Wilson  
Team Vicar, 4Saints Team (Huyton Deanery)