



The West Hereford Team Ministry  
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Hello everyone,

This is the first time I've been asked to write this covering letter. It made me think of the last time I actually sat down, put pen to paper and wrote a proper letter that didn't just say "please find enclosed a cheque for ...". I think I've been leaving out a very special means of communication to my friends and family. To write a letter one has to give the time to compose thoughts into words and because of the time it takes, and the opportunity to re-read, correct and re-compose the finished article becomes an expression of honest thought and sometimes emotion. For the person receiving the letter they have the time to think about the words and to understand the meaning behind them. I'm sorry I haven't written more letters recently because they are important; just think how many of us hold on to those precious letters of loved ones from the past. I think I'll be writing letters to my family this week to remind them that they are in my thoughts and that I want to spend the time in something personal that's just for them.

On Monday, at work, I asked a retired gentleman who volunteers for the hospice if he had enjoyed his weekend. A pretty ordinary question I suppose but he replied that he wasn't really sure as every day seems the same under our "new normal" with all its restrictions. I was struck by his answer and I thought it really quite sad. I don't think he's on his own with this feeling that for many of us one day melds interminably into the next without highlight, or without anything normal like a trip to the seaside to look forward to. I suppose the rise in the number of new pandemic cases has taken away the belief that, just like The Great War, it will all be over by Christmas.

He left me thinking of my favourite poem. Although it's normally read at funerals "The four candles", for me, has daily significance. For those who haven't heard it the first three candles of peace, faith and love are extinguished, but the fourth, "Hope" continues to burn and is used to relight the other three. With the knowledge that God our Father is always there and that The Light of Jesus will never fade our candle of hope will always burn. We just have to look for it whether it's on Zoom or in this letter, none of us are alone and we all, as the Church, move forward together.

As All Saints Sunday approaches, we have the opportunity to remember with thanksgiving before God those whom we have known more directly: those who gave us life, or who nurtured us in faith. The pandemic means that we won't be able to hold our normal services of memorial but outside each church in the benefice is a cross and we are invited to hang on the crosses doves with the names of those we have loved. It may not be our usual way of doing things but it remains an expression of love and remembrance.

Things aren't easy at the moment but don't forget that we are all together in this current situation and we are all there for each other. If you find you need a chat, prayer, or some practical help then do reach out – either by phoning 01432 273086 or by contacting your Pastoral Coordinator.

We hope these resources help you feel connected as we worship as a scattered Church. Please be assured that you are not forgotten and that you are remembered in our prayers – and that we long for the day when we can meet again as the whole church in one body and one place.

God Bless,

Mike