

Dear Friends,

I do hope that you are well as we launch into a very strange and unfamiliar autumn. September normally feels like the start of the church's year but with so much of life still being online it's going to work out very differently this year.

CHURCHES – Please pray for Eastleigh and Waterlooville Baptist Churches both of whom are still keen to find new ministers. The Covid crisis has massively interrupted their search and this is very frustrating for all concerned. Please pray for wisdom as we seek to find appropriate ways to move forward. Both churches are very happy to interview candidates online but it is clearly difficult to progress the search.

PREACHING – I am delighted that on 27th September I will be preaching in a church to a congregation for the first time since March 8th! I've recorded sermons in churches on a few occasions during these weird months – but have always been alone with a recording device. Delightfully this will be at Alvechurch Baptist Church where I led my first College Sunday service when I was in my first year at Regent's 44 years ago! Folk in the church have kept in touch with me over the years and it will be such a pleasure to return. On the other Sundays I will be preaching to my laptop as usual!

WRITING – My new way of life as a writer (!) is going well. Although I have always done a lot of writing the need to write 2,000 words a week in a very disciplined format is an interesting and enjoyable challenge. I have now written five months' worth of devotionals and the first ones will be published in the Premier's Voice of Hope magazine next month and will be broadcast twice every weekday on Premier Christian Radio.

May the Lord bless you and encourage you as you negotiate the many strange challenges of these days.

Yours ever,

Jonathan

SEPTEMBER DIARY

Tuesday 1st
Gloucestershire visits

Wednesday 2nd
Premier online Staff Meeting

Thursday 3rd
Waterlooville online Church Members' Meeting

Friday 4th
Writing Day

Saturday 5th
Day Off

Sunday 6th

Preaching online – Waterlooville Baptist Church

Monday 7th

Morning – Eastleigh Baptist Church online Ministry Team Meeting

Evening – Eastleigh Baptist Church online Leadership Team Meeting (this is the Ministry Team plus deacons)

Tuesday 8th

Parish Nursing Ministries' Trustees' online Catch-up meeting

Evening – Eastleigh Baptist Church online meeting with a ministerial candidate

Wednesday 9th

Foster review meeting

Thursday 10th

Meeting with our supervising social worker

Friday 11th

Writing Day

Saturday 12th

Day Off

Sunday 13th

Preaching online – Waterlooville Baptist Church

Monday 14th

Through the Roof online Team Prayer Meeting

Mentoring online

Tuesday 15th

Mentoring online

Woodley Baptist online Church Leadership Team Meeting

Wednesday 16th

Churches for All online Conference ... we were due to have a two day gathering but have turned it into three online meetings at 9.00, 2pm and 7.30pm. This is a really important national gathering for Christian disability groups.

Thursday 17th

Waterlooville Baptist Church online Deacons' Meeting

Friday 18th

Parish Nursing Ministries UK – meeting with the new CEO as her probationary period comes to an end

Saturday 19th

Day Off

Sunday 20th

Preaching online at Eastleigh Baptist Church

Monday 21st
Eastleigh Baptist Church online Ministry Team Meeting

Tuesday 22nd
Woodley online Church Members' Meeting

Wednesday 23rd
Day off

Thursday 24th
Oxfordshire visits

Friday 25th
Writing Day

Saturday 26th
Eastleigh Baptist Church online Deacons' Morning

Sunday 27th
Preaching at Alvechurch Baptist Church near Birmingham in real life!

Monday 28th
Meeting with Premier colleague in Wolverhampton
Herefordshire visits

Tuesday 29th
Newbury Office

Wednesday 30th
Writing Day