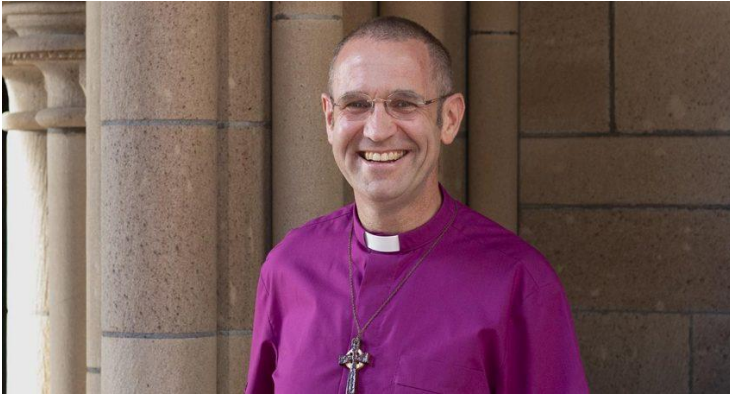


## Taking stock – we have come a long way



March seems like an age ago. I was looking back at some of the things I was [writing](#) (and thinking) back then – COVID-19 was the novel coronavirus and ‘lockdown’ was a new phenomenon, which we had previously only seen happening in other countries on our screens. We have come a long way since then. I rejoice that most of our churches have reopened for safe in-person worship. Many of these have done so whilst still providing [an online option](#) for those unable to attend church – ‘hybrid worship’. That is an amazing achievement.

At both the personal and parish levels, it is worth reflecting on just what has been achieved, learned and explored in the last eight months. Without a doubt these have been months of challenge. We here in Queensland have had it easy compared to those in other states and territories, yet this has been – and still is – a stressful time.

One of the challenges we face now is how to juggle the increasing normality of life with the overlay of shifting COVID safe restrictions and the ambient stress of knowing that greater restrictions may be introduced if community transmission begins again. What lessons can we take from the time of ‘lockdown’ (now months past) to bring into this new liminal season?

During the time when we were much more confined at home, I was considerably more intentional about getting out each day for my permitted exercise. Now that life has resumed some of its usual shape, it has been too easy to forget about this and other positive changes to various aspects of our lives. In terms of our churches and how we offer worship, I have the following three observations.

During the period of solely online worship, the liturgy was often stripped back. Options that are usually present were omitted and often two, rather than three, Bible readings were read. Now we are back worshipping face to face in our churches, can we learn from that time of simpler liturgy?

When we were worshipping solely online, alternative services to Eucharists were increasingly held. Now that many churches are offering in-person Sunday worship again, do we need every service to be a Eucharist? The Parish of Rochedale now holds a Morning Prayer service on the occasional Sunday. It is a beautiful service.

When church is held online, people can watch and worship whenever they wish. One friend noted that it was quite nice not to have to get up early every Sunday, but to join the worship after a lazy breakfast. What can we learn about the patterns of worship? St Bart’s, Mt Gravatt started a Sunday evening service as soon as in-person church recommenced. It was a pleasure to join them a few weeks ago – they are thriving.

I can fully understand the point of view that says, “we are doing great just standing still”. In this topsy-turvy year, there have been times when merely getting out of bed deserved its own award. Yet perhaps we can take some time to consider just what hills we have climbed together and what insights we have gained along the way so we can apply these learnings to the way we do things – for the better.

**Sunday Devotions • Monday 19 October 2020 • By The Ven. Kevin Bourke**

## **Sunday Devotion: 25 October 2020, Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost**

How will YOU be re-membered?



**Main Readings:** [Deuteronomy 34.1-12](#); [Psalm 90.1-6, 13-17](#); [1 Thessalonians 2.1-13](#); [Matthew 22.34-46](#) [[Leviticus 19.1-2, 15-18](#); [Psalm 1](#)]

**Supplementary Readings:** [Psalm 19](#); [1 Thessalonians 2.13-16](#); [Joshua 1.1-9](#); [Psalm 1](#); [Matthew 24.1-14](#)

“Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his sight was

unimpaired and his vigour had not abated.” ([Deuteronomy 34.7](#))

I have heard many eulogies over the years, and I have been surprised, confused and outright dismayed with what people sometimes remember about their loved ones. I doubt whether the person who has died would have even been aware of the strange things associated with them. The weirdest things sometimes account as ‘love’ in our relationships. It’s worth pondering, ‘Do we truly understand how our love is perceived by others?’

From the readings we note that after all that Moses achieved in his lifetime, he is ultimately remembered for being 120 years old, never losing his sight and still being ‘vigorous’! Paul asks the Thessalonians to remember that he laboured hard and never burdened any of them while preaching the Gospel. Jesus claims the greatest thing people can be remembered for is ‘Loving God and loving others’. Remembering is a significant activity in the Scriptures. Remembering is important business – particularly remembering what God has said and done for God’s people. Moses in Psalm 90 asks, “Why would the God of eternity remember us? When we are nothing but a dream, or a blade of grass?”

Occasionally we wonder how we will be remembered. Does it ultimately matter if we’re totally forgotten on earth, as long as we are remembered by God?

None of us can determine if we will be remembered and, ultimately, we have no control over what others remember or forget. But how would you like your life to be remembered?