

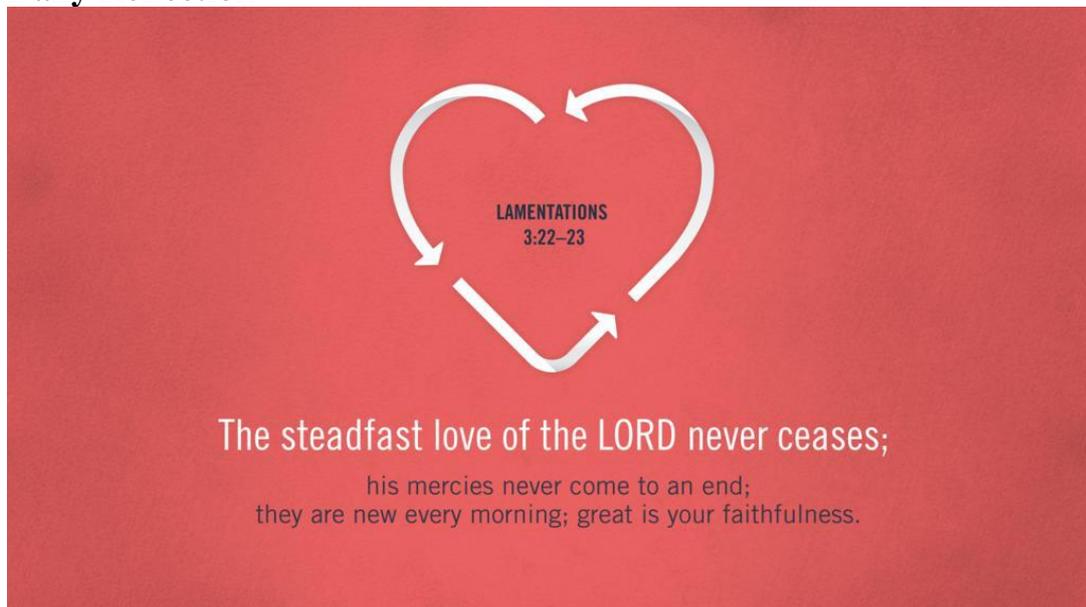
Dear Ipswich City church family,

Prayer

I have been following all the graphs and statistics and it seems that in the last couple of days social isolation is beginning to work and the virus is being contained. It is like Easter. It is still Holy Saturday, we are still in darkness but the first rays of light are beginning to appear on the horizon. Let us give all thanks and praise to God for this and for all who have worked for it. There is still a lot of social isolation to go. Many will still become ill. Some will die, there is still the rebuilding of the economy which will have to happen but the dawn may be breaking.

At the same time we need to pray for nations like the United States and for developing countries where it will be difficult to do social isolation and provide quality health care.

Daily Reflection



²² *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.*

Lamentations 3:22 (NRSV)

At a time like this it would be easy to think that someone speaking of the steadfast love of God and never-ending mercy must be in a pretty good place in their life. Actually, Jeremiah and the people of Israel in exile are the authors of this book. They are in a very bad place. Before Jeremiah goes into exile he gets thrown in jail. He is jailed because he can see what is coming and warns the king and the people but they don't want to hear. Then it turns out Jeremiah is right. The Babylonian Empire invades, destroys Jerusalem and the

temple. Many die. All the leading citizens are taken away from their destroyed homes into exile and forced to serve as slaves and servants of their captors.

Being in limited lockdown is nothing compared to the trials the people of Jerusalem went through. While most of this book of the Bible (Lamentations) is an expression of sadness, grief, anger, and brokenness, in chapter 3:21 Jeremiah remembers the steadfast love of the Lord. He remembers what God has done in the past, and remembers the small mercies and provisions of each new day.

I remember once being on a bus with an upset tummy. The pain was terrible, but someone held my hand. The pain did not go away or become less, but somehow it became bearable. A small thing like that or like a single candle in a pitch-dark room, or the first glimmer of dawn can give us hope.

A phone call, an email, a gift dropped off to someone in need or alone, might make all the difference. It might remind them as it reminded Jeremiah of the steadfast love of the Lord.

Lord, remind us and help us remind others that, your steadfast love never ceases, that your mercies never come to an end. In Jesus Name. Amen

Rev. Andrew Gillies