

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CHAPLAINCY

This is our third Newsletter since the beginning of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of you are continuing to work from home. So, this month we thought we would give you a glimpse in the team working from home still providing all the usual chaplaincy support and activities.



[Rabbi Dr Moshe Freedman writes](#) - Before the COVID-19 crisis took hold, the Jewish networks would meet every week for “Lunch and Learn” where a sandwich lunch would be provided together with an educational talk on subjects of Jewish interest. This would include the chance to pray the afternoon service together. The Lunch and Learn programmes have been going for many years and have been very successful at bringing Jewish professionals from across Canary Wharf together.

While most people have been working from home, the Lunch and Learn initiative has continued online (albeit without the lunch component). This has also given us the opportunity to pray for those friends who have been gravely ill during this period. Many people have experienced the loss of colleagues, friends, or family members while so many more have been gravely ill. Everyone has been put under enormous pressures of juggling the needs of their families with the extra pressure of working from home. During this time, the online meetings have given me the opportunity to help others explore and reflect on how this crisis is affecting all of us and understand how we can strengthen ourselves and be inspired to find the resilience to fortitude to keep moving forwards.

[Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra writes](#) - I don't think I can explain why, but love is certainly in the air during lockdown. For some of the people who've been in touch with me, lockdown is not a barrier at all when it comes to tying the knot. With on-going easing of the lockdown restrictions, gathering for a wedding is the least of the challenges for a number of those who have been in touch. Their challenge - how to overcome the barrier of religion when they have fallen for someone of a different religion to their own? I am currently handling four sets of couples who want to marry someone of a different faith. There is also a Muslim couple who want to marry but are from two different denominations of Islam. Convincing the parents to give their blessings is going to be a real challenge for me. I've had lengthy email exchanges, even longer telephone conversations and had it not been for the lockdown restrictions, would have had very long meetings over many cups of tea and coffee - all in a day's work of a chaplain under lockdown.

[Revd Dr Fiona Stewart-Darling writes](#) - Many of us working at home have found a rhythm as well as physical space. I usually work on the kitchen table. But since our cleaner has been allowed to return, I have moved to the greenhouse on Monday afternoons to give me privacy for Zoom or Teams meetings, to give her space. You might notice I am supervised by our cat, Mai!

We are still living in a cautious world even as lockdown begins to be eased. I know many of the office workers will not be back on the Wharf until later in the year or even next year. In this edition of our Newsletter I have asked colleagues to mention some of the activities we continue to provide for our faith groups. For the Christian community we continue to send the Thursday email with a biblical reflection and offer the opportunity to meet to discuss it on Thursdays at 12:15. And in addition we also send out a Sunday email with the reflection written by a guest writer, this will continue until the end of August. If you are not signed up to receive these it is still possible [to do so](#).

[Revd Barbara Hume writes](#) - In my role as a retail chaplain I belong to a network of workplace chaplains in Essex and East London. We have been meeting on a regular basis by Zoom in lockdown and one of issues we have been discussing is redundancy as a result of COVID-19. This could be a real possibility in retail malls as well as in small Independent shops. We as chaplains explored how we can support those who are facing redundancy by not only listening, but by helping people write their CVs especially looking at how we can help people see how their skills maybe transferable in the workplace. We pray redundancy's do not happen in Canary Wharf, but we are here for you and prepared just in case.

CHAT TO A CHAPLAIN - Just to remind you that through this strange and challenging time should you or a colleague want to chat to a chaplain we are still available and can be contacted via the contacts page on our website.