

## Sweet to the soul, healing to the bones

We've started a new series on Sunday mornings, based on Henri Nouwen's Life of The Beloved. One of the most powerful points made by the author is that we live and breathe within the constant blessing of God. His words to us, all the time are, 'you are my son, you are my daughter and I'm pleased with you'. God's vocabulary is kind and affirming. We in turn, through our speech and actions, can also choose to bless and affirm others.

During last Sunday's sermon, I issued a challenge to Ararat in 2022 based on this idea. What would our community look like if we all chose only to speak well of each other and avoided destructive words? It's not easy as we continue to deal with the effects of COVID and its restrictions. But how about it? As Proverbs 16:24 says, 'Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.'

## Important Information

We are operating under Level Two COVID restrictions for the time being. This is how we are affected in Ararat:

**Sunday services 10am & 11.15am.** A two metre distance must be kept between the pews allocated for seating. In order to make the best use of limited space, we will be asking you to share a pew with up to four people downstairs and up to six people upstairs. When you're booking, please note that everyone needs their own place. It's no longer based on households. If you'd prefer not to share a pew with anyone else, there will be space in the Ark to view the service on a large screen and sing along with the song sheet provided. We would also ask you to take a lateral flow test before coming and to share in online worship if you have tested positive for COVID or had close contact with someone who has the virus. Masks will also need to be worn indoors. Between the sanctuary and the Ark we can seat around 75 people in total.

**The Ark.** Tables will be distanced two metres apart and each table will seat a maximum of six people.

**Community Centre.** Classes will have a maximum capacity of 30 people, allowing for two metre distance between them. Each class will also conduct its own risk assessment.

## What's On This Week.

### Sunday 16 January:

**10am:** Morning worship and Holy Communion. Join us by booking a place here: [tinyurl.com/yckfkma2](https://tinyurl.com/yckfkma2)

This service is also streamed live on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzRpyLWzcXKy20LCGJ0R1NQ>

**11.15am:** Family service and Holy Communion. Join us by booking a place here: [tinyurl.com/2p9dnpfv](https://tinyurl.com/2p9dnpfv)

### 6pm: Zoom church

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82201850871?pwd=bDVXMjJNT0FNNHVVVGVXWUwyOEtNQ09>  
Meeting ID: 822 0185 0871  
Passcode: 469582

### **Monday 17 January**

The Ark will now be open on Mondays (10 – 1pm) for tea, coffee, light refreshments, and cake.

### **Tuesday 18 January**

2-4pm: **Renew Wellbeing** in the Ark. An opportunity to paint, bring a hobby and chat.

7pm: **Zoom midweek service**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85626282990?pwd=eTY3Z053ZjQyNGlUb2FNY0R3bHpzZz09>

Meeting ID: 856 2628 2990

Passcode: 524152

**Please note there will be no morning Midweek service or Luncheon Club this week.**

### **Naomi's last Sunday**

After announcing her decision to step down as co-minister of Ararat in October last year, Naomi has since been on a much needed sabbatical. Next Sunday (23 January) marks the end of Naomi's ministry with us, after nearly nine years of devoted service. With restrictions still in place, we are unable to host a leaving event at the moment, but we will be planning a sizeable gathering as soon as we are able! Naomi will be preaching at the 10am service and also taking part in the 11.15 family service. We realise that many of you will want to be there and there will be about 150 spaces available across both services once the tickets are released. We intend collating photos for a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting Naomi's time in Ararat, so if you have any such photos please email them to [rachelpowell@ararat.org.uk](mailto:rachelpowell@ararat.org.uk)

### **Flower Rota**

Public worship is greatly enhanced by the beauty and aroma of fresh flowers. Our flower rota for 2022 is rather empty at the moment, so if you'd like to play a part in bringing God's good creation into the sanctuary on Sundays, please add your name in the rota that is in the porch.

**That's all for now folks, so be blessed and be a blessing**

**Much love from**

**Naomi, Rachel, Sarah, Aly and Gethin**