

Dear Friends,

In our service last Sunday, we looked at the story of Lazarus. He had been dead for four days when Jesus called him out of his tomb. Lazarus rose up and came out. His body, however, was still wrapped in the strips of cloth in which he had been buried. Because of this he could not move or breathe properly. So, Jesus turned to those around and said, "Unbind him and let him go." That surely is our invitation to join with Jesus. He is about the business of setting people free and bringing them to life. We become his partners whenever we play even the smallest of parts in that process.

We are hearing lots of stories about how this horrific virus is bringing out the best in people. When they see those in need, they do what they can to unbind them and let them go. They form a long queue of people who will really deserve medals when all of this is over. Many in our church are nominating Vicki for one of these awards.

Vicki is our centre manager. She organises our work with homeless people. When the virus hit, we stopped all of our meetings and very nearly all of our activities. We wondered whether we should also suspend what we do with rough sleepers. The Government guidance said that we could continue. But that was asking a lot, particularly of Vicki who has four children and by carrying on was making herself very vulnerable. But Vicki was determined. She is not the kind of person to pass by on the other side. To be honest, if we'd told her to stop, she would have ignored us. So, thanks to her, our doors are still open serving homeless people.

You will know that a lot of progress has been made in finding spaces for rough sleepers in empty apartment blocks and hotels. Locally, Vicki is amongst those who have put a lot of hard work into finding this accommodation. They still however don't have anywhere to prepare meals. So, Vicki and some willing volunteers that she has corralled into working with her is still at the church, providing a space where people can get advice, do their laundry and have some breakfast. They are truly God's partners in reaching out to those in need and unbinding and letting them go.

Vicki, we can't promise you a medal, but you have our thanks and our prayers.

God bless you,

Tony