

Terry Crolley Keeping in touch. 10th May 2020

Our much respected director of Music, Terry Crolley has contributed this week's reflection to keeping in touch.

These are difficult days for everyone. There is no imminent end to the isolation many of us are experiencing. The media is awash with critical incidents; of people breaking the rules and police overreacting to "offenders".

Little attention is given, however, to the closure of churches other than occasional references to whether the strictures announced by the Archbishop's of Canterbury and York are really necessary.

Many people feel deeply about the lack of access to their place of worship. This is not just because of the absence of spiritual inspiration but also forfeiting social interaction with fellow worshippers. This is especially so for the older generation of which I am a part.

There is a niche group though who feel it as keenly as most. Organists are critical to inspiring and fostering a spirit of optimism and to uniting people through high quality church music. The closure of our churches has, however, deprived them of the opportunity to practise their craft, to maintain the high standards of performance they expect of themselves and which, when done well, is so central to uplifting the human spirit.

Professional organists, mainly at Cathedral and Collegiate level, are fortunate to have a home organ. They continue to practise without losing their skill. For those of us at a lesser level, however, access to a home organ is impractical. Daily piano practise is the only way to keep musically fit. The touch and technique of the two instruments, is, though, quite different. The absence of a pedalboard is also a huge loss. When churches re-open some of us will have to sharpen our skills to regain the virtuosity we may have lost.

Organists, worthy of their salt, think about the musical and spiritual needs of the congregation. I am fortunate that at St. Margaret's this is reciprocated. Thus when our isolation is lifted and we all return to our church I hope the congregation will forgive the many errors likely to creep in over and above those they normally hear!

Terry Crolley

Director of Music,