**FOCUS ON FRIENDS IN THE CRISIS**

***Iris Ford -* Iris first came to St Thomas’ Church in 1952! It would be easier to list the roles she hasn’t held in the time since, rather than the ones she has, but being PCC Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer, Treasurer and Churchwarden are all ways in which iris has served our church. she was also one of the managers of a nursery school that used to meet daily at St Thomas, with a paid teacher. Apart from the church, Iris has also served Scouting groups as treasurer and was an active member of the Community Health Council. Her paid job was as a school secretary. A lifetime resident of Greenwich borough, Iris is a knitter and an avid cryptic crossword fan, completing 3 a day!**

***Joan Lake – has been worshipping at St Luke’s, where she has held many roles, for around 25 years. A former personnel manager, Joan used to do a lot of sailing and at one time ran a Sea Ranger crew. Joan loves to travel and garden, has a wide circle of friends and has been a long term supporter of Greenwich Welcare, where she was treasurer for 27 years.***

***Iris*** and ***Joan*** were asked these questions about lockdown:

1. What are you most grateful for at this time?

**Iris -** I thank God daily for the ability to recall many memories of a happy childhood, a supportive family and 46 years of happy marriage to Norman. I am grateful, too, for the support and care from church friends and neighbours during the Lockdown.
There are not enough words to express my thanks to Ian for his loving care and support, in spite of his own health problems. He has been my rock since Norman died, especially during the past two years.

**Joan –** I am grateful for friends and the many kindnesses I have received. I try to speak to 4 or 5 people every day. It is good to share experiences with them, no matter how trivial they may be.

I am very grateful for my little garden, which gives me so much pleasure. Also, the sight of more birds than I normally saw before lockdown. I am also grateful that as a pensioner I am in receipt of a regular income and don’t have to worry, as many do now, about how to pay the bills.

I am filled with admiration and gratitude for all those, many of them volunteers, who are working so hard to ensure that the essential services are still operating.

1. What have you learned about yourself?

**Iris** - I have learnt that I am quite comfortable with my own company and being on my own a lot is not a problem. I am also learning to be patient (very difficult) when I cannot do things as I used to or do things as quickly. A hard task.

**Joan** –  I have learned I need to have more self discipline. I am determined not to waste this time and I have a strong urge to “set my house in order”. Things are improving, but there are some things I still have to get to grips with. Most of my relatives live some distance away and I don’t speak to them as often as I should, but we have been making efforts to strengthen our links with the aid of technology (something else I haven’t quite come to grips with).

Whilst I am used to living alone I do miss the physical presence of other people. You learn and communicate so much better if you can see facial expressions.

1. What would you share with others?

**Iris**  - Recently I have thought a lot about the way in which communities have pulled together marvellously during the current Covid 19 crisis. I hoped this would have generated the actions necessary to sort out the problem of discrimination (of all kinds) and the disadvantaged. However, it seems the actions of the many activists causing mayhem have shifted the focus from that problem to their actions. I pray that we do not allow the initiative to put right the wrongs in society to slip.
When I get too down about the way of the world I listen to music or sit in the garden for a while to get my balance.

**Joan -** I do look forward to the Sunday Service on zoom and enjoy it so much. Whilst I continue with my daily Bible reading and prayers and I know God is always with me, it is so comforting to pray with others. It is also good to see so many people in the benefice taking part in the service and be able to name them. I do feel the links between our churches are much stronger.

I am sure many people are excited that shops and other businesses will be open shortly. I pray that they will heed the rules, be sensible and look out for others.

*Thank you Iris and Joan for sharing with us.*