

Tour de Lockdown

This story about life in lockdown comes from Susan Walker - a member of St Ninian's Pollockshields.

She writes:

"On April 1st 2020, I received the letter I had been expecting and dreading. "The NHS has identified you as someone at risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus. Stay at home and avoid all face-to-face contact for at least twelve weeks from today."

The letter went on to explain sources of support and advice, how I should change my normal living arrangements (separate bedroom, bathroom) and how other members of my household needed to respond. In essence, that meant my husband, John, should not have any contact with other people either.

In many ways, we had already isolated ourselves. After all, we were a week into lockdown. Our social life had stopped before that; I had absented myself from church before services were stopped and hadn't been in physical contact with anyone other than John for two weeks. However, I had been walking and cycling locally, exchanging greetings, at an appropriate distance, to neighbours as we passed. That had to stop. My outlook would now be restricted to the views from my house.

I have been cycling for much of my adult life, latterly on an electric bike, due to health problems (which have led to my shielded status). After several years of health problems, I had been getting back out on my bike, enjoying both social and fitness benefits. The thought of losing that was yet another blow, but we did have a turbo trainer – a device which holds a bicycle by the back wheel and applies a resistance – a "posh exercise bike". My old touring bike was extracted from the depths of the garage and set up for me to ride. All I needed was motivation...

In support of



That came in the form of a challenge from my friend Fiona Wallace, suggesting that my daughter, also Fiona, and I join her in riding the distance of the Tour de France – 2,200 miles between us, during the period of my isolation. The Tour de Lockdown was born. We chose to start a JustGiving fundraiser in aid of the Trussell Trust, the charity which supports and coordinates foodbanks across the UK.

Many churches collect donations of food every Sunday and take them to their local foodbank. As soon as services were stopped that regular source of food stopped too, but the need for foodbanks is growing rapidly due to the impact of the Coronavirus lockdown with the Trust reporting an 80% increase in demand in the first two weeks of lockdown.

Food banks have reported their busiest ever fortnight during the first two weeks of the pandemic.



We have been recording our mileage for over three weeks now – the accumulated total is over 725 miles already, which is a great start. Riding in the garage is tedious but I can at least look out across the street and observe people passing by. I can listen to music and I have also set up my tablet on a stand in front of the bike and can watch videos of other people's bike rides, including local ones recorded by my husband to keep me entertained and motivated.

Thirty days into "shielding", I have found a routine which gets me through each day and week. I ride six days a week, for between 30 minutes to an hour, taking a rest day on Sundays, when I watch the live broadcast from the SEC. I also walk round and round my garden for 15 minutes twice a day. I am keeping St Ninian's (Pollokshields) website up to date and sending out a regular email newsletter to our church members.

I have rediscovered my sewing machine and am making face coverings in the hope that eventually I will be "released" into the wild again.

When it all gets me down, which it does, I try to remember that I am loved and cared for, I don't have financial worries and I live in a lovely house in a village, with fields overlooking my back garden. I am getting fit and I am safe.

Keep well, stay safe.

If you would like to contribute to our fundraising effort, for the Trussell Trust, you can do so by following the link <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tourdelockdown>.

Susan Walker
St Ninian's Pollokshields

If you have a story about your experiences of lockdown and how God is moving in your life, we would love to hear it - please email digitalmissioner@glasgow.anglican.org