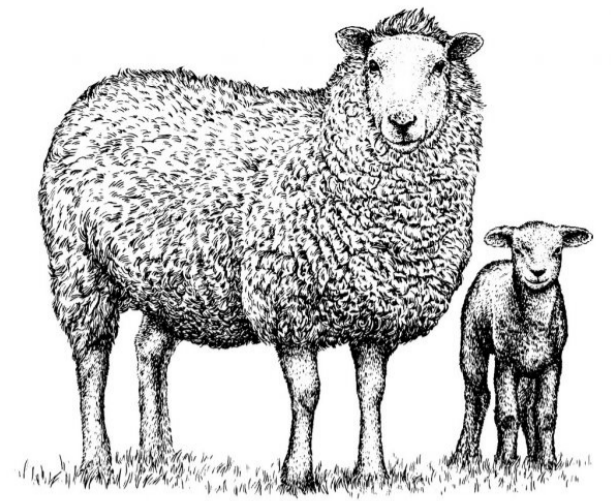


THE SHEEPFOLD PROJECT

Part 2



I'm going to try and set out more about what I think might be the way forward for the community that gathers under the banner of the Ordinary Office.

I am convinced that chiefly we are called to be a dispersed online community and that already seems to have a life of it's own and is growing steadily, now almost 16,000 on Twitter and the office is being said an average of around 3000 each day. Both of these statistics would have been beyond my wildest expectations when we began in July 2018.

The onset of the COVID crisis has left me convince more than ever that online is the way forward but there has to be more.

As relationships grow people who only know each other virtually begin to seek opportunities to meet in the physical realm.

That said we have no way of knowing how long this COVID situation will go on or indeed if we may have to live with it for ever

So let me share with you what I think God is putting on my heart

Some of this I have talked about in the previous Sheepfold document and some will be new to you but now I believe the situation we now find ourselves in is making sense of some of the things I've felt for a while yet didn't at the time know why.

The Sheepfold Wood & Prayer Garden

The image of the sheepfold has been on my heart for a number of years and was re-enforced one day when a friend turned up out of the blue and presented me with the gift of a five bar gate with the words I am the gate to the sheepfold carved in to it. He had made it for me because he had dreamed it without knowing I was already thinking of it.

As well as this I have been thinking for some time that when people say the office online it would be good if people could imagine a real physical thin place where they might be sat praying the office.

Lately that feels to me like a wood, with a clearing where we can make a dry stone sheepfold, a space where people can dedicate trees and plants and imagine themselves among them and when they get the opportunity actually come and visit. A type of prayer garden/wood.



The shot on the last page gives an idea of the sort of thing I am imagining.

As well as the sheepfold I am imagining a canopy that would go over it but leaving a gap for air to flow through, the next image I am sharing is how I see it but without the sides.

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So the woodland prayer garden? Slash sheepfold is one part of the vision for the future.

Taking The Office On The Road

I have also been thinking how nice it would be to take the office out on the road, to go to different places with a mobile chapel and set up at a regional hub, say a cathedral or large church for a day or two where people could come along and join us for sessions of our office, meet the team and get the chance too build relationships and simply to hang out.

Lately I have noticed that lots of local authorities are selling off their fleet of mobile libraries, these vehicles are wheelchair accessible and would make an ideal mobile chapel.



Could this be a project we could fundraise for?

The Ordinary Office Book

Meanwhile I have been working on a book of the Ordinary Office, a clear print book with additional liturgies and prayers as well as some background to the whole project.

I envisage this in a format rather like a Filofax with a felt cover and ring binder so that over time as more prayers and liturgies are written they can be added to your book and you can also add pages of your own.

