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| Update fromColin & Audrey GibsonLebanon.  June 2020 |

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| A group of people sitting at desks in a room  Description automatically generated |
| All Saints Church. |

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| A group of people sitting at a table in a room  Description automatically generated |
| Keeping our distance! |

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| Yesterday was a special day for our church, All Saints Beirut, as it opened its doors again after nearly three and half months of Covid19 lockdown.  It was a joy to meet and worship together again with a simple service, during which we prayerfully remembered the plight of the 70 million refugees worldwide as it was World Refugee Day. We are both on the PCC and our decision followed many emails and Zoom calls to agree the best date to re-open after the government gave the go-ahead a few weeks ago.  We didn’t have much official guidance and so gathered best practice from the Diocese, the USA and the UK and tried to make the service both safe and meaningful.  Thankfully, we don’t have to fill in cumbersome risk assessments!  We hope that after these first gentle steps we will all gradually get accustomed to worshiping together, while keeping our distance.  The next hurdle is working out how to administer Holy Communion - but that’s another meeting!  |

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| Refugee crisis - one of the uncertainties facing Lebanon |

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| This month we decided to ask a few of our colleagues for their views about what’s going on now and how they felt about the future. By far the biggest concern was the uncertainty – over the refugee situation, the economy, Covid19 - will things get worse before they get better and is there an end in sight.  And while the Government has said it is hoping for an influx of tourists to boost the economy when the airport re-opens (possibly July 1st but already delayed twice) many of our colleagues thought, rather, that it will be packed with people trying to leave.  When asked if she would encourage her (adult) children to return from the West one colleague replied “This is always a conflict.  I would love to have my family close, but objectively I have to tell them they are better off where they are now”.    Encouragingly, few expressed much concern about religious tensions, though tensions between Sunni and Shia, reflecting regional problems, is a concern.  Indeed, foreign countries meddling in Lebanese affairs was mentioned by many.While some had decided it was impossible for anything to change many still expressed hope the future.  “We have been through so many crises before and every time we have come through”. Most encouragingly, it was their faith that gave them hope, even amid so many trials. Please keep Lebanon in our prayers.  |

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| Many of you will have heard that we have decided the time is right to end our service with LSESD, here in Lebanon.  We expect to finish sometime later this year - subject to the situation with Covid19.  This has not been an easy decision but it is for positive reasons and we will be providing more information next month in our CMS Link Letter.  We thank you again for your ongoing support and ask for your prayers as we consider our next move.  |

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