

Coronavirus Update from St Botolph's Church. 18th March 2020

Dear Friends

As you may know things having been moving very rapidly with regard to the Government's advice around the Coronavirus and non-essential contact.

The Church of England has suspended all public worship with immediate effect. That means there will be no services until further notice on Wednesdays and Sundays.

All other events at St Botolph's have already been suspended. The Lent Lunches have been cancelled as you may already know.

The church will remain open for private prayer and reflection between 10am and 4pm. If you do come in to spend time in church, please wash your hands as you enter, and if others do happen to be present, please sit well apart from them.

Worship

As there will be no opportunities for collective worship the Church of England has prepared simple Morning and Evening Prayer services, which we can all use each day.

A copy is attached. Other prayers have been prepared for us to use and they are also attached.

We invite you to join with Al, Rev Heather and me in "meeting" to say Morning Prayer together at 9.30am, each in our own homes, and Evening Prayer at 5pm, again each in our own homes.

In this way we will continue to worship God together and offer our prayers to him in this difficult time.

Please "join" us for Morning and Evening Prayer at those times or at times more convenient to you.

I would stress that we don't meet in church but say the service in our own homes.

Keeping in Contact

We now have a fairly up-to-date list of the church family with contact numbers and email addresses for those with computers

Al, Rev Heather and I will keep in touch with you either by email or phone on a regular basis to make sure you don't need any help. Please contact us at any time if you have a query or need some help.

Both Al and Heather are listening to advice and will socially distance themselves for a while. Heather because she has reached a certain big birthday and Al because he has some underlying health issues.

I, however, am more than happy to help out with shopping etc if you do need help, so please contact me for help.

Our contact numbers are as follows:

Mark 01529 306776

Al 07961 654486

Heather 01529 488334

We also have an emergency mobile, which will be with me or a deputy covering for me. That number is: -

07592 065567

Help

If you need help with shopping or similar task please contact me in the first instance.

Family Contacts

The Church of England has suggested that our church families may wish to share their family contacts with the clergy team, so that we can contact them in an emergency arises.

If you would like to share that contact then please pass that on to me. I will keep that information secure in the rectory.

Sunday 22nd March at 7pm

The following is a message from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York calling us to pray this coming Sunday for all those affected by the coronavirus, for the anxious and for all working in the health service.

"We have called, along with our fellow church leaders, for a day of prayer and action this coming Sunday - Mothering Sunday (22nd March).

Mothering Sunday has always been both a day of celebration for many and a sensitive and emotional day for some. Wherever you are this Sunday please do join in this day of prayer and action and remember especially those who are sick or anxious, and all involved in our Health Service. As one action, we are calling on everyone to place a lighted candle in their window at 7.00 p.m. as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished."

Our Archbishops have also pointed out that our Christian lives will look different in the weeks ahead as we can no longer worship in the usual way.

They encourage us to use the prayers and services attached below to worship God, to pray for people, our country and the world.

We are asked to continue to support foodbanks, the homeless etc.

Our Bishops, David and Nicholas, have also written to all clergy reminding us that what is called “social distancing” is actually “physical distancing”.

We can remain close to each other, and to God, in prayer, in love, and in many other ways as God is always close to us.

St Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans that “Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ our Lord” Romans 8:39

In closing, I pray that God will keep each one of you safe, and that he will continue to bless you in this difficult time. Please be assured that you will all be in my prayer and those of Al and Rev Heather

Every blessing

Mark