



The Vicarage,  
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18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear friends,

I'm writing to you in these unprecedented circumstances we are living in as we face the spread of the Coronavirus, and yet as we heard on Sunday from God's word: "**Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.**" (Isaiah 43:1) As a local church family, now is the time God wants us to rise up to serve our local community with practical action and words of hope. In this letter I want to communicate to you some really important things that we have decided on as a leadership team:

- 1) Following the guidance issued today by the Church of England, we are not going to be holding any services of public worship on Sundays for the foreseeable future.
- 2) My strong advice is that home groups do not meet either.
- 3) We will not be holding any prayer meetings (or any other church meetings) until further notice.
- 4) Rachael and I will be sending out a daily **Thought for the Day** to encourage you in your daily walk with Jesus. This will also be posted up outside the church on a large cross for passers-by to read too.
- 5) We are also going to put up a large wooden cross outside the church which is clearly visible to passers-by on Glebe Road. On this cross we are going to put a notice that invites **anyone** who would like to let the church know about prayer requests they may have by emailing [prayer@baystonhillchurch.org](mailto:prayer@baystonhillchurch.org) or phoning them through to (01743) 583215 that will then be accessed by the clergy, wardens and Debbie as the prayer co-ordinator. If appropriate, she will then contact the prayer ministry team to ask them to pray.
- 6) Please note that even if we are not able to meet together at church on Sundays there are many ways you can be encouraged and 'fed'. These include Premier Radio, or UCB, or the BBC's Daily Service and Sunday Worship on the radio and BBC iPlayer, or maybe try **#LiveLent: Care for God's Creation** - the Church of England's Lent campaign for 2020. With weekly themes shaped around the first Genesis account of creation, it explores the urgent need for humans to value and protect the abundance God has created. This daily audio content is available via the app.

- 7) We are also going to 'livestream' sermons each Sunday from this Sunday via our church website at [www.baystonhillchurch.org](http://www.baystonhillchurch.org) Just go to the **sermons** page on the website and you will be able to access the sermon for that Sunday. If you want to hear it broadcast live just click on the link at the top of that page, or at any other time, just click on it as normal. We will also print out sermons for those who do not have access to the internet.
- 8) If you are, or know somebody, who needs food shopping delivered to their door and they live in the village, please ring Jo Marsh who is coordinating deliveries of food in Bayston Hill. She can be reached on: 07776 123136. Jo will direct you to a local volunteer who will organise for a delivery to be brought to your door. This also includes requests for prescriptions and dog walking. Please do take up this offer if it would be helpful to you! (Please note that no personal care can be provided.) Please do take up this offer if you are over 70 or in a vulnerable health category. For those living outside the parish we will provide help with those things. Please contact Cheryl Farrow on 07952 187572 if that applies to you.
- 9) Please do check the information being issued by the NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>) or the Government (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>) for up to date advice on coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 10) The latest Archbishop's statement is also attached to this email for your information and encouragement.
- 11) Rachael and I will follow up this letter with a pastoral phone call to you all over the course of the next few days.

Let me finish with some more words from the prophet Isaiah as we seek to be people of faith, hope and love: **"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."** (Isaiah 41:13).

With love in Christ, Peter



Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops  
of the Church of England



 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Ref:+TT

Tuesday 17 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

### **A letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to all Church of England Clergy**

We wanted to write to you today to offer you advice and encouragement at this very difficult time. Please find attached to this letter some careful guidance. We write this letter having consulted with the bishops across the Church of England and are grateful to them for their wisdom and help.

Thank you for all that you do and will continue to do as disciples of Jesus Christ and ministers of the gospel. We recognise what a very unusual and painful time this is for everyone and we want to stress that we are praying for you all and very grateful for all that you are doing.

It has always been the historic vocation of the Church of England to be the church for everyone. William Temple, one of the great Archbishops of Canterbury and York of the last century, is often quoted as saying that we are the one organisation which exists for the benefit of its 'non-members'. As the challenge of the coronavirus grips the world, and as the government asks every individual and every organisation to rethink its life, we are now asking the Church of England in all its parishes, chaplaincies and ministries to serve all people in a new way. Public worship will have to stop for a season. Our usual pattern of Sunday services and other mid-week gatherings must be put on hold. But this does not mean that the Church of England has shut up shop. Far from it.

We need to look at new ways of serving everyone:

1. Where you can and where it is prudent we encourage all clergy to continue their pattern of daily prayer and, if it is your practice and can be done within the constraints as set out, a daily Eucharist. It is vital to observe strictly the protocols of hygiene and, where necessary, self-isolation and social distancing. This will not be public worship that everyone can attend, but an offering of prayer and praise for the nation and for the world. Please do of course keep the church buildings open for private prayer wherever possible as we know so many do all the time.
2. If churches and worshipping communities have the resources to live stream then they should do so. This will enable the people of God and anyone and everyone who looks to God for support and meaning in this time of crisis to participate in the life of worship at home. At the same time both nationally and in our dioceses we will produce and provide resources for prayer and worship in the home. This will be especially important for those who are self-isolating, but also for the benefit of everyone.

3. Many people are going to suffer during these coming months as the coronavirus reaches its peak. Tragically there will be deaths and so many will be grieving and fearful. We, the Church of Jesus Christ, with our sisters and brothers from other Christian churches, must be in the forefront of providing practical care and support for the most poor and the most vulnerable and we offer our services to all those who are beginning to think through how best to provide for those in need.

Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day. We may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people. And we can certainly offer practical care and support. Please do carry on supporting the local foodbank and buy extra provisions for it. Ensure the night shelters wherever possible are kept open. There are many very encouraging schemes happening right across our country in communities to focus on caring for the most vulnerable and do continue to play your part in those. Then by our service, and by our love, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that will counter fear and isolation - will spread across our land.

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 specially 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.

This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly are a church for all, or just the church for ourselves. We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.

Please, therefore, join us in this great challenge; and pray for our government and nation, for each other, and especially those who work in our health and emergency services.

Yours in Christ,



The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby  
Archbishop of Canterbury



The Most Revd & Rt Hon John Sentamu  
Archbishop of York