

Dear church family

We realise that many of you will be anxious and worried about the current situation and quite upset that the churches are closed for services. Attached is a Franciscan reflection that we hope will be of help to everyone. Also attached are prayers for Mothering Sunday that everyone can use.

The Archbishops have requested the following be shared with church family...

“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.”

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will lead a national broadcast online and across 39 local BBC radio stations this Sunday.

Find out more about how the Church of England is responding to the challenge of becoming a "different sort of church" at cofe.io/VirtualCofE. Further information from the Church of England regarding things they are hoping to develop can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

Also attached is a list of online resources received today from the Diocese that may help people.

St John's will be open for silent personal prayer from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Candles will be lit at 7pm. We ask that you please enter in silence and remain silent, and please leave the church in silence. Thank you. Clearly, all social distancing guidelines must be observed. Those who should be self-isolating are encouraged not to attend.

If lighting a candle at home, the following prayer can be used:

Lord, as I light a candle

may it be a sign of solidarity and hope

in the light of Christ, that can never be extinguished.

Amen *“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” John 8:12*

St John's will also be open for prayer on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 am and on Thursday mornings from 10-11 am. The same guidelines regarding social distancing and self-isolating apply.

During this time, The Way In House will be the pastoral hub for the parish. The Way In telephone number will be the first port of call (01733 325613) and a central point for anyone needing non-urgent pastoral support. I.e. Delivery of food, medication etc. We have a team of volunteers who will be co-ordinated through The Way In to provide assistance to those who need. If the phone is not answered, please leave a message and it will be picked up as soon as possible.

The Parish Office will still be functioning but is closed to visitors. If you need something done by the Office, please ring or email rather than simply try to call in. At present we do not know what hours we will physically be in the Office but we will pick up calls where possible and definitely have access to emails. As the situation changes so quickly, we are sure you will appreciate that we will do our best to respond to needs as they arise.

Please continue to pray for the Night Shelter, both the guests and all volunteers. Also, pray for George, Sue & Kevin as they do their best to respond quickly to an ever-changing situation. In addition, pray for those looking to the pastoral care of our church members and for all who are anxious and overwhelmed at this time.

With blessings and prayers for the week ahead

Anne & Sarah

“Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7