



Abington Pastoral Letter #4

23.03.2020

Dear friends

You may have already heard that the Prime Minister has announced this evening that all places of worship as well as shops to be closed immediately. Our Bishop has authorised to move all daily offices, Eucharists and any livestreamed services to be moved to the homes of priests. This means the church building will be closed at all times while the government instructions stand. All Weddings and Baptisms between now and Easter are canceled.

It feels like our world has been turned upside down just over a week. When I was listening to PM's announcement this evening, I was almost finished writing my letter to you with some new information. Then the PM's announcement came through and I had to delete everything because all the information that I put in became instantly irrelevant. Now I am writing a new letter to you. That's how quickly our world is changing right now.

We are living in truly uncertain times. We don't know when and how the vaccine will become available. We don't know what impact this will have on our economy. We don't know how our life style will change after this. Actually we don't even know what is going to happen tomorrow. Perhaps that is why we are seeing levels of fear and anxiety around us. We, human beings, fear what we don't understand. We get anxious when we feel we are not in control.

I know how awful and perhaps even depressing this all might feel. I know some of you are

genuinely frightened and very concerned about the whole situation. It is true that the threat of this virus is real. Therefore we must do everything we can to keep ourselves and others safe. And they are not two different things. Here, to keep yourself safe is to keep others safe.

In fact, this is not the first time that the humanity faced a pandemic. History tells us that, unlike some sad stories we hear about the empty shelves in supermarkets, what was always predominant in times of pandemic was acts of love, compassion and sacrifice. And that is what is happening in our community as well. While few people were driven by fear and anxiety, stacking up toilet rolls for the next 50 years, there are so many people; those who are helping the elderly and the vulnerable, those who are delivering groceries and letters to their neighbours, those who are phoning the isolated, the fearful to let them know that they are not forgotten, that they are prayed for; those who are delivering craft packs to children; those who are working tirelessly in hospitals, schools, churches, foodbanks, night shelters, police force, emergency services, supermarkets, sharing all they have got with others. Yes, it is true that the threat of this virus is real. However it is also true that God's presence with us in the midst of this all is real. Those people who are sharing their love, their time, their energy with others through their professional work, through simple acts of kindness, through their ministry are the proof. They are saving lives, spreading hope and light, even as I write this letter. The virus might take away our ability to breathe but it cannot take away our love, our hope, our faith as God's people.

Please remember especially the following people and organisations in your prayers as well as those who you remember in your personal prayers.

- All the children, students and schools
- Local Foodbank at St. Alban's
- Northampton General Hospital and all the medical staff across the county

If you wish to help with our foodbank then please contact Malcolm Ward at [malc.ward49@gmail.com](mailto:malc.ward49@gmail.com)

If you need Worship at Home as a hard copy booklet because you are having problems with your printer or computer then please send me an email at [rector@abingtonchurch.org.uk](mailto:rector@abingtonchurch.org.uk)

If you have any specific prayers that you would like us to pray together with then please send

me an email. If you would like to have a chat please remember that you can always contact me on 01604 621265. I am here for you.

If you know any family or children who might need support or friendly phone call, please email to Cathy or Alison at [cathytinsley18@gmail.com](mailto:cathytinsley18@gmail.com) or [alison.canfield@sky.com](mailto:alison.canfield@sky.com)

If you would like to check more information regarding the guidance for churches, please check the Church of England Website. You can also watch or listen to the Archbishop leading the act of worship on behalf of all of us. <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

I have attached to this email Colouring Pages that is particularly designed for anxious children which can be enjoyed by the grownups as well. It includes some really lovely prayers which you can say while you are doing the colouring. I hope this might be useful.

Let me conclude this letter with one of the final prayers of our Worship at Home.

*We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.*

*We are not people who protect our own safety:*

*we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.*

*We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.*

*We are your people God, giving and loving,*

*wherever we are, whatever it costs.*

*For as long as sit takes, wherever you call us. Amen.*

Please take a good care of yourself. May God bless you, your family and fill your hearts with his light and peace.

With love in Christ

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