

Community Engagement Social Action: Responding to Social Distancing.

Act Justly, love mercy, walk humbly Micah: 6:8

Many of you will be in discussion about what practical acts of engagement you can do in your communities at this time. One of the key messages is Unity as churches co-ordinate with each other and with existing agencies at work locally, to pool resources and support each together to serve our communities.

When crises emerge it's tempting to set out thinking we have the answer without talking to others: adding support to existing initiatives will help us to spot the real gaps in where we may be able to help, to learn from each other and to bless each other. So whether you're a big church or a small one, think about who you can work or make a partnership with, and build relationships with each other. Good personal hygiene is key: ie washing your hands, not touching your face, and following the 2-metres (6ft) rule.

We join Archbishop Justin in urging congregations to be at the forefront of providing practical care and support for the most poor and the most vulnerable during this crisis: *"Our life is going to be more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day 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. Let us make sure our buildings are open... and make sure that the fact that the building is open is well publicised for people to come in and spend time in church on their own or with their loved one."*

In the information below you will find helpful suggestions from your CESA Team, resources to help you engage with your community and our contact details: we are here to support you so please do stay in contact. We have partnered with the CofE, CUF and a number of other dioceses to share your stories of supporting people and communities with individuals, churches, dioceses and charities using #peopleofhope. Just search for #peopleofhope on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. A daily Top Tip will also be posted there.

Know that your efforts will be a real blessing in your communities, helping them to see that we know a God who is Good News; Word in Action is our passion.

In no particular order:

- Set up a Good Neighbour / Love Your Street / Acts Of Kindness Scheme online
- Contact and make yourselves available to a local know Charity/ Organisation/ Service Provider/ Foodbank / Council Service etc. Volunteers will benefit from the practices, protocols and training already in place in those environments.
- Think about forming a Buddy/Befriending scheme for the most vulnerable: remember this may include single parents too.
- Display posters outside with helpful community information such as the local Foodbank arrangements / contact details for those who are anxious etc. CPO

has a coronavirus resources page where you will find Posters and other resources: www.cpo.org.uk

- Arrange with others to have a meal/ watch a film/ play a game (like monopoly etc) over Skype/ Zoom www.zoom.us/download What's App/Facebook etc, to link with local people.
- Start an online club/interest group such as a Virtual Choir/ Gardening Group etc.
- Consider donating a spare phone, computer or laptop to someone without one; make sure the memory has been correctly wiped of all personal information.
- Ask your local shops if they need help delivering orders to vulnerable people. (See Safeguarding guidelines.)
- Telephone someone who is isolated and vulnerable.
- Buy an extra item and place it in your local Foodbank.
- Look at the Messy Church resources here: www.messychurch.org.uk and facebook.com/messchurchBRF
- Public visual prayer stations can be found here: www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/328363/HOPE_Spaces.aspx
- Link people with your church livestream or initiative online, for example Rev Mandy Carr's Film Club here: www.stgeorgesweald.co.uk (under 'Activities'.)
- Holiday Hunger: FEAST is an initiative several churches partner with to feed families in receipt of benefit, free school meals or who are on a low income: www.feast.org.uk
- Investigate with your local council whether you can be involved in their civil emergency plan.

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