

GOOD MORNING

This Easter Sunday morning I wanted just to bring you a brief message.

First - it's been so good to see the **whole village united** and **helping each other** as we all face Covid-19.

I'm sure like me you **want to thank all** those who volunteered to make up the **Stanford 20 helpers**. Each providing essential help to isolated villagers by collecting food and medicines. They have brought practical help and comfort to so many.

I also wanted also to **THANK YOU** to all those who work at the **COOP**, and our **PRIMARY** and **PRE-SCHOOL**. The way all staff have **SERVED OTHERS** has been incredible, making such a difference in the life of our village - so thank you!

I wanted too to **THANK** all those who live in our village who are **KEY WORKERS**.

Those who work in our **NHS**, our **FOOD CHAINS**, **EMERGENCY SERVICES** and our **CARE & NURSING HOMES** – like The Grange, right next door to me.

All are working **extremely long hours** and deserve our prayers, thanks and support.

I'm also **very conscious** that so many of you are in **ISOLATION**. Whether in the **general** lockdown, or because you are **over 70** or have a **medical issue**.

These are **hard and difficult times** and I know how much we all **long for normal life to return**.

For now, **to save lives** by protecting the NHS, we must **keep in touch via phone**, Zoom, FaceTime or other forms of social media.

You may be **out of sight**, but you are all **in my prayers**, and of those of our church members.

[PAUSE]

EASTER is a time to **reflect on the life**, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

On **Good Friday** we think the **pain and suffering** that he endured for each of us.

On **Easter Saturday**, we, like the first disciples, are in a **place of waiting**.

The first followers of Jesus felt hopeless. They were in such despair, such gloom. All hope seemed to have gone.

But then on **EASTER SUNDAY**, Jesus **ROSE** from the grave.

He conquered death - offering **new life**, a **new hope** and a **new purpose** for living.

Therefore, **for Christians**, followers of Jesus, we face **Covid-19** with a solid foundation. What do I mean?

Well, because of Easter, Christians ..

Know where they have come from, they

Know why they are here, and

They Know where they are going when they die on this earth.

These **three foundations** help us **root our identity** in God.

They also give us a **deep inner peace** and purpose – **whatever** life throws at us – including Covid-19.

This Easter, right in the midst of this pandemic, it is my prayer that **you to might find that deep** inner peace and purpose.

Perhaps for the first time, you may recognise that Jesus **died for you**, and wants to **offer you** peace, hope and strength at this most difficult time – and for the rest of your life here on earth.

A very **Happy Easter** to you all, and **may God Bless** and **protect** you and **our village**.