



Wednesday 11th March 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Each day seems to herald a further advance of the coronavirus. It's clearly important for us as a church family to respond wisely and I trust that you will find the following points helpful.

- It is important that we follow the official guidance from **Public Health England** which appears to be updated on a daily basis. There is important information about the virus and particularly about maintaining good hygiene as well as guidance on what to do in various circumstances.
- We are also following guidance from **The Church of England** from the main website, which is reinforced by regular mailings received from the Diocese of Rochester. There is guidance for churches and leaders as well as specific information about other matters such as communion services. The latest instructions received from the Archbishop of Canterbury is that at Communion Services only the bread should be administered. We will be complying with this guidance.

In addition to this there are a number of other things which I want to share.

1. **We will want to show love for others within the community.** If we know of those who are self-isolated then, though it would be unwise to visit, we will want to find ways to communicate, perhaps on the phone, and provide appropriate support, perhaps through doing essential shopping. It is important that our instinct as followers of Christ is to look outwards to the needs of others.
2. **We will want to show love to others within the church family.** If we are feeling unwell ourselves we will need to refrain from joining others at services and meetings and, on medical advice, we may need to self-isolate. [If you do need to self-isolate then **please let us know** and we will arrange for someone within the church family to be in contact by phone or email.] Even if feeling well, we will want to show particular care to those who are more vulnerable, which appears to be the elderly and those with underlying health conditions. Certainly, in our gatherings we will want to make sure that we respect how the virus appears to spread by refraining from the usual handshake and maintaining the highest standards of hygiene.
3. **We will want to express our love to God, through hearing His word and prayer.** Especially at such times we will want to be nourishing our souls. Perhaps it is helpful to be aware that if we were faced with closure of our buildings then plans are already being put in place so that through the St Nicholas website we will make available a fresh sermon recording for each Sunday, together with appropriate prayers. In addition you should be aware that there are a number of resources already available each week on the website: [Weekly news sheet](#), [prayer diary](#), [monthly newsletter](#). In addition you are more than welcome to join the list of those who subscribe to my [weekly prayer briefing](#).



The Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent (Book of Common Prayer), though written in traditional language, seems particularly appropriate:

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And finally, please find this link to a song we've sung just a couple of times which speaks about times when we are fearful. It's entitled '[Jesus, strong and kind](#)'.

Warmly in Christ,

Angus MacLeay

Rector

Church Family updates:

Where possible, these will be sent via ChurchSuite with hard copies made available on the welcome desk for those who do not have computer access.

Please check your ChurchSuite Communication preferences to ensure you are registered to receive email updates.

The MyChurchSuite App is easy to download and access and we recommend that you use it to stay up to date with church communications especially at this time of uncertainty. Contact the office if you need help.