



St Peter  
& St Paul  
ABINGTON



18.03.2020

## Abington Pastoral Letter #2

Dear friends

Many of you may have already heard from the news that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York have suspended public worship in the Church of England. This means there will be no service in the church for a while. Other groups and activities such as Lent Groups, Tots Group, Choir, Experience Easter will have to stop as well. Funerals and Weddings still take place.

This is a very painful time for the Church but also for the whole nation and the world. However we are not left without purpose or meaning. Experiencing the same pain and suffering often lead people to truly understand each other and care for each other. Suspension of public worship in the Church does not mean that our life of prayer and worship as disciples is suspended or canceled. The opposite. We as a church, are now called to share the same pain and suffering with our neighbours and indeed with the whole nation. Our life of prayer and worship is no longer confined in the church building or in our own gatherings. Our home, our street, our neighbourhood, our parish, our town is our church now.

During this period of suspension, all clergy are encouraged to continue to offer prayer and worship without the presence of congregation. I will be saying Daily Morning and Evening Prayer

at home and on every Friday at 9.00 am I will be saying Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel. On every Sunday I will be celebrating the Eucharist at 10.00 am in the church on behalf of everyone in the parish. This will not be public worship that everyone can attend, but an offering of prayer and worship for the nation and for the world. May I encourage you to join me in spirit on Sunday at 10 am by praying at your own home please? I will be soon sending out Resources for Worship at Home which you can use to pray together with your family or on your own. We may not gather in the same building but we can still pray and worship in the same spirit at the same time. We all are now on the same journey although we may not see each other as often as we did.

To begin this journey together, the Archbishop of Canterbury has called, along with other church leaders, for a day of prayer and action this coming Sunday –Mothering Sunday (22<sup>nd</sup> March). He has asked us to 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 invited to place a lighted candle in our window at 7.00 pm as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished. I will be joining you through this action in my home with my family.

The public worship might be suspended from today but the Church is going to be working very hard indeed with its outreach and pastoral work. Soon we will print Abington Pastoral Card which I have attached to this email. These cards will be left in the church for you to take to deliver to your neighbours while the church is open. Malcolm Ward will be leading this work. We will let you know when the cards are ready.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has said that the church building should remain open during this period for private prayer. Many churches are already opening their doors. Abington Church will remain open on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm for private prayer. Liz Kelly will be leading this work and more details will follow later from her.

We are very much aware of those who don't have email addresses and who are likely to be isolated. We will soon introduce a group system based on geography through which people can

look after each other and communicate with each other. Some of you will be asked to keep an eye on your neighbours and to deliver these letters and Worship at Home Service Sheet to them. Bob Purser will be leading this work and he will soon send out emails. If you are willing to help with this please contact him at [bob.purser@abingtonchurch.org.uk](mailto:bob.purser@abingtonchurch.org.uk) or call on 01604 636947.

Our pastoral visits will be reimagined and we will be doing this work in a more creative and safer way. I will be still doing necessary pastoral work and priestly ministry in the parish and in St. Christopher's Care Home with great precautions of course. I can be contacted at [prayandwork@gmail.com](mailto:prayandwork@gmail.com) or on 01604 621265.

I have shared a lot of information and have said a lot of things in this letter. If you feel this is a bit too much, if you feel stressed or anxious right now, then please take your eyes off the screen for a moment and look around you. What do you see? It may feel that so many things are getting canceled and suspended. But the most important things in your life are still there. Most of all, God is still there for you. He is with you. He will never cancel his promise to take care of us. God promised us through the Bible,

*Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid." (Hebrews 13.5-6)*

As we remind ourselves of his promise, How about we take a few deep breath for just a few moments and say our Pocket Prayer?

*God, you are good.*

*I need help.*

*So do they.*

*Thank you.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

Please take a good care of yourself. Please remember in your prayers those whom we may not see for a while. Please pray for those who will be isolated and those who will be looking after

them.

May God encourage you and give you his strength. May he unite us in his Holy Spirit as we begin this journey of faith together as one God's people.

With my love and prayers in Christ

Revd. Jun

Parish Priest