

Braydon Brook Benefice

Hello Friends

Well, our church doors are now shut and I don't think any of us saw that coming. These past twenty four hours have felt so sad. Talking to Head teachers in our schools and hearing their pain. Emailing so many people to inform them that events have been cancelled. Listening to the tears of our wedding couples who know that their marriage will not take place on the date they want. Taking down posters, notices in our churches and then this morning shutting Crudwell Church and placing a sign on the door. I'm feeling worn out and perhaps you are also?

We are being asked to discover new ways of being church, and Bristol Cathedral has expressed this as *"Church is not closed, Church has changed"*. We can still support each other, we can still contact each other, but we must adapt in our social interactions and in the way we conduct daily life.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

We cannot gather on Sundays, or any other day, so there are some different options available to you for Sunday Worship:

TV

The BBC has announced that it will be broadcasting a Sunday morning service on TV starting this Sunday, although there are no details at this stage. There is also 'Songs of Praise' usually broadcast at around lunchtime on Sunday.

Other ways to worship

Songs of Praise each Sunday

Radio 4's Sunday Worship at 8.10am

Various live Facebook Events, locally Revd Steve, Rector of Woodbridge Group offers Daily Prayer at 9am, for details, please look on the Woodbridge Website

Paper based

Many of you will have received the service booklet, 'Worship & Praise', there is a link on the Website and it's the service I'm intending to use on a Sunday.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Revd Sarah, Richenda & myself are ringing lots of people in the Benefice on a daily basis, just to say hello. If you'd appreciate a phone call, let myself or Alison Withers know.

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

All Weddings and baptisms are currently not taking place, as Prime Minister Johnston stated last night.

Funerals will be at the graveside or in the crematorium. Numbers attending is severely restricted.

MEETINGS

All non-essential meetings are also suspended. Where urgent PCC business needs to be transacted the Standing Committee is authorised to do this, and decisions are allowed on the basis of email discussion and agreement. However complex issues may need to be discussed

more extensively by a multi-way phone call or video conferencing and we are exploring how this might be achieved. APCMs will be delayed.

PCC members – if there is urgent business please contact your Lay Chair so that we can work out how this business will be dealt with.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND FUNDRAISING

We do not know when restrictions will be lifted. It is not too far ahead to the annual round of fetes, on which several of the churches are dependent for a significant portion of income. I would ask you to continue planning towards them, even though we do not know whether they can take place. They may need to take place in a reduced form, or you may need to find alternative ways (e.g. a jam stall at a fete could become a more general sale of provisions across the coming months to the benefit of the church in question). Cashflow may start to become a problem, and we must be prepared for this to be a year when reserves will have to be used.

If you give regularly by the collection plate I ask you to continue to set aside what you would have put in the plate, and to keep it for when you are able to give it again in person. If you would like to start to pay us by bank transfer please contact your treasurer (Alison can let you know who this is).

GOLDEN RULES

The Bishop of St Albans has published the following Golden Rules, which you may have read in the Charlton & Minety Magazine:

One. Each one of us can think about how we can protect and support our neighbours. So much of the public rhetoric is sowing fear about the danger of other people. So, taking all the official precautions, offer help and reassurance to others – and don't demonise anyone or any group.

Two: Think about who may be suffering more than me. For those of us who are healthy there is much less to worry about but the elderly, the housebound and those with chronic health conditions may be very anxious.

Three. Don't give into panic and start hoarding food. There is plenty to go around, so practise the Christian discipline of sharing. Ask your neighbours what they need and do your best to help them get it. If you are self-isolating you will of course need some supplies.

Four. Live today to the full. None of us ever know what the future holds. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6. 25 – 34), Jesus challenged his followers to live each day fully and not be afraid. Every time we are tempted to give in to fear we need to make a conscious choice to respond in trust and openness.

IN CLOSING

I look forward to being able to meet with you in person again, whenever that may be. In the meantime, please get in touch if you need us, or join us if you can at one of our midweek gatherings or Sundays at 10am.

With prayers & blessings to you all,

Tonya