

Dear St. Edward's family,

It is with a heavy heart that I prayed this morning thinking about not gathering as the body of Christ tomorrow. I'm sure many of you feel the same. These are difficult times, but limiting social contact is necessary to preserve our health care system from being overwhelmed. Revd Professor Alasdair Coles, part of the Immunology Network at Cambridge University, has said that this is the worst medical emergency this country has known outside of war time: *'Already people with treatable conditions, who could be saved normally, have died because we do not have the capacity to treat them. Young doctors are being ventilated. We know since testing has stopped that the numbers of the infected only count those with severe infection, not all who are infectious. It will be nigh impossible to avoid infection unless strictly self-isolating.'* We all need to act responsibly so that we don't cause undue stress on the NHS and possibly endanger the lives of those who could be saved.

We will need to be creative in how we express the love of Christ and live as his body during this time. Below are a few thoughts on how we might do this for the coming weeks.

1. Church: The church will be open periodically throughout the week and on Sundays from around 10-12. We will not be holding services, but you are welcome to come and pray. Please maintain appropriate distances (2 metres) and be considerate of others. This Sunday please join in the national day of prayer and light a candle in a window at 7pm. <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/latest-news/coronavirus-archbishops-call-national-day-prayer-and-action> We are currently looking into the best ways to possibly broadcast services live from St. Edward's in future weeks. We will also be rescheduling our APCM and the diocese has given us till 31 Oct. Please keep an eye out for email updates.

2. Prayer: It is so important that we remain a praying people at this time. Pray for one another, pray for those working in the health care field, pray for the vulnerable and self-isolating, for families with school children, and those who have lost their jobs or are suffering financially. If you do not use the daily office, may I encourage you to take it up during this time. You can find it online here <http://www.oremus.org/cofe.html> If you would like listen to Compline in the evening you can find it read here <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/spoken/evening.html> and you can find other prayers from the C of E here <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources> Psalms that are appropriate at this time are Psalms 91, 103 and 121. Do meditate on these daily as we remember that we dwell in the shelter of God's wings.

3. Communication: Most of our communication will now be done online or by phone. Please do be in touch whenever needed. I will be working from home since the college has closed our building and Matthias will also be around. Be creative with things like Facetime, Skype, Zoom or other online meeting software. I've found <https://zoom.us/> to be very useful for group chats and you can sign up for free.

4. Giving: I pray we can continue to be a generous people at this time. Even though the church building is not being used, we still have our ongoing costs and expenditures. If you

do not give online, can I please encourage you to make your donations via BACs to our parish account: *Sort code: 20-17-19 Account number: 30851477.*

Finally, please take care of yourselves at this time. It will be stressful on all of us and for many self-isolating will bring on mental health challenges. I hope we can all support each other as best as possible during this time, trusting that Christ remains present among us all.

With his blessings...

Mark

p.s. please forward this on to anyone who might not be on our church email list