

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We are living in unprecedented times, in a constantly changing situation which is unsettling at best and distressing at worst. Following the guidance from the Government and the Church of England we moved on 24 March from suspending all acts of worship and gatherings in the benefice but keeping St John's chapel at St Laurence's open daily for prayer and reflection to closing all churches. This does not mean we are shutting up shop but adapting to the changing situation and looking for new ways of carrying on, one way or another. We are strong as a church community and we must do all we can to keep ourselves united together spiritually and through prayer.

We have produced two booklets to support those at home for whom coming together to pray and attending public worship are important. One is for anyone at home to join the clergy as we continue to say Sunday Morning Prayer at 10.30am, from our own homes. The other offers a range of prayers and readings to be used at any time, both by those who pray and worship regularly and those who feel a particular need to pray at the moment. You can download both booklets on the Sunday Services page of the church website where you will also find a link to the offices of Morning Prayer and Compline which I will be saying at 9am and 9pm every day. Please join me in these if you can. Radio, TV and a host of websites offer other ways of sustaining our faith lives and continuing to be part of the body of Christ.

The Parish Office in College Street is closed but its work continues remotely, sending out the weekly news sheet to keep us all in touch and updates as the situation develops. The telephone is being monitored but it is best to contact the office by email (office@stlaurences.org.uk).

With all churches closed there will be no christenings or weddings. Funerals will be conducted at the graveside or at the crematorium with only very small numbers of immediate family attending.

Anyone needing assistance should contact me or Ann Barge and we will do our best to help you. Continue to pass on any prayer requests and do pray for each other and the world at this time of challenge.

Be assured that we continue to do the best we can under these very difficult circumstances. If I can offer one piece of advice it would be: focus on what we can do and not on what we can't do. Use this time we have been forced to take from our normal activities to pray, read, rest and consider others as much as possible. We will get through this in the best way possible if we obey Jesus and love God with all our heart and love others as we do ourselves.

Love and blessings in Christ

Kelvin