

Update #1

21st March 2020



Welcome to the first edition of 'Update', keeping you updated during this time of social isolation...

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Public worship is suspended across the Church of England. This means our 9:45am services will not be happening until further notice. This also affects all other public services, such as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.
- Baptisms, weddings and funerals can still go ahead, but with only the absolute minimum number of people in attendance. In the case of a wedding, this means only five people may attend: the priest, the couple, and two witnesses. For funerals, the restriction is for only immediate family.
- This coming Sunday (22nd March) will be a National Day of Prayer for the nation. More details below.
- All hirings and bookings, with one exception, are suspended until further notice. It is far too early to say when the suspension will be lifted, but we could be looking at months rather than weeks.
- The one exception is Crafty Drama, who are (for now) able to continue to meet in the Church Hall, although this is partly on the basis that there are no other users of the church premises.
- The Annual Church Meetings are postponed. It is too early to say when they will be able to go ahead, but the Church of England is making the necessary legal arrangements for them to be postponed for some time (if necessary, until the summer or autumn).

PASTORAL CARE NETWORK

One of the hardest things about the current crisis is the sense of isolation. This will be more severe for some than others, although all of us are likely to experience some sense of loneliness or frustration over the coming weeks. Whenever possible, do your best to stay in touch with friends and family by telephone or online.

At St Botolph's, we are expanding our Pastoral Care Network. You can expect a phone call in the next few days from someone in the church, to check that you are all right and to see if there is anything you need. If you haven't heard from anyone by Tuesday, do please let me know (01206 572641).



This Pastoral Care Network will be a means of ensuring everyone is cared for over the coming weeks and months. It will also be a means of keeping everyone informed of the latest details for the church. It may not feel entirely necessary at the moment, but we are being told to expect the situation to get far worse before it gets much better.

A NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER — Sunday 22nd March



The Archbishops are calling the nation to prayer. This Sunday, please set some time aside to find Psalm 23 and read it aloud, to pray the Lord's Prayer (and to pray the Lord's Prayer every time we wash our hands!), and then to pray for our nation at this time. We are also being encouraged to light a candle at 7pm and put in our windows.

You can find out more via this link —

www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/latest-news/coronavirus-archbishops-call-national-day-prayer-and-action

PARTICULAR PRAYER NEEDS

Please pray specifically for:

- **those at St Botolph's with underlying health conditions.** Pray for health and safety.
- **NHS staff in/around Colchester.** Many are already over-stretched and over-tired.
- **Paul Watts** (Dan Watts is Churchwarden at St Peter's; Paul is Dan's father, living in Coventry). Paul has significant underlying health issues, and has recently been diagnosed with C-19.



If you have a particular prayer need that we could publicise in a future 'Update', just let us know.

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

No one is pretending that online contact is as good as face-to-face fellowship. But in this time of social isolation, it may be that online opportunities are better than nothing. Here are a few to be aware of:

- **Songs of Praise** — <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006ttc5/episodes/player>
- **St Martin in the Fields** — <https://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/> (look for the 'livestreaming' tab)
- **Facebook.** If you have a facebook account, look out for these pages. If you 'follow' or 'like' them, you will be kept up to date with any future posts:
 - the Church of England — <https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland/>
 - the Diocese of Chelmsford — <https://www.facebook.com/chelmsdio/>
 - Mark's page as Town Centre Vicar — <https://www.facebook.com/towncentrevicar/>

If you have a favourite that we could publicise in a future 'Update', just let us know.

THE COLLECT FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Anything for future 'Updates'?

Please email towncentrevicar@gmail.com or ring 01206 572641.