

URGENT NOTICE – SERVICES SUSPENDED

It has been announced that, as of the 17th March, the Archbishops have regrettably suspended all public worship in the Church of England, so there will be no public services in our churches until further notice. This will, sadly, cover Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. We are also having to suspend *Cake & Company*, *Sparklers* and *Flying Fishes*, at least for the time being.

We are urged to keep the flame of prayer alight by continuing to pray individually. The archbishops have called for a national day of prayer and action on Mothering Sunday, 22nd March. In particular they ask everyone to place a lighted candle in a window at 7pm that day to symbolise the light of Christ shining in our homes.

We will keep our churches open as places of prayer and comfort. Hand gel or washing facilities, tissues and bins will be available, as well as aids to prayer. We will ask people to keep a safe distance from each other, and will institute a regime for sanitising door handles, etc on a regular basis. More information will be provided as soon as we have it (see www.whittonteam.org.uk for updates).

In addition, we'll be circulating resources for prayer, and will be making greater use of our website, and seeking other ways of using technology to support the people of our villages spiritually, including – possibly – live streaming. Please let us know if there are things that you would find especially helpful!

Meetings will also be cancelled, or will be done by conference call or electronically wherever possible.

Pastorally, please do keep supporting those you already care for, as well as additional villagers under strain. However, PLEASE ensure that you keep both them and yourself safe. Do not visit (even more so, do not enter someone's home) without checking first by phone that this is all right. Then follow good hygiene protocols as set out on the NHS website. If you are ill, please observe self-isolation and don't even THINK of visiting, and if someone else is self-isolating, please respect that. DO use phone/email/skype/WhatsApp/Facebook/whatever to keep in regular touch.

On a practical note, there is a great deal we can do. Ramsbury already has plans in hand for providing support for the vulnerable. In Aldbourne the Church Community Contacts have been asked to put a note through each door on the their "patch", offering help and giving contact details, if support is required, so that a support network can be co-ordinated without duplication or missed need. Similar steps have been taken in Baydon. See the contact details below. Please don't forget the Food Banks in all of this – existing needs aren't going to disappear just because others have arisen!

Weddings and funerals can still take place at this time – provided that small numbers of people are involved, and hygiene protocols & safe distances (2m between people) can be observed.

The full text of the Archbishops' letter is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/17%2003%2020%20Joint%20letter%20from%20the%20Archbishops%20of%20Canterbury%20and%20York%20re%20coronavirus.pdf>

With love and prayers, and blessings on all you do

Rhona Floate
Team Vicar
540253

Sue Rodd and
Team Vicar
541571

Karen Rizzello
Team Curate
07882055878

Joanna Hobart
Aldbourn Community Contacts
540418