

Thursday 19 March 2020

Dear Friends,

We are living through unprecedented and unsettling times because of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. Even last Sunday, we could hardly have imagined what this week would bring in terms of the impact on the life of our churches. It is particularly challenging as we journey through Lent towards Passiontide and Easter, the most significant period of the Church calendar. To have to cancel public acts of worship is heart-breaking for all of us at such a crucial time, but we recognise the need to follow official advice in prioritising people's health and wellbeing. The clergy are especially mindful of those of you who are self-isolating and whose lives are consequently restricted: it is indeed an anxious time, particularly for those who live alone. We will be keeping you and all our parishioners, and the local community we serve, in our prayers.

Unless we are advised otherwise, we intend to keep our church buildings open as much as possible. We must obviously follow best practice with regard to social contact, but please know you are welcome, if you are able, to come in to say your prayers, light a candle, or just sit in the sacred space for a while. Within the next few days, we plan to make available an order of service that parishioners can use at home, and we'll be providing a regular focus for prayer and contemplation. TV and radio programmes may also help.

We are receiving some requests for - and offers of - support from members of our congregations. Please let us know if you would welcome a phone call, or assistance with practical things like shopping or collecting prescriptions. We will keep in contact and let you know of any developments in these fast-changing times.

The Church of England website has lots of ways to join in daily prayer (please see: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>) or you can join the Archbishop of Canterbury for an online service this Sunday (22 March) – you can find out more at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishop-canterbury-lead-first-national-virtual-church-england-service> You can read the letter from the Archbishops of Lambeth and York about church service restrictions here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishops-call-church-england-become-radically-different-public-worship>) as well as some Digital Resources on this page: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na> (beneath the FAQs – scroll down the page).

In the letter from the Archbishops of Lambeth and York we are asked to **place a lighted candle in our windows at 7.00pm this Sunday, 22 March** as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished – do please join in on this day of prayer and remember those who are sick or anxious and all those who are involved in our health service.

Sadly we have had to cancel all church services, all Lent courses, all planned church meetings and all children's activities until further notice. However our churches are open for at least part of the week for private prayer – St John the Divine is often open when Neil is working in the church (not Thursdays) – please call before going (020 8332 1838), St Mary Magdalene is usually open between 8.00am – 3.00pm Mondays to Saturdays. However, because the nurseries at St Matthias have now closed, the church may not be open. Please remember to try and sit a good distance from anyone else in the church.

With every blessing,
Anne, Neil and Wilma

Prayer for a Pandemic
by Cameron Bellm @krugthethinker

May we who are merely inconvenienced
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
remember those most vulnerable.
May we who have the luxury of working from home
remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
remember those who have no options.
May we who have to cancel our trips
remember those that have no safe place to go.
May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market
remember those who have no margin at all.
May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
remember those who have no home.
As fear grips our country,
let us choose love.
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.
Amen.

Please pray for:

...**Fr. Jamil Khadir and the Anglican congregations in Nablus** in the West Bank
...**Christ's School** and all those who were due to take exams
...**Glass Door**, their guests, staff and all who volunteer for this project
all those who work for the NHS and for medical researchers
...**those who are sick or anxious** and for those feeling lost and lonely
...**the sick and those in need** - Hermione Lockyer, Ron Bond, Madge Thorns, Molly Lambert, John Roberts
...**the departed, may they rest in peace** - Sylvia McAlister

World Day of Prayer Thank you all those that attended this year's service on Friday 6 March for your participation and commitments. Unfortunately because of the coronavirus, we have had to cancel the follow-up meeting planned for Friday 27 March at Raleigh Road.

COMING UP

Parish Retreat Saturday 24—Sunday 25 October at The Royal Foundation of St Katherine in Limehouse. Our retreat will be led by writer and popular Radio 4 Thought for the Day contributor Brian Draper. The weekend will be a time to switch off from the noise and busyness of daily life and find rest for body, mind and soul in beautiful surrounds. St Katherine's offers luxury accommodation (all rooms en-suite) and great food. For more information and to reserve a place please [email Revd Anne Crawford](mailto:anne.crawford@stkatherine.org).

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

We are urgently looking for a **new PCC Secretary**. This is an exciting opportunity to be involved in the governance of RTM. It does require you to be computer literate. Please speak to a member of the clergy for more information.

ELECTORAL ROLL

The revision of our Church Electoral Roll is now underway and finishes this Tuesday, 24 March. If your name is already on the roll and there are no changes to your details you don't need to do anything. If you are not on the roll and would like to be, application forms are available at the back of church. If your details have changed please complete a form, noting 'Amendment' at the top. Please put your completed form in the Electoral Roll letterbox at the back of church or return it to the Parish Office, or the electoral roll officer (Margot Gallie at St Matthias). It is necessary to be included in the roll if you

wish to vote at the annual meetings for the election of church officers and representatives. If you have any queries please contact Margot on 020 8948 2775 or margot.gallie@gmail.com

Because of the Government directives regarding coronavirus the **Christian Meditation Group** will not meet until further notice.

Emergency Food Box at St Mary Magdalene—for those in urgent need of food we have a box at the back of church. If you would like to donate food, please feel free to do so. Items should be non-perishable and easily consumed without the need for a tin opener or cooking equipment. Thank you.

The **Foodbank** is running low on the following donations:

- UHT milk (1 litre)
- Long life fruit juice
- Sugar
- Mashed potato (packet)
- Rice
- Tinned fruit/puddings (400gms)
- Tinned meat
- Coffee
- Jam/marmalade
- Breakfast Cereals

These can be bought and donated at: Waitrose plc, Sheen Road, Richmond and Sainsburys plc, Friar Style Road, Richmond and also the Vineyard Centre (please ring the Vineyard Centre to check when they're open: 020 8940 0274).

With best wishes,
Tina

Tina Roberts
Parish Administrator (Mon – Thurs, 9.00am – 5.00pm)
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Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at: <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/wp-content/uploads/Privacy-Notice.pdf>