

*Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

From the Bishop of Peterborough

APCMs, Elections, etc.

The APCM is cancelled. Under powers in the new Church Representation Rules, I am extending the deadline for these meetings. Attached you will find the legal instrument bringing this into force. I'm afraid it is rather wordy legalese, but that is necessary. It should be fully self-explanatory.

Banns and Marriages

Marriages may take place, but on a small scale, with just the priest (and possibly a deacon who is learning the ropes), the couple, and two witnesses present. No vergers, organists, photographers, or guests should be present. If the banns have not already been read or completed, you will need a licence. I hope we can reduce the price of licences during this crisis to roughly the cost of banns, but that is still under discussion.

Funerals

Although this will be very difficult for everyone, numbers of those attending the funeral will have to be kept to a minimum - we advise immediate family only. This should also be communicated to anyone in the wider circle of friends, family or colleagues in advance. Sadly, those over the age of 70 and those with an underlying health condition are strongly discouraged from attending in the present circumstances.

The Bishop has recorded a 5 minute video. Here is the link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW6bb8l8gm0>

Further information from the Church of England Website
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

St Edmund Warkton

News Sheet

22 March 2020

COVID19

Coronavirus, COVID-19, more accurately, SARS-CoV-2

The rapid spread of COVID-19 demonstrates just how easily transmitted the virus is.

Some facts:

For the vast majority of people infection will lead to nothing more than a short lived sore throat and a runny nose. For many there will be no symptoms at all, although they will still be contagious.

The risk of severe symptoms increases with age. Children are extremely unlikely to develop any severe symptoms, whereas those over 80 are at high risk.

- You will be at high risk of developing serious complications if you already have a respiratory condition (such as asthma), diabetes, or blood clotting problems.
- Person-to-person airborne transmission of the virus demands that people are in close proximity to one another, closer than about three or four feet.
- Hand-to-hand contact, or a hand coming into contact with an infected surface, then on to the face, mouth, nose or eyes is the most likely cause of transmission and infection.

Children and babies are the most common transmission agents for the virus.

The coronavirus is robust. Some studies suggest it may be able to survive on a surface at room temperature for as long as nine days.

Please turn over

What sensible steps should we take personally?

The coronavirus family of viruses are simply a long string of RNA that is wrapped up and enclosed in a lipid (fatty) envelope. In order to destroy the virus you need to break down the lipid, hydrophobic envelope. This can be done effectively with soap, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide cleaners, and many other household cleaners. Water alone is insufficient (it's like trying to clean an oil stain off a pair of trousers with water alone). Be aware that cleaners labelled 'antibacterial' or 'antiseptic' are not necessarily any good either, we are dealing with a virus not bacteria.

So, what steps can we take:

Wash your hands regularly with soap or a cleaning gel with a high alcohol content.

Avoid direct contact with other people as much as possible - especially children and infants.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Clean your household surfaces, door handles, taps, toilets etc. regularly with a good household cleaner (preferably containing peroxide).

Don't visit elderly relatives. This is hard but it may be possible to use video phone calls (Skype, Whatsapp etc.) instead. If you're not used to this, but have a smart phone, this is really very simple to do.

If you are in a high risk group consider isolating yourself from possible infection.

What is the Benefice doing?

The Diocesan Bishop has passed on instruction from the Archbishop not to give the wine at communion when it takes place. He has also issued other instructions for leaders that we will be following.

Please avoid hand-shaking and hugging.

This may be hard, but it really is quite important.

Use some other form of greeting instead.

Where is God?

It is important that we recognise God is here with us, not distant and disinterested. This crisis is not lost on Him.

Throughout the Bible many of God's people faced hardship, struggles and persecution.

It was by casting themselves on God alone (1 Peter 5v7) that they found comfort, strength and hope.

Some helpful Bible passages:

Job 19v23-27 - I know that my redeemer lives.

Psalm 27 - The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Psalm 91 - He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 139 - You have searched me and known me.

Lamentations 3v19-33 - His mercies never come to an end.

Habakkuk 1 - How long, O Lord?

John 14 - Do not let your hearts be troubled.

2 Corinthians 4v7-18 - Do not lose heart.

Revelation 21v1-8 - all things new.

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Some prayers to help you pray:

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

*God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Please turn over