



17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

To everyone at St. Mary's

I am sure that you have all been following the news, so it will come as no surprise that, following the advice of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, public worship at St. Mary's has been suspended until further notice.

These are uncertain times, and for some also fearful times, and I therefore want to reassure you of what I hope you already know. That church is about so much more than public worship. Church is about who we are; who God is; and where our hearts are. There is so much love among the community at St. Mary's and there has never been a more important time for us to share that love. Let's take care of ourselves, one another and the community in whatever ways we can. The smallest gestures can make the biggest difference.

In the absence of public worship, it is my commitment to provide resources for prayer and worship at home. Many resources can be found online, in particular the Church of England website at <https://www.churchofengland.org/> There are prayers, service sheets and links to other online resources, including places livestreaming services.

I have produced a Service of the Word booklet for all of us to use on a Sunday morning at home while we cannot meet together in person. A copy is attached and we can provide printed copies for anyone who would like one. Each week, I will email the collect for the day, the readings and a sermon.

This Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, along with other Church leaders, are calling for a day of prayer and action. As one specific action they invite us all to place a lighted candle in our window at 7 pm as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished. You are invited to be a part of this.

The church building will be open every day at 9 am (except Monday), when I will be saying Morning Prayer. If you would like to join me virtually, you can find the service at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer> There is also an app that you can download, if you prefer. Please let me know if you have any particular prayer requests. The church will remain open until 12.30 for private prayer. On Sunday the building will be open from 8 am until 11 am, when I will be following the Order of Service I have provided for use at home.

Finally, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me if you have questions, concerns or would just like a chat. My numbers are 07949 769580 or 020 8337 4914. And please be assured of my prayers.

Best wishes

Theresa

Theresa Ricketts  
Priest in Charge