



THE PARISH CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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Tuesday 17th March 2020

Suspension of Church Services Due to Coronavirus

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Perhaps a better title for this E-mail would be 'Number 122 of the things they do not prepare you for at Theological College!'

One of the joys of meeting together as a church each Sunday is our freedom, joy and want to worship God through our services and social interaction. The Coronavirus outbreak this year has turned the world upside down and it has been announced in the last few hours that the Archbishop's of Canterbury and York have stated that all acts of public worship within Church of England parishes should be suspended until further notice. The news follows yesterday's advice from the government.

In addition, any group or social activity which is associated with either King Charles the Martyr or St Mark's is equally suspended. This includes: Junior Church, Women and Men's groups, T@3, Bible study, Mary/Martha, St Mark's Women, St Mark's home groups, The Lent Course, Craft Groups etc. This suspension also applies to any official business meetings such as PCCs and the Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) A standing committee at KCM is arranged for Wednesday evening and we will keep this meeting to consider our contingency planning. I will be meeting with the wardens and clergy in the coming days to clarify our practices for the foreseeable future.

We often say that Church is about the people and not about the buildings and this could not be more true than right now. Christ says in John 13:34-35:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

We must uphold this commandment in the coming days, weeks and months.

If you are healthy and willing to give your time to look after those who are already in or will be going into isolation then please give your details to either of our church offices respective to the place in which you worship. Our Parish secretaries, Johnny and Nicky, will collate all this information. If you are in isolation or find that you become ill and need to go into isolation then please contact either of the church offices and we will twin you with at least one or two others who can support you by phone and assist you with shopping. Isolation must not mean loneliness so do not be hesitate to contact us. All personal details will be dealt with under strict privacy guidelines (GDPR) and only the licensed clergy (Laurence, Sarah and Claire) plus the two parish secretaries will have access to the information gathered in this way.

The King Charles website was built to support media output such as videos and live-streaming. Over the coming days we will be exploring ways in which we can make videos and broadcast small acts of worship so that everyone can feel a part of church life in the coming months.

For those of you who use social media, KCM has active platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You can access these pages here and we will keep them regularly updated with spiritual output and related materials.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kingcharlesthemartyr/>

Twitter: @KCM_Church

Instagram: @kingcharlesthemartyrtw

Over the coming days and weeks will also explore more ways in which we can bring the church to you in your homes. This will include redesigning the St Mark's website and getting St Mark's on social media platforms.

KCM has a long standing tradition of keeping our church open during the day for prayer and reflection. We will do everything in our power to continue to keep the church open every day, Sunday included, unless we are informed otherwise. The aim is to keep the church open between 11am - 3pm each day. We will provide a space for you to write and offer prayers which will be prayed for by the clergy on a regular basis. Many of those who supervise the church (Church Watchers) may find themselves in isolation due to their age or health. Therefore if you would like to offer your services as a Church Watcher in this period then please get in touch with the KCM office.

We are still waiting for advice on how to handle baptisms, wedding and funerals and this information will be given to relevant parties in due course.

This e-mail is not confidential and may be passed on within both our parishes. Please do not share e-mail addresses with others and treat the information here with care.

Claire, Sarah and I of course more than happy to hear from you if you want any clarity over the situation or if you simply want a chat and a prayer.

The Church of England website is being regularly being updated with advice for churches and ministers and you see all of this here: The wider website has a number of resources for news, prayer and reflection. I will pass on more information as it is published. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Please take care of yourselves and follow all the guidance from the government on hygiene, looking out for symptoms of Covid-19 and self isolating responsibly.

With much love and prayers

Laurence



The Reverend Laurence Powell
Vicar of King Charles the Martyr Church, Tunbridge Wells.