



## URGENT COVID-19 UPDATE

Dear Friends,

### COVID-19 Changes

There are some letters that one really doesn't want to write – and this is one of them! We met with the wardens this evening to review how we should proceed in light of the rapid changes in the pandemic and **have decided to cancel all live services in the parish for the time being** and move our worship online.

It is a very difficult decision to have taken, not least because of the missional implications and the really exciting things we had planned; but with the evidence available and the relatively small, poorly ventilated building that we have, we concluded that it is the only responsible way to proceed at this point. The evidence and advice presented by the medics and scientists yesterday was what persuaded us – along with a sense from our own appeals to The Lord in prayer.

Proverbs 23:3 was one of our readings today:

*"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty."*

Our hope is that this will not be a long break, and we will review it weekly as the situation develops and evidence emerges. It is just a particularly frustrating time of year to have to change services that so many of us particularly look forward to.

### Alternative Arrangements

We will work as fast as we can to put suitable replacement offerings in hand, but as we see it tonight, we believe that our service offering will now be:

- Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am Morning Service live streamed.
- Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm. Carol Service "Premiered" at 6.30pm followed by Zoom chat.
- Christmas Eve from 4pm a "Make your own Christingle" service (replacing the crib service).
- Christmas Day 10.30am Christmas All-Age Service live streamed.
- Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am Morning Service Live Streamed.

Many of you took advantage of the two outdoor carol services last weekend, and we thank God that they were both able to go ahead.

We will try and make the first 15 minutes of each Sunday service child friendly as per usual, so do help your younger ones engage with that part of the streamed services especially. Grandad and James are back this Sunday!

## **What can you do?**

Alongside what we can provide in terms of services; as your pastors, we simply encourage you to take responsibility for your own spiritual welfare, and for that of those around you. Please phone or video message each other regularly to chat and to pray. Think both of your Connect Group but also of those you know who might not be in one. Take advantage of our online offerings as well as the national phone lines and TV services. Lean on the *rules of life* we have spent the last year developing (or start creating one) so that your faith can continue to burn brightly.

## **Communication**

As well as this email and our social media, we will be asking people to phone down the church list to get the message out, but please do play a part in passing this message on – especially to anyone you think doesn't access email.

## **Emmanuel**

Despite the disappointment, the truth remains that:

**"The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood."**

John 1:14 (MSG)

Let's be deeply thankful that He was prepared to face the uncertainties of this world for us!

God bless,

Alan & Jane