

COVID-19

Brief version of the CONTINUITY PLAN

St John's Hensingham

Revised 19th March 2020

If you live in or around Hensingham, even if you have had no previous contact with church, you are very welcome indeed to phone or email either Fergus or Si if you would like a chat or if you need any help.

In line with the Diocese of Carlisle's request we have put in place a continuity plan to prepare for further development of the Coronavirus situation.

This document summarises the key points we need to be aware of at the moment; it will be updated as circumstances change.

Please note: rather than making decisions on the hoof ourselves, we are closely following the advice of the Diocese and of the Church of England. We will keep following this advice, updating information as we ourselves receive it.

- National Church of England guidance: <https://www.churchofengland.org/coronavirus>

1. Infrastructure

If both Fergus and Si are out of action, Stephen Jackson will carry responsibility.

Where possible, people should be cross-trained for essential tasks so that if a person needs to self-isolate or becomes ill, tasks can still be undertaken.

2. Communication

Marian as secretary, and Fergus and Si (and if necessary Stephen) will keep in touch with the wardens, the visiting team and the safeguarding team.

Church leaders can play a key role in addressing rumours, misinformation, fear and anxiety. In addition to the website and the facebook page, note especially:

- The blog on the church website will give frequent pastoral input.
- We will make a list of vulnerable people in our congregation who may not have family to look out for them. We will phone them to offer appropriate support.
- We will consider a kind of newsletter for those who are not able to access the internet.

3. General Hygiene at church

Information will be posted here when we anticipate having church meetings again.

4. Worship

With the advent of further social distancing measures and increasing numbers in self-isolation, anxiety levels may rise and people will be looking for spiritual resources accessible at home to help them. We will seek to offer worship and spiritual support to individuals and the community.

- A Bible message written at intervals for our church website blog and printed for those without internet access.
- A videoed sermon and prayers posted on the website and the facebook page from 9.00am on Sunday mornings.

We suggest that those in a household might gather on a Sunday morning, watch the sermon, use the prayers given, and pray with each other.

Personal prayer and Bible reading: reading the Bible and praying daily can help give structure to our days for those who are housebound with more time for thinking and reflecting.

Here is a short list of good online resources:

- **Explore Bible reading notes.** some notes are free to sample on the app: <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/explore-app>
- **Our Daily Bread.** Daily Bible reading notes: <https://odb.org/2020/03/18/>
- **Speak Life.** a resource run by Glen Scrivener. A variety of videos, blog posts and podcasts; also a prayer bulletin called "Speak Life Daily": <https://speaklife.org.uk/resources/>
- **Two excellent American ministries:**
 - Ligonier Ministries: <https://www.ligonier.org>
 - The Gospel Coalition: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>

We will consider producing prayer and Bible-reading booklets to offer as *personal copies only* (please encourage people NOT to pass these around).

Regular prayer times: Even if we don't meet to pray, setting up regular prayer times could positively help to establish a sense of corporate prayer and the strengthening of the praying community.

- People could agree with each other to be telephone prayer partners.
- Home Group/small group leaders could call their members to get prayer points and to share others prayer points by phone or text
- Virtual prayer meeting: some may like to set up a Zoom conference if people have been isolated for a long time. Zoom gives 40 free minutes of conferencing for multiple people https://zoom.us/?zcid=1378&creative=359469727804&keyword=zoom&matchtype=e&network=g&device=c&gclid=Cj0KCQjwu6fzBRC6ARIsAJUwa2To8euhGJ9KR0eDvm60ULDbJCYjwIJSwloTw_gdxNwddbR2osohvA4aAjOyEALw_wcB

5. Pastoral

The diocese advice says that clergy can offer an important public reassurance through being seen to be ‘present’ and available. But *this does not include physically visiting those diagnosed with COVID-19 or those who are self-isolating*. Clergy need to protect themselves and others, making sure they adhere to hygiene precautions.

Clergy can help with the distribution of government advice ensuring isolated members of the community are aware of the precautions they can take.

- We will network as appropriate with local health, welfare, safety networks, funeral directors and other service providers. We will ensure contact details for these service providers are held by key parish leadership.

For those who are **vulnerable or housebound**: Ministers and members of the Visiting Team will make phone calls to offer both pastoral and practical support.

For those who are **self-isolating**: We will consider how people can be supported with phone calls and via social media, and helped with the delivery of shopping or medication.

- It is very important that all church members involved in such support are very clear on and committed to adhering to the Government’s isolation and general hygiene advice.

Funerals: will still be conducted but in a very different way from usual.

- Good Church of England direction is here (under FAQs):
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

6. Activities

All church activities involving meetings of any sort are now no longer happening. We will give updated advice here when things change.

7. Finance

We are ensuring that there is other access to our accounts in addition to the treasurer’s access so that the church finances will continue to be administered appropriately.

The Rev’d Fergus Pearson

Vicar

Joyce Hewer and Andy Walkingshaw

Church Wardens