

I'm writing this with sadness to let you know that our Church services must stop for a while. This is what Archbishops Justin Welby and John Sentamu have written:

'It has always been the historic vocation of the Church of England to be the church for everyone. William Temple, one of the great Archbishops of Canterbury and York of the last century, is often quoted as saying that we are the one organisation which exists for the benefit of its 'non-members'. As the challenge of the coronavirus grips the world, and as the Government asks every individual and every organisation to rethink its life, we are now asking the Church of England in all its parishes, chaplaincies and ministries to serve all people in a new way. Public worship will have to stop for a season. Our usual pattern of Sunday services and other mid-week gatherings must be put on hold. But this does not mean that the Church of England has shut up shop. Far from it. We need to look at new ways of serving everyone

Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day. We may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people. And we can certainly offer practical care and support.

Please do carry on supporting the local foodbank and buy extra provisions for it. Ensure the night shelters wherever possible are kept open. There are many very encouraging schemes happening right across our country in communities to focus on caring for the most vulnerable, so do continue to play your part in those. Then by our service, and by our love, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that will counter fear and isolation - will spread across our land.

We have called, along with our fellow church leaders, for a day of prayer and action this coming Sunday - Mothering Sunday (22nd March). Mothering Sunday has always been both a day of celebration for many and a sensitive and emotional day for some. Wherever you are this Sunday please do join in this day of prayer and action and remember especially those who are sick or anxious, and all involved in our Health Service. As one action, we are calling on everyone to place a lighted candle in their window at 7.00 p.m. as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished.

This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly a church for all, or just the church for ourselves? We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.

Please, therefore, join us in this great challenge; and pray for our Government and nation, for each other, and especially for those who work in our health and emergency services.'

So, in terms of our church in Adderbury, the church building will remain open and everyone is welcome to drop in to pray – keeping at a sensible distance from anyone else who happens to be there at the same time.

There are some copies of Daily Prayer and some prayer cards which you are welcome to use in church and/or take away with you to use at home.

I hope that you are happy receiving this email – we are being forced to use an old email list, so if you would like your name removed, please let me know.

I'm intending to send weekly emails with updates, and with prayers and links to other resources, so please circulate this to other people and if you would like your name added to the list, let me know.

There will be another mail sent out before Mothering Sunday with ideas for prayer, and it would be good if we could all join with the Archbishops at 7pm on that day.

I know that villagers in Adderbury are good neighbours – let's make sure that we take especial care of those who are on their own, and of those who have recently moved here.

Yours in Christ

Liz Simpson, Vicar of Adderbury with Milton

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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.