



St Martin's Church Jersey – COVID-19 Response Impact on Ministry and Mission (16/03/2020)

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In light of the rapidly developing situation as regards the spread of COVID-19, and in consultation with the Dean, the Deanery Chapter, the Connetable and the Church Council of St Martin's, the Church Officers and I have decided to make the following changes to our ministry, mission and worship in the Parish.

Whilst our activities may change remarkably, our intention remains the same: to worship God, to spread the good news of His love, and to grow in our faith.

In practical terms, our guiding principles are threefold:

- To follow the advice of the Church of England and the Government of Jersey
- To protect the most vulnerable in our community (especially those over 65, and those with underlying health conditions)
- To be realistic about the resources available to us as the rate of infection increases.

As of Tuesday 17th March, the Church of England has **prohibited public church worship** and church activities, excluding Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms (with strict restrictions applying). Nevertheless, our churches will remain open for individuals to visit and pray, and as your priest I will be praying in church daily for the needs of our community and the wider world.

In the event that the Government or the Church of England suspends access to church buildings, such advice would supersede the plans outlined in this statement. **Please keep checking local news sources for more information.**

Making this shift in our ministry focus now, also means that we can free up our resources to focus on the longer-term task of **caring for our wider community**. In the coming days we will be creating a plan for ensuring the church, municipality, schools and other agencies work together to support anyone in St Martin's who is vulnerable and isolated. I will share more details about this as things become clearer.

New Pattern of Weekly Ministry

From Monday 16th March, the following regular events and services will be **cancelled** until further notice:

- Tuesday Evening Bible Course at the Royal Pub
- Wednesday Morning Healing Service
- Thursday Morning S'Marteenies Toddler Group
- Friday Lent Lunches (27th March and 3rd April)

On Sundays the church will remain open, but we will not be gathering at set times for collective prayer.

Daily Prayer in Church

The Parish **church will remain open** (until otherwise instructed) every day from 8.30am – 4.30pm and **anyone who wishes is welcome to come and pray**. There are a range of prayer resources available in church for anyone to use and to take home. We will keep a candle burning on the High Altar at all times, to remember the presence of Christ in the midst of our lives and our community.

Continuing to Live our Faith Together

Whilst the rhythm of church worship is being greatly disrupted, our necessity to live and grow our faith has never been more vital. With this in mind I would encourage all of you to consider the following:

- Visit the Church for **private prayer** whenever you feel able
- Use the **Labyrinth** as part of a guided prayer walk
- **Call your friends** and neighbours, and other members of the congregation; be brave and offer to say the Lord's Prayer together over the phone
- Read the **weekly church bulletin** that will be sent out each week – it will include updates on church life, reflections on our faith, and prompts for prayer. This will be emailed to our contact list, posted out if requested, or collected from the back of church.
- Make use of the prayer resources that will become available – you can print off the attached **'Prayers in Isolation'** card, request one to be sent to you, or collect one from the back of church.
- Read your **Bibles** – I would recommend the Psalms, and then chose a Gospel and slowly work through it a little bit each day.
- As a sign of our witness of faith to the wider community, all Christians are asked to **light a candle** in their windows at 7pm every Sunday evening.
- If you **give money regularly** to the church, please consider maintaining your giving if appropriate. Our ministry and mission rely heavily on the generosity of your giving, and that is going to become very difficult without your giving in the collection plate. If you are not already using planned giving (Covenant or Standing Order) please consider doing so, or alternatively we would be happy to receive your giving by cheque (made payable to St Martin's Parish Church).

Your Health

Finally, for now; **stay safe** and follow the advice of the Government. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please inform the Rector as soon as possible as there are precautionary steps we would need to take.

I will be praying with you and for you every day.

As I said on Sunday, ours is God of Resurrection, and we are a people of hope; however dark times may seem, there is always the promise of the Dawn. *The Son is Risen.*

With Every Blessing

Rev Jonny Scott

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