



UPDATE #1

Welcome to the first edition of 'Update', keeping you updated during this time of social isolation...

*** CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS ***

- Public worship is suspended across the Church of England. This means our 11:00am services will not be happening until further notice. This also affects all other public services, such as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. We plan to offer something online on Sunday mornings instead.
- Baptisms, weddings and funerals can still go ahead, but with only the absolute minimum number of people in attendance. In the case of a wedding, this means only five people may attend: the priest, the couple, and two witnesses. For funerals, the restrictions mean that only immediate family may attend.
- This coming Sunday (22nd March) will be a National Day of Prayer for the nation. More details below.
- The Annual Church Meetings are postponed. It is too early to say when they will be able to go ahead, but the Church of England is making the necessary legal arrangements for them to be postponed for some time (if necessary, until the summer or autumn).
- Churches are encouraged to be open for private prayer. Once it has been established how best to do this, I hope that St Peter's will be open in the town centre as soon as possible.

*** THIS COMING SUNDAY (22nd March, Mothering Sunday) ***

- **The church building will be closed.** We are doing all we can to let people know that public worship is suspended, and that therefore there will be no Morning Service and no Rock Solid.
- **'Worship with the Wallaces'.** As an alternative to gathering physically, we will be livestreaming Sunday morning worship from our dining table. You will need access to my Facebook page (search for '@towncentrevicar'), but that's fairly straightforward to set up. We will aim to start at 11am, as we would have been doing in church otherwise, so do try to get yourself connected online just before then if you can. It might be chaotic, but hopefully also helpful...!
- **It's Mothering Sunday.** Do please be particularly mindful of, and prayerful for, any mothers for whom this will be a particularly difficult Mothering Sunday, especially if they are unable to be with family.
- **It's Make a Mother's Day!** We had hoped to have a Gift Day in church on Sunday (Mothering Sunday) to raise the necessary finance to continue supporting Mary in the Philippines and Richard in Brazil for a seventh year. Since we cannot now have a collection taken up in the service, we will be relying on a 'virtual' Gift Day. Please give generously: if online, then the sort code is 09-01-54 and the account is 36051087 (please use reference: *Compassion*); if it's easier to give by cheque, please make it payable to *St Peter's PCC* and post it to the Vicarage (Balkerne Close, Colchester CO1 1NZ). Thank you.
- **A National Day of Prayer.** The Archbishops are calling the nation to prayer, so this Sunday please set some time aside to read Psalm 23, to pray the Lord's Prayer, and then to pray for our nation at this time. We are also being encouraged to light a candle at 7pm and put in our windows. You can find out more via this link: www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/latest-news/coronavirus-archbishops-call-national-day-prayer-and-action

Mother's
day2020 MAKE A MOTHER'S DAY

*** JERICHO ROAD MINISTRIES ***

Thank you to all who have offered help in the last few days. Over the coming weeks and months, there will be clearly be many opportunities to love and serve our neighbour (especially when our neighbour is in great need). We are still in the early stages of putting plans together, but here are a few examples:

- **Practical support.** I am already aware of instances of people unable to get out to the shops for necessary supplies. Thus far, we have been able to meet such needs informally. However, since the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better, we are looking to 'scale up' our efforts.
- **Giving to Foodbanks.** It seems that supplies of food is a particular need. As such, we may start to use the church building as a 'drop-off' point for specific supplies. Details to follow.
- **Supporting Beacon House.** There are particular needs at Beacon House at the moment, helping homeless people in the town centre. Once we have established what is viable, we will be seeking offers of help so that we can support them while they help the homeless through this time.
- **Make a Mother's Day.** Meanwhile, do consider supporting our long-standing arrangements via Compassion to sponsor Mary Crist Bilardo and Richard Enderson Oliveira. Details above.

*** ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES ***

No one is pretending that online contact is as good as face-to-face fellowship. But in this time of social isolation, it may be that online opportunities are better than nothing. Here are a few to be aware of:

- **Sermons.** There are some great sermons available online. Here are some good places to start:
 - St Helen's, Bishopsgate — www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/
 - St Ebbe's, Oxford — www.stebbes.org/sermons/
 - alternatively, try something from our own archives — www.stpeterscolchester.org/resources/sermons/
- **Facebook.** If you have a facebook account, look out for these pages. If you 'follow' or 'like' them, you will be kept up to date with any future posts:
 - the Church of England — <https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland/>
 - our own church's page — <https://www.facebook.com/stpeterscolchester/>
 - Mark's page as Town Centre Vicar — <https://www.facebook.com/towncentrevicar/>
- **WhatsApp.** There is now a WhatsApp group for *St Peter's Church*, which we are using for prayer and encouragement. At the time of writing, 39 off our congregation are part of it. If you would like to join in, please send a text to Mark's mobile on 07772 615378.
- **Livestream Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.** You can join in live via Facebook at 9am and 5pm, or 'catch up' any time afterwards, via Mark's Facebook page (@towncentrevicar).
- **'Worship with the Wallaces'.** This Sunday, online, starting at 11am, via Mark's @towncentrevicar page on Facebook. Hopefully!

*** PARTICULAR PRAYER NEEDS ***

Finally, here are some specific needs...

- **for Paul & Hazel Watts** (Dan Watts' parents, living in Coventry). Paul has significant underlying health issues, and has recently been diagnosed with C-19.
- **for Marcus Woods.** Marcus' father died recently, and the arrangements for the funeral are complicated by the C-19 pandemic restrictions.
- **for the family and friends of Ken Cooke.** Ken's private burial will be on 2nd April.
- **for those at St Peter's with underlying health conditions.** Pray for health and safety.
- **for NHS staff in/around Colchester.** Many are already over-stretched and over-tired.

If you have a particular prayer need that we could publicise in a future 'Update', just let us know.



Anything for future 'Updates'?

Please email towncentrevicar@gmail.com or ring 01206 572641.