

Letter from our Curate Rev'd Rachel Prior 24th March 2020

Dear Friends,

In the light of the new briefing from the government, our church doors are now closed for private prayer as well as for services. Weddings and baptisms are suspended. Funerals will continue but they will not take place in church; instead they will be at the crematoriums or at the graveside. Only immediate family members are able to attend these funerals. In time, we hope that we will be able to host memorial services in church for those who were unable to attend the funerals of loved ones. As you're aware, the situation is unfolding rapidly and the advice is fast-changing. For now, this advice is current, but it may change further in the coming days.

Each Sunday, the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry intend to upload a pre-recorded service with musical accompaniment. You can find the link to these videos on the church website, and you can also find on the 'Church At Home' website page many resources to help you draw near to God in this unusual time. Please also 'like' and check our 'Saint Mary's Church Saffron Walden' Facebook page where we are sharing encouraging verses from Scripture as well as prayers to help guide your intercessions.

For those who are unable to access online resources, we are offering a 'prayer and worship pack' that includes a prayer booklet from Lent through Holy Week to Easter, prayer cards, as well as a copy of the most recent Grapevine. If you know of anyone who would like to receive this, please contact Dawn at the Parish Office. Please note that Dawn is no longer working from the Parish Office but she is able to receive telephone calls on the usual number and emails at the usual email address.

We are glad to say that our pastoral and practical support teams are now up and running. If you are in need of support or of any essential shopping and medical supplies, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office and someone will get in contact with you.

Many thanks to all those who are working together in new ways to share God's light and hope. I am inspired by your hopefulness, good humour, and prayerfulness. May we continue to turn to God in prayer, even when we don't have the words, trusting that we are never beyond the reach of God's love.

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8.38-39)*

Our doors may be closed, but our hearts remain open.

With love and prayers,

Rachel