

18 March 2020



Dear Friends

Greetings in the strong and precious Name of Jesus

The national response to the Coronavirus has developed very significantly this week. We remain in a very fluid situation.

It is with great sadness that I need to inform you that, in line with Government policy, following National Methodist direction, and a meeting of Superintendent Ministers with Revd Graham Thompson this morning (18.03.2020) – the last for a while! , in consultation with Circuit Leadership Team and local Church Leadership Teams, we have had no option but to suspend for the time being all Church services and events. This includes all Sunday activities, Children and Youth events, Café's, Lunches, business meetings, etc. In other words, all non-essential contact. More information is at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

This does not mean however that we stop praying for one another, our communities, nation and world at this challenging time; indeed we very much need to do so – GOD is still on the throne! It has been suggested that whenever possible, wherever we are, we pause at 12 midday for prayer. I commend this to you.

We will be making available as soon as we can via the Internet and hard copies for those not on the Internet a suggested Order of Service for home worship, a written Bible based reflection / message each week, which I will prepare, and Internet Links to live-streaming of Sermons and Prayers.

If you require specific support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Churches together in England have called us to prayer for the situation this coming Sunday. Further information can be found at <https://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=569010> We will also seek to produce hard copies for any requiring them.

Inevitably this is a very difficult situation for many of us – please continue to pray for our four congregations , leadership (local and Circuit), especially those working within the NHS, as we seek to be Christ's Church in a different way over the coming days.

I offer two outline prayers offered by the national Church, that I trust will be of help.

18 March 2020



A Prayer by the President of the Conference:

Loving God

If we are ill, strengthen us

If we are tired

Fortify our spirits

If we are anxious

Help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders!

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves

Fix our eyes on your story

And our hearts on your grace

Help us always to hold fast to the good and see the good in others.

And remember there is just one world, one hope,

One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,

The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,

In whom we trust, these days and all days. Amen

*God of all hope we call on you today.*

*We pray for those who are living in fear:*

*Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.*

*May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.*

*For those people who are worried about attending worship.*

*For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other*

*For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.*

*Grant us your wisdom.*

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised that*

*Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.*

*Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.*

*Amen*

The Gospel remains “the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” – Romans 1v.16

With all Best Wishes and Love in Christ

John W H Wiltshire Rev, Andy Cooper, Chris Down, Paul Warren.