

March 16th: Third Sunday in Lent

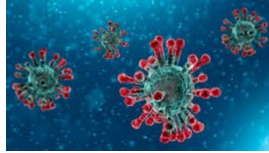
Novel coronavirus COVID-19:

Bishop Nick retweeted this from +Alan, Bishop of St Albans:

The Bishop's Coronavirus Golden Rules

Not official advice: food-for-thought about our attitudes...

Golden Rule One: Each one of us can think about how we can protect and support our neighbours. So much of the public rhetoric is sowing fear about the danger of other people. So, taking all the official precautions, offer help and reassurance to others – and don't demonise anyone or any group.



Golden Rule Two: Think about who may be suffering more than me. For those of us who are healthy there is much less to worry about but the elderly, the housebound and those with chronic health conditions may be very anxious. How about each church undertaking an audit of all the vulnerable people they know and sharing out the responsibility to phone them each day. There's nothing like a friendly voice to offer solace when someone is worried. A smile can bring cheer, even on the phone. If you visit, follow all the official precautions or don't go.

Golden Rule Three: Don't give into panic and start hoarding food. There is plenty to go around, so practise the Christian discipline of sharing. Ask your neighbours what they need and do your best to help them get it. If you are self-isolating, you will of course need some supplies.

Golden Rule Four: Live today to the full. None of us ever know what the future holds. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6. 25 – 34), Jesus challenged his followers to live each day fully and not be afraid. Every time we are tempted to give in to fear we need to make a conscious choice to respond in trust and openness.

And, along with just over half the adults in the UK, don't forget to pray. Here's a suggestion from the Revd Louise Collins, a Team Vicar in Borehamwood, Herts:

Dear God our Shield and our Defender, guide and protect my neighbour in this time of health emergency; deliver them from all harm and may your love and care ever grow in this place. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

We're following advice from **Public Health England** on precautions towards prevention of contamination:

- Everyone is *washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as we enter & leave the buildings.* At St John's we're using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol, and Rev Andrew and his assistant will do so before & after giving Holy Communion.
- We'll avoid touching our eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

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- *If we're feeling unwell, we'll stay at home, and will not work or school.*

- *We'll cover our coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin – or if without a tissue, will cough or sneeze into our elbows.*

- *We are regularly disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home & work environment.*

- *We have agreed the option of simply greeting each other without handshakes or hugs at **the Peace.***

As a PCC, we shall be taking further advice about how to respond as churches, should the epidemic worsen, and have an additional PCC meeting after church today .

As I wrote last week, the main thing is *not* to panic, and to remember that God is good, sovereign, and our provider and protector. 'Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.' (Psalm 91v1) He also invites us to be *beacons of hope* in a fearful world.

News: Sadly, our **FIRST AID COURSE** due to happen **Next Saturday 21st March**, 10am – 4.30pm, is being postponed.

Men's Breakfast: Thanks to *all* those who came out for breakfast & a really helpful discussion about Covid-19 . Thanks also to **Mike**, who helped me cook and kindly did the bulk of the clearing & washing up!

Lent Studies: On Monday evening we examined the vital role that water plays in our lives, practically & from God's view. *There's still time to come along & join in! We meet again tomorrow evening, Monday, from 7-9pm in the hall.*

Lent Lunches: These have taken place on Wednesdays at 11.45am, following the **Drop-in**, and focus our reflections on the **#Live Lent** booklets. We were very grateful to **Marie** for having provided the soup this week. **As a PCC, we regret that these must now stop, given present circumstances.**

This week in the Parish:

Today: 12.30pm **Additional PCC Meeting** Meeting Room

Mon: 7-9pm **Lent Course Session 3** in St Cuthbert's Hall

Tues: **NB: No Veterans' & Community Art Group until future notice**

6-7pm **Warden's Hour**, meeting room

Wed: **NB No Drop-in until future notice**

7.30pm **Prayer for the World** (along with King's Church members) Meeting room

Thurs: 9.30am **Deanery Chapter** The Vicarage

Prayers For those seeking comfort & healing: **Brendan, Lisa, Glen, Stuart, Lee, Eve, Graham, Gracie, Derek, Tricia, Ann, Michael, Jenny & Pauline.**

We pray for the families & friends of those who have died: **Edgar Waite** and **Teresa McLoughlin** .

Please note: All public worship, including Sunday Services, is to cease, with immediate effect. We will shall try to contact all those who might attend to give advice.