

Hi Friends,

Church is changing for a season!

We are all aware that as a nation we are living in extremely challenging and difficult times. Updates on how to respond to the unfolding coronavirus emergency are coming at us all almost by the hour. We will be communicating on a regular basis and I don't want to inundate you with too much information at this point. So, for now, some brief bullet points:

- As a result of government restrictions, our Archbishops' have made it clear that all public worship will have to stop for a season; our usual pattern of Sunday services and other mid-week gatherings must be put on hold.
- So, we need to explore and experiment with new ways of being church in this season. Inevitably this will begin to take more shape over the coming weeks. We want everyone still to feel a strong sense of belonging and connection across our community of SML, and for us to be encouraging each other in our lives and our walk with the LORD. Our own personal daily rhythms of Bible reading and prayer are vital and Life Groups will be looking creatively about how they continue to stay well-connected. I know that you will also be looking out for each other in other friendship and support groupings too. We will also be sharing opportunities for us to pray together corporately even if remotely.
- For this Sunday we are preparing a video which will be available on the homepage our website www.smlpoole.org.uk - this will include a welcome, prayers, link to worship music, Bible reading and a talk, which I'll be giving. There will also be age-specific resources available for our Kids' and Youth. We will be developing and fine tuning all our online resources over the coming weeks.
- We are particularly concerned to support the most isolated and vulnerable in our church and wider local community. For more information, please contact either: Liz Rolleston, our Pastoral Co-Ordinator, liz.rolleston@smlpoole.org.uk or Rachel Dismorr, our Outreach Pastor, outreach@smlpoole.org.uk.
- A 'National Day of Prayer' has been called for this coming Sunday – Mothering Sunday (22 March). Wherever you are this Sunday please join in this day of prayer, in any way you can, and remember particularly those who are ill or anxious, and all involved in our Health Services. As one action, we are each encouraged to place a lighted candle (safely!) in our window at 7.00pm as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Jesus Christ that can never be extinguished.
- Our **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** planned for Weds 1 April, like every other church's, needs to be postponed.
- In a closing statement in their letter, the Archbishops' said, '*This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly a church for all, or just for ourselves? We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world*'

Let's encourage each other to live each day to the full (Matthew 6:25-34), walk in faith, resist fear, pray for our health services and look out for our neighbours.

See you online on Sunday!

With my love & prayers,
Andy



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