



The Parish of Thorpe St Andrew

**TO: ALL CONNECTED WITH THE
PARISH OF THORPE ST ANDREW**

21 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A CHURCH LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE: A CALL TO PRAYER

The decision of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to suspend all public worship was not, as they wrote, 'shutting up shop', but an opportunity to see the church with fresh eyes and fresh possibilities. Our weekly 'pew sheet' has been re-purposed in its new role as an 'armchair sheet', to provide resources for prayer at home and for those following the service streamed live each week. These are worrying and unprecedented times, but it is my prayer that as the crisis continues that our communities and our church will grow together in love and hope, so that when the restrictions are lifted we might be part of church and world with the values of God's Kingdom at its heart.

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH

If you become unwell, or are self-isolating please let us know so that we can keep in touch – and if you need help with shopping or getting medication, please say. Useful contact details are below. Prayer is ongoing constantly in the Church as a whole, and whenever we pray, we join with brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world, and with the whole company of heaven, so we never pray alone. Included with the Weekly News Sheet is a booklet of Prayers and Resources, adapted from the Church of England resources online.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

- Keep all of this in prayer and take part in any number of the ways to worship distantly which will be shared in the days ahead. Please particularly keep in your prayers all those who are working still to contain, delay, research and mitigate the spread of the virus, and those medical staff treating people suffering from it, as well as those who are sick.
- Look out for friends and neighbours who need extra support and reach out in new and radically Christian ways.
- Watch out for further requests for volunteering in the days ahead - leaflets will need to be delivered, support given, worship resources photocopied and distributed,

supplies collected, the lonely and distressed comforted on the telephone and in other ways. Things like GDPR are not necessarily very helpful but in the days ahead I am sure we will find ways to support our whole community. All priests in the Church of England were first ordained deacon (as we hope and pray our new curate, Taylor Wilton-Morgan will still be on 27 June). In the service of ordination as Deacon the Bishop begins with these words:

Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.

It is my prayer that in these days and weeks ahead we will all share in this work of 'reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.'

A PRAYER FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

This letter comes with the assurance of my unqualified love for you all and a commitment to pray for you and this world to be full of light and hope and love.

With every blessing,

James Stewart
Rector – Thorpe St Andrew

Rector: The Revd James Stewart
Address: The Rectory, 21a South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 OEY
Telephone: 01603 439160 Email: rector@thorpeparishchurch.org
Registered Charity No: 1131592