

Friday 27 March 2020

Dear Friends,

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7

It has been a momentous week for the people of the world, with lockdowns in many countries. We are all having to adjust to new ways of living. Many have found their work ending, families have been physically separated and governments have had to make the kinds of economic provisions not made since the Second World War. A tiny virus has humbled the leaders and nations of the world.

Even the Church has been humbled as we find ourselves unable to meet together. New ways of gathering have been forced upon us. Yet the goal remains the same – as the apostle Paul says in the verse above, we *'continue our lives in him'*. Maybe this time of physical distancing from one another can be used by the Lord to help us draw near to Him.

Rectory life has fallen into something of a pattern. We rise around 5am and take our daily exercise in the form of a five mile walk. We are seeing the same faces most days and greet many from the appropriate distance!

We work from home and the day is filled with prayer times, study, phone calls, conference calls, 'Zoom' calls, Facebook Live worship and update live streams and preparation. Strangely, we are finding that working from home is even busier than usual. The added bonus has been listening to albums in their entirety rather than dipping in for the songs I like!

We are doing our best to keep everyone connected. Online communications make this easier, but we recognise that some are not equipped to participate in this way.

Here's what we will plan to do to be of service in the coming weeks.

1. The church staff will try to make weekly contact with those who we know are not using the internet or social media for communication. Please let us know of needs you are aware of.
2. I am available as a listening ear either by phone or online. The situation we are in is likely to last for some time and the stress for many is likely to increase. Please make sure that each of us takes time to reach out and care for another.

3. We will offer regular prayer and worship online. Details of this week's programme are appended to this letter.
4. Some Home Groups will meet using the 'Zoom' conference calling app. If you need help setting this up, we can assist.
5. We'll also have informal gatherings online for conversation, care and prayer.
6. Our website is being refreshed and will be renewed in order to improve our communications.
7. Our Facebook page is now an important resource for communication. We encourage as many as possible to use it.
<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>
8. We also have a closed (private) Facebook group for St Thomas' people to share needs, resources and prayers. You need to be invited to be part of this group – please contact me if you want to be part of it.
9. Phil Taylor and our volunteers are working hard to keep good communications with, and gathering of young people going. Contact Phil at phil@saintthomas.org.uk if he can be of help.
10. We will go on praying for you, those on the front line of helping those afflicted by Covid-19, our leaders and those who need Jesus Christ now more than ever.

Let us pray that as we are all humbled by current events, all of us will turn to the Lord, reaching out to those we love, witnessing to the hope of the Gospel, and supporting those in need.

My contact details:

Mobile: 07411 236433

Email: david@saintthomas.org.uk

All my love and prayers,

David McCarthy

Online Programme of Meetings and Worship

Sunday 29 March: 10.30am Online Worship @

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Monday 30 March: 12pm Midday Worship @

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Tuesday 31 March: 9.30pm Night Prayer @

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Wednesday 1 April: 12pm Midday Worship@

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Thursday 2 April: 10am Coffee Morning Online

To join Zoom Meeting – please contact David McCarthy

Thursday 2 April: 9.30pm Night Prayer@

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Friday 3 April: 12pm Midday Prayer@

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Saturday 4 April: 9.30pm Night Prayer@

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

Other Resources

Regular video updates are posted at <https://www.facebook.com/stthomasedin/>

and also at my blog, <https://www.gadgetvicar.org.uk>

We are on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/stthomasedin>

Our webpage is <https://www.sainthomas.org.uk>

NHS advice on Covid-19: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

Scottish Government on Covid-19: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

UK Government on Covid-19: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>