

18th March 2020

To members and friends of West Derbyshire United Reformed Church

Dear friends,

I am writing to you under very unusual circumstances. In the light of guidance from the government and the national United Reformed Church all our church services and events are postponed for the time being. It is very sad not to be able to meet together for worship and it is a worrying time for many as we don't know what the future holds. However, we are still the church, the body of Christ, and we can still offer our worship and prayers to God and support each other as well as those who are particularly vulnerable or struggling. Indeed, this is a time when we need to turn to God more than ever to find strength, solace and support so let us not give up praying or offering Christian service, only we have to do it differently.

There are many different resources that you can use for your own personal prayer and reflection at home. In particular, if you have use of the internet, consider using the daily devotionals on the URC website at <https://urc.org.uk/>. They will also be providing a weekly service which you can join in with. If you want any other suggestions for prayers and readings during this time please let me know, I'll be happy to help.

I want you to know that I will endeavour to be in church every Tuesday morning and Sunday morning to pray for the church and all of our needs, and for the community.

The Elders want to encourage you to pause for prayer and worship on Sunday mornings at 10 am wherever you are. It will be a great source of strength and encouragement to know that we're all praying together at the same time. You can pray as you wish – either following the URC service on their website or using some other prayers and readings. I will also post a prayer we can all share in on the church website. However, the main thing is that we all join together at the same time for prayer.

You can look at our church website <https://www.westderbyshireurc.co.uk/> for any news or updates. I will endeavour to post a weekly reflection and prayer on the website.

This is a time when we need to offer each other as much support as we possibly can. The Elders and myself will contact people on a regular basis to see how everyone is doing. But everyone can help – think of who you might be able to phone or send a card to let them know they are not alone and that you care. If you, or anyone you know of, need any help with shopping or picking up items because you have to self-isolate please let myself or one of the Elders know and we will do our best to find someone who can help.

It is natural that we might feel worried or anxious at this time, as there is so much uncertainty. The Bible gives us encouragement not to be fearful but put our trust in the living God. The apostle Paul says "The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:5-7

It is my prayer that we will all turn to God and find in him a source of peace and strength, which in turn will spur us into acts of kindness towards those around us.

God bless. Camilla 01629 826 913

Contact details for the Elders:

Ian – 01629 732 582; Mike 01629 822 672; Brian 01773 550 333