

# WELCOME



*Generously sharing God's compassionate love with everyone*

22 March 2020

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Dear Friends,

I guess none of us could have suspected that in the course of a week things would change as dramatically as they have done and that our **church services would be suspended** until further notice.



The Archbishops' Announcement said that we would '*become a different church*'. That process has started and will accelerate as we learn how to support and encourage one another while we are physically apart, and also as we rise up and respond to the needs in our communities.

I want to say that during this time our churches will remain **OPEN** – as a sanctuary for you and anyone in our community to safely come in, be still, pray and use the resources that we

will place there. Of course, this will be done in a way that complies with current advice and guidelines. But I want to reiterate – **we are not shut or closed** – **we are open but are doing things differently during these challenging times.**

**I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,  
may have power, together with all the saints,  
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.**

Ephesians 3.17-18

## OTHER THINGS I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU

On **Sunday evening (22<sup>nd</sup> March) at 7.00pm**, if you can, light a candle and place it in your most prominent window (light more if you want). Churches Together are calling on all Christians to **light a candle of Hope and Action** – to be a visible sign to the community that there is hope and light and help during these uncertain times. Please do this in whatever way you are able.



### Connecting Together, while Apart!

We need to follow the Government advice and recommendations to stay safe and in doing so limit the spread of Coronavirus. **It is very important that we all do that, especially washing our hands frequently.** Of course, this means that many of us may well be isolated and alone – so, following the work already done with Tuesday's Place we have clustered everyone in our worshipping community into groups of about 6 and allocated one person to call and start the process of **mutual support and encouragement.** So, please be ready to chat when those calls come in and use your phone to be connected to those in your groups (or others you know). Speaking with one another is going to be an important way we deal with any isolation that may have to happen.



### Streaming Services / Events



We will be signposting you to resources online and streamed services so that you can access these. In addition, the BBC will be showing a Sunday morning service starting soon – so look out for these and access them to encourage you in your journey of faith. This **Sunday evening at 6.45pm** we will be attempting to do a live stream for 15 minutes from the Rectory, just ahead of lighting the candle of hope and action. **Separate instructions will be sent out about what you need to do to join that** – so please look out for these, download and install the software and we will give it a go. It will be a chance for me to share some encouraging thoughts with you, lead us in prayer before lighting the candle.....I hope as many as possible can do this. We will offer other streaming events and improve and expend this as much as we can.

### Lighthouse Online

Children and parents – Emily Peter-Simmonds will be sending you material and moving towards Lighthouse Online – so look out for a special video she has recorded for you with some thoughts about mothers for Mothering Sunday.....and don't forget to give your Mum a lie-in this Sunday – and maybe pick some daffodils from your garden to give her.





*<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'*

The events of the past week have been reminded me of this wonderful passage in Mark's gospel where Jesus and the disciples are in a boat together. A violent storm comes from nowhere when they are far out at sea. The wind takes a hold of the boat and the disciples are terrified. They begin to bail-out the water as though their lives depend on it, but it clearly won't be enough. They wonder, where Jesus is? In fear and desperation, they find him at the back of the boat asleep! – They wake him up and he rebukes the storm saying - *"peace – be still"*. The Sea of Galilee is instantly still.

What a scene it must have been! One moment the boat was keeling over under the weight of the storm, the next there was complete calm. By now, the disciples are no longer afraid of the storm, but instead fearful of being in the presence of a man who is obeyed by nature itself! – *"who is this, that even the wind and the waves obey him"*.

This story is such a blessing in times like this. It reminds us that, even in situations when we feel out of control, Jesus has complete authority. Equally, he is our friend – a very present help in times of need. He was in the boat after all and he travels with us through every storm of life. He loves us and wants us to put our trust in him today. Right now, he lives in us by his Holy Spirit – ready to calm our storms with his love. It is a gift we receive; we cannot manufacture or muster it by ourselves.

**Sit for a few moments in stillness and reflect on the following:**

Picture the calm after the storm. Fear which turns to joy and produces faith. The look of love in Jesus's eyes as you see him in a new way. Thank him for his patience with us when we struggle to believe he is in charge. What fears and struggles might you place in God's hands just a little more today?

## PRAY TODAY

**For a place:** for those unwell in Italy – the worst affected country in the world. Ask God to speak those same words over that country, ‘peace – be still’.

**For a person:** for Professor Chris Witty, Chief Medical Officer for England – for energy, wisdom and courage.

**For a purpose:** that God would give us faith to believe in his power to save so that we can know his peace and pass it on to others. Amen.

### Giving to God at this time

It probably seems a bit odd that I mention giving right now – but we are aware that there will be many needs in the community that we might be able to help meet. If you give online, through direct debit / standing order, please continue to do so.....If you give by the plate, can I ask you to give directly to us so that your gift can benefit the work of the church and support the mission of Jesus in these exceptional times. I want us to be able to respond generously with the compassionate love of God to everyone – and we might need to build up a **Coronavirus Community Chest** to help us do just that. If you want more details of how to do this, please contact me or Karen on the usual numbers.



**We are now on Instagram!** Instagram is a brilliant way of sharing pictures and images that



help keep us informed and connected. If you have a smart phone, download the Instagram app and follow the simple process of installing this on your phone or computer. Once it's installed, search for **stmaryskw** – and that will lead you to the posts we are making to help encourage you and keep you informed of news as it develops.

The **CHURCH OFFICE** will be (wo)manned sporadically starting Monday. Emails and phone messages will be checked but bear with us when we take a little longer to respond to you.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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**Jesus said, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me’.**

John 14.1