

St John's Worship during cessation of services in the building

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Thu 19/03/2020 21:14

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📎 3 attachments (986 KB)

St Johns_ServiceoftheWord.pdf; StJohns_MarchCollectsReadings.pdf; LetterStJohns19March2020_signed.pdf;

Dear Friends (if you need paper copies of any documents attached let me know)

On Tuesday the Scottish Episcopal Church's College of Bishops following advice from the Scottish Government is to the effect that church services should cease. Consequently, the Bishops asked that all gatherings for worship, including small gatherings such as house groups, should be discontinued until further notice. That means that for the foreseeable future services on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays will cease to be held in the church building and gatherings after services and the Tuesday Café will cease. This does not mean that the Church of St John's is closing, we are just going to have find ways of being the Community of God in different ways. A copy of Bishop Anne's pastoral statement to the Diocese is included in this email. The Primus' message can be found at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/a-message-from-the-primus/>.

Please know at this time that I will be praying by name for each of you and for those who you love. I am finding saying Morning and Evening Prayer (particularly the Psalms) a comfort in these changing, worrying and anxious times. I'll be distributing prayer resources as time goes on and there are lots of resources online but if you would like some personal recommendations, please get in touch. Daily Prayer is available each day online (including the Psalms and Readings so no need for a lectionary) at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/prayer/>. You can get a pdf (for a Kindle app or similar) under the Who we Are -> Publications -> Liturgies section.

This Sunday the worship of St John's will look and feel a little different, but we will still pray, sing reflect on scriptures. I will miss being able to see you all, especially on Mothering Sunday when we reflect on all those who have and continue to 'Mother' us in some way – caring, loving, encouraging and teaching us. However, as often children are away from their parents and find ways to still be together so will we at St John's. At 9.30am you are invited to say Morning Prayer from the Scottish Book of Common Prayer. You can say this in your house or we're going to experiment with Zoom meeting (<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/386348852> no software download required). At 11am you have two options. You can say the Service of the Word (included) or you can watch Broadcast Sunday Worship online (in real time or after) from the Chapel of St Duthac where the Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness (and Primus) will celebrate Eucharist. The link for this is <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/> and the plan is to have different churches each week. This pattern for St John's Sunday Worship (9.30am Prayer Book Morning Prayer with Zoom Option, 11am Service of Word or Broadcast worship) will continue until further notice. The Collects, Readings and Hymns for the rest of March are included here.

The Churches of the United Kingdom have called for a National Day of Prayer on Sunday 22nd March with people lighting a candle and placing it in a window (taking appropriate fire precautions). Information at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/churches-join-together-in-call-for-national-day-of-prayer/>

The prayer we're asked to use when lighting the candle is:

For all that is good in life, thank you,

For the love of family and friends, thank you,

For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.

May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,

May those who are sick, know healing,

May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.

Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,

Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being,

Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.

And may the light shining from our windows,

across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,

be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

We're preserving the pattern of worship services in the week (in the meantime) with a Wednesday Night Taizé Service reflection being posted online (Facebook) and saying (in our homes or wherever we find ourselves) Morning Prayer at 8.30am on Fridays.

The vestry are putting in place phone circles and we have volunteers to fetch shopping if you're self-isolating and need help. This is in addition to me catching up via phone with people. More information will be coming out about this shortly but please don't hesitate to be in touch with me. At the moment I'm working between the Church Office and Curate's flat but following government guidance so it may be best to try my mobile first or email.

In the introduction to the confession in the Scottish Liturgy (1982) the officiant says "God is love and we are God's children. There is no room for fear in love. We love because God loved us first." I know it's hard not to be fearful right now but we can be assured of God's love and God's merciful listening ear at any time through prayer.

I close with an Irish Blessing:

May the road rise to meet you

May the wind be at your back

May the sun shine warm upon your face

May the rain fall softly on your fields

And until we meet again

May you keep safe

In the gentle loving arms of God

God Bless

Jenny

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Rev Dr Jenny Holden

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My day off is Tuesday.

Find St John's on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsCrownTerrace/>