



THE STEEPLE CHURCH

A church at the heart of the city with the city at its heart

20 March 2020

***** MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS *****

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND THE CHURCH

In these difficult times, the Church like every other part of our society is impacted by the effects of the Coronavirus (Covid – 19).

The first thing needing to be advised is that with immediate effect the Church of Scotland has given advice indicating that all gatherings for worship should cease until further notice. This is in accord with the Scottish and UK Government's recommendation that people should minimise social contact by avoiding crowded areas and gatherings, including religious congregations. Therefore, **until further notice the Sunday morning services at The Steeple Church shall cease. In addition, all other meetings and events associated with the church are also suspended until further notice.**

A new way?

Whilst it is necessary to put public services on hold until further notice, we are not “shutting up shop.” The Church needs to respond to the challenges by becoming a radically different kind of church rooted in prayer and serving others. So how are we to supplement the words with action?

Well, whilst our actions and communications will over the coming days undoubtedly evolve and possibly change in response to developing circumstances, we shall undertake the following:

1. Through Facebook and our YouTube channel, broadcast a short time of reflection each Sunday morning. Please use this technology to connect with us – if you need help to do this please ask.
2. Issue a regular information bulletin which will incorporate, news, prayer points for the period ahead and recommendations around how best to make the most of social media for the purpose of continuing a close walk with God in our daily lives. We shall of course offer guidance to folks who cannot easily access the technology.
3. Remain available to receive direct contact from you in order to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is given. If you have any specific requirements or become aware of any pastoral issues involving our church family, please contact Rev Robert Calvert on mobile: 0753 202 9343 or email: robertacalvert@gmail.com or contact the church office: office@thesteepchurch.org.uk



Across our city and communities there are many encouraging schemes being set up so that practical care and support can be given. We are not intent upon setting up a specific scheme ourselves but as is appropriate and taking into consideration all guidelines issued by the government, we do

encourage you as the 'face of the church' to get involved wherever possible. We recognise that many in the congregation link in with each other - please continue to do so. Please also continue to support Foodbanks and other initiatives which are providing social care in the community.

"Then by our service, and by our love, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that can counter fear and isolation – will spread across our land."

Offerings

We are aware that closing down worship services will impact on congregational income. Whilst it is recognised that for some, financial hardship will be encountered, we'd want to encourage people to continue contributing financially as far as possible.

If you do not currently give via a bank standing order, we would ask that you consider this means of giving. You can contact your bank directly for the purpose of setting up a standing order arrangement. To obtain our bank account details, please contact Bob Potter or Alister Stibbles.

If your giving is normally via the Freewill Offering envelopes or the 'open' plate, we would encourage you to set aside your weekly offering. When we again meet together, these offerings can be given.

A personal message from Robert



Friends, a few days ago we did not expect the Steeple Church to be closed and that we would be doing things in a different way. But perhaps it is good for us. This Sunday I will connect our experience of living with the coronavirus with the ideas of being in a post-modern world. It is not a bad world to be living in – but it is different. We will see how faith in Jesus is even more relevant than we realised.

We need to stay together and keep connected. That is why this news-sheet contains information on how we can stay in touch. If you have a PC, TV or a smart-phone, please try to get the short service that will be loaded up on the Steeple Church's own You Tube channel.* Talk to one another through the Steeple's private group on What's App. Check out the Steeple Church's website and Facebook regularly.

Recently, on Sunday mornings, we have been looking at problems that people have with Christianity. But I think this is a time when Christians can shine. We want to spread a message of hope. We want to show care and compassion to our neighbours and the most vulnerable. We don't take undue risks but we are not afraid of death. If you know someone has problem, let us know by calling the Steeple Church and leave a message. **"Lord, help me to trust you to love you with all that I have and to love my neighbour as myself. Amen."**

* <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3No73xjivpUfQwdw1vbj2g/>



Bible Reading for Sunday 22 March

John 18: 37-38

³⁷ 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate.

Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'

³⁸ 'What is truth?' retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him.'

The detail given is offered in the light of current information, and is of course subject to further public health guidance and directives from the Scottish Government. For up to date information you should refer to www.scot.nhs.uk or www.gov.uk

THIS SUNDAY

The Church of Scotland is supporting calls for a National Day of Prayer and Action on 22 March, which is also Mothering Sunday. We encourage you to become involved

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair is joining the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and other church leaders to issue a national call to prayer.



The Moderator said:

"There are many different ways the Church can and should offer support and help to their communities at this time, but one way is through prayer. We believe in a God who hears and answers prayer.

We are encouraged to come honestly in prayer, sharing openly our emotions, questions and concerns in the light of COVID 19.

We have become aware in a new way of our frailty and need to renew our dependence on God. I welcome this call to prayer across the UK and encourage you to join in it this Sunday wherever you are."

Light a candle



The call to prayer asks everyone to light a candle at 7pm on Sunday as 'a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.'

Church leaders are seeking to quell fears and remind us of God's presence and love. They write:

"At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds."

Pray for leaders

We have the great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our nation. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically, but we can make connections in so many other ways.

At 7 pm this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.



We note that this call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday: a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers that have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many.

For some the remembrance is painful, and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss. In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday.

"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you" 1 Peter 5:7.

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