

Dear friends

This afternoon, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have made a statement about the Church of England's response to yesterday's public health guidance. If you have not already seen it, you can read it [here](#).

In the bishops' letter this morning, there was a clear indication that life in the Church is going to change. As the Archbishops have indicated, we are going to need to adapt. Church buildings will remain open where possible, reflecting the fact that the Church continues to pray. Although public gatherings for worship will not be taking place in the immediate future, we are as a Church, nationally, regionally and locally, developing new ways of ensuring that acts of worship are accessible by other means. And our love of God and neighbour will be expressed in new ways, responding to the challenge of the coronavirus, and focusing on our closest and most vulnerable neighbours.

Knowing that these changes to our communal life raise many questions, here is a summary of how the latest advice will affect church communities:

- Communal public worship is suspended, although ministers will maintain rhythms of prayer and worship in church buildings where possible;
- Churches that are able to will make available electronic resources to help others participate in worship, whether through live-streaming or pre-recorded video/audio, or the publication of resources. In the next few days, the Cathedral will begin live-streaming of prayer and worship about which we will keep you informed, in addition to the resources already available on the website here;
- We will pray for and give generously of our time and money to assist those most in need, remembering not only the fearful, sick and grieving, but also those that work in hospitals, emergency services, logistics and supply chains – the list of key services is limited only by our capacity to imagine those whose lives are most affected;
- We will focus our prayers during a Day of Prayer and Action, this coming Sunday, accepting the invitation, wherever we may be, to light a candle of hope;
- Weddings and funerals may take place, with a small group present and appropriate precautions to reduce the risk of infection;
- Non-essential church meetings (which includes PCC meetings without urgent business) are to be postponed, and essential meetings held with appropriate precautions;
- Youth and children activities run with schools will follow school advice, but church-run activities should be treated as social activities or meetings for prayer and worship, and therefore suspended.

This advice will be published very shortly in an updated list of FAQs on the CofE and diocesan websites. Further advice is being prepared to include:

- Continuing measures for safeguarding – at present the need for safeguarding training and safer recruiting for all ministers and volunteers remains unchanged;
- Licensing of music for live-streaming and recording;

- The postponement of Annual Parochial Church Meetings and arrangements for elections.

There is a great deal to be done. We appeal to those who are able to, for the sake of those who are not currently able to. We now have a dedicated page on our website around [communicating at this time](#). This provides a range of advice, support and resources to help you continue to communicate internally and externally. You will see there that we also want you to keep our Communications Team updated on how you are adapting and providing for your local community at this time. There will be inspirational stories that we will want to share amongst ourselves, and with the wider public, including through social media and the press.

As a team, we have committed to a daily meeting by conference call to keep developments under review. We plan to remain in regular communication with you.

With our prayers and best wishes

**The Bishop and the Bishop's Staff Team**