

My dear brothers and sisters,

“ The Church is changing”

You do not need your vicar to tell you that we are living in strange times! We have just received a communication from the Bishop of Chichester informing us that all public worship is to be suspended until further notice. This will include Holy Week and Easter. Clearly, this is very sad news for all of us, but it is a necessary decision, under the present circumstances.

We know, of course, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, and we firmly trust that the Holy Spirit will show us, in the weeks and months to come, creative ways to go on celebrating, living and enjoying the good news. The amazing technology of the present time offers us many ways to do this, and the churchwardens and others are presently looking at what systems will facilitate worship, prayer, and our on-going fellowship; we will let you know more about this as soon as we can.

We are a church with a beating pastoral heart, and in this season of “ self-isolation,” raised anxiety and increased suffering, we must work together to ensure that we continue to be a compassionate presence, for all people, in our community, especially for the most vulnerable. Again, the pastoral team, the wardens and myself will consider how this is best achieved. I know that you will already be praying for and offering practical help to those in need.

It is worth saying that Christians have always continued, in the most testing of conditions, to proclaim and live out the reality of the gospel of Christ-the Holy Spirit will give us grace to do so today, of that we can be sure.

Finally, may I encourage all of you to read the letter written by our Archbishops Justin and John (see link below)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

I will be in touch (how easily we use that phrase!) again very soon.

Please be assured of my constant prayers for you all.

Yours in the love of Christ,

Fr Keith

Vicar