

Friends,

Warmest greetings, love and prayers to you all, in these strange times!

PUBLIC WORSHIP SUSPENDED

Due to the Coronavirus Covid-19 outbreak and following the advice of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, public worship at Holy Trinity and St Mary's is suspended until further notice.

The advice also states that churches should be open where possible. We are seeking to keep Holy Trinity open for prayer or a few moments of quiet as a sign of peace, confidence and hope for the town. Before going to any public place, please consult the [NHS advice](#) for [vulnerable people](#), [those who may have the virus](#), and those who should [stay at home](#).

Information and spiritual resources will be regularly uploaded onto the parish website www.htsmguildford.org.

Throughout this period, we will be following advice from the government and church authorities, doing neither more nor less than what is required to keep safe all who turn to us.

KEEP IN TOUCH

It will be so good if we can keep in touch with each other. Many of you will be close to others within our parish. Please use these existing networks to strengthen friendships and pass on information. For all, please let me, Tom or the Parish Office know if your circumstances change, or there is someone you know who needs extra support.

Rev Robert Cotton: rector@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 575489

Rev Tom Pote: curate@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 511725

Parish Office: office@holytrinityguildford.org.uk 01483 567716

Please make sure we have an up to date email and phone number for you (especially if you have changed either recently). These can be provided via the Volunteer Response Form (see link below) even if you are unable to volunteer at this time.

Point to ponder: *'We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul' (Hebrews 6.19). Some of you will know the old Sunday School song: 'Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?' It has an uplifting tune, and a strong message - that, when storms come our way, we need to be well anchored, with God and each other. When the strands of care, hope and prayer are woven together, there is nothing that will uproot us from God's love. So, although we may not be able to touch each other in a literal way for now, we are still held - anchored - as we hear and speak words of care, hope and prayer.*

I wonder if we might know how you are making the most of this situation. You are invited to post photos to [our Facebook page](#) or use our Twitter handle [@HTSM_guildford](#) showing what you are doing, books you are reading, cakes you are making - let's see if we can enjoy and share the unusual!

FIND YOUR RESOURCES

When faced with unexpected challenges, it is easy to be frightened and confused. That's why, sadly, there is so much panic buying. But we are resourceful people, and we belong to a community that has many resources. Make use of these - which will be good for you, and also give you something to resource others.

We will continue to post [Pause to pray](#) content on our parish website, Facebook page and Twitter account. Use this - perhaps light a candle before you do so, and direct others to this resource. Within 24 hours of posting the first one, we received over 100 views and many favourable comments. Also, we will be finding other ways of keeping us together in spirit, including some offerings from our musicians.

Point to ponder: *I am sure many will be feeling unprepared to face this current situation. So, consider what happened to David (see 1 Samuel 17). When he was called to fight Goliath, he was told by God to use the skills he already had. He did not need extra armour, nor the weapons that others had been using. God had already been preparing him for this moment, without David even recognising it. You too - your life of faith (whether it has been for 8 or 80 years) has been the best preparation for what is needed now. You know how to pray, to care, to be calm and still, to live with uncertainty, and to display hope. This is the time to draw on what is already there. Your character of kindness and faith may be precisely what others need now.*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

In asking for help, I am not placing an obligation on any of you. Some of you will be self-isolating or protecting yourself in other ways - that is right and proper. But I know we need some help from those of you who can provide a listening ear or run essential errands.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSE / CONTACT DETAILS UPDATE FORM

If you can help in these ways or have already been in touch with us to offer help, we would be very grateful if you could complete the attached form to help us co-ordinate things as quickly as possible.

SELF ISOLATING

As my wife is unwell (a slight cough and feeling under the weather), I am taking the precaution of self-isolating. I look forward to remaining in contact. I appreciate all the effort that is being put in to keep our parish community together and remain of service to our neighbourhood.

Finally

Two great Christian classics have one word in common: CS Lewis wrote "Surprised by Joy" and Gerard Hughes wrote "God of surprises"! My hope is that we will be surprised by how much goodness is around, often in unexpected places.

With love and prayers

Robert

20 March 2020