



the arena Weekly

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newsletter

St James' Vicarage,
1a Arlington Square,
London N1 7DS

vicar@stjamesislington.org

020 7226 4108
07989 281123

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2020

Dear All,

CORONAVIRUS: ALL CHANGE AGAIN



Church of England suspends all services over coronavirus



The Church of England has suspended all services until further notice, saying it must become "a different sort of church in these coming months".

**DUE TO THE CURRENT
OUTBREAK OF COVID-19**

**ALL CHURCHES IN THE DIOCESE OF LONDON
ARE NOW CLOSED.**

**PLEASE USE THE PHONE
FOR ALL PASTORAL ENQUIRIES.**

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Please let Fr John know of any who are ill
or in practical need of help with shopping

It was only this time last week that we were announcing the end of normal Sunday services in St James' - but we told you about the daily 12noon prayers which were taking place because the Church was to be kept open between 9-6pm each day. Now Bishop Sarah has asked us to close the Church completely. That is why you will find this notice (left) on the main doors of the Church, a sign which will remain there until the coronavirus pandemic has peaked and we can begin to return to normal again. We simply have to adapt now that Boris is insisting on a full Italian-style 'lock-down'.

So how do we cope? For as long as we are able, Pack-Up will continue to offer soup and sandwiches at the door of the Church Hall from 12noon on Mondays. Thanks to Islington Council we will receive supplies of fruit and veg to help that to happen but the availability of bread remains a constant worry. We are really grateful to the Pack-Up team for their ingenuity and their determination to provide a good meal - albeit without the chance for the street community to spend time together. Thanks too for your kind offers of help. At the moment we are managing but if we need assistance in getting food to the elderly in particular we will be in touch.



But we still wanted the Church to be visible and so we went to some trouble to stream a short Mass last Sunday. The picture on the left is a still from this first attempt. Thanks to Isabel and to Sinead and her i-pad, we managed to record a 40minute Mass complete with readings, sermon and prayers. You can find it on YouTube and on our Facebook page at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIttKrvuvTw>

It wasn't perfect of course - the sound quality was less good than it might have been - and I really did need to slow down the speed of my delivery for the camera! But we had over 30 hits and I am sure the quality of what we were trying to do in Church would have improved markedly in the coming weeks.

However today, Tuesday 24th, in response to Boris' pleas for everyone to stay at home unless absolutely compelled to go out for food or medical treatment, the clergy have now received further instructions from Bishop Sarah not to enter our churches unless the Vicarage is next door, and not to stream services unless it can be done by one member of the same household! This really does make it impossible for us at St James' to continue as we had hoped. So for the time being we will abandon the streaming. We will, however, continue to post the Weekly News sheet and the set readings on the website (www.stjamesislington.org/news) and the usual Sunday sermon. From next week we will post some prayer material in this newsletter.



What does seem to have worked, though, is the sending out of a Bible story and a Sunday School style activity! Thanks to Sinead and Maria a large envelope of craft materials - and even a glue stick - were able to be hand-delivered to 24 homes and up to 35 children before last weekend! We're glad that people seemed to think it was a great idea.



At the bottom of Maria's covering letter was an email address inviting our children to send back pictures of their work and already we have received some lovely examples to share. We might not be able to be all together in the same place and at the same time but we are certainly working from the same page!



Sinead sorting out the crafts and then the great contributions from Ivy and Mae Dennison, Nylah Lawrence, Charlie and Isla Seabrook, Theo Jenkins, Antonia Nistor, Ben Sabine and Ilaria Goodwin.

Given the latest rules from Boris about 'staying at home' and social distancing most of these envelopes will now have to be sent by post. This will inevitably cost quite a bit over the next three months so if you would prefer not to receive Sunday School crafts each week, please let us know.

Of course there is no charge for these but when you are thinking about your giving to St James' (as part of the recent Stewardship Renewal Campaign) we hope you will feel able to help us to fund this project - alongside all the other ministries at St James'. Please return your green Stewardship Pledge Cards to Nieve Goodwin by Sunday 5th April.

More next week. Keep safe!

Best wishes as ever,
John