

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF ST CHAD'S SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns forever! Amen!

This morning the Standing Committee of St Chad's Church, Handforth met to decide on what we should do as a church family in light of the current situation with the spread of COVID-19.

**The decision was unanimous that all meetings at St Chad's should cease as of today (14th March 2020).** This includes all Sunday and midweek services; youth group, homegroups, Lent course, prayer meetings, cafe and ad hoc meetings. Consequently there will be NO meetings at all tomorrow (Sunday 15th March).

We will be constantly reviewing the latest advice and will review whether we stay closed in a month's time.

We realise that this will cause disruption for many people and for some of our key meetings such as the APCM and Easter celebrations. This decision has not been taken lightly. Whilst this is not in line with the more general CofE advice we have taken the following things into consideration to make this decision:

The best and latest epidemiological and scientific reports. E.g. please read the following article:

<https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-act-today-or-people-will-die-f4d3d9cd99ca>

- Medical professionals in our congregation concur that they feel this is the right and proper course of action.
- The average age of our congregation is squarely in the most vulnerable age bracket.
- It is better to proactive rather than reactive.

We are planning to put some things on our website regularly for people to participate in Worship and Prayer remotely if you are able to access the internet. We are also planning to offer pastoral care by telephone and to help those who are housebound as much as possible.

All this said we want to assure you that we are not worried or anxious about any of this. These are purely sensible precautions so as to protect the most vulnerable in our church family.

I want to reassure you that the Lord is the same today, yesterday and forever. Please be confident of the following:

1. Firstly we should all remember that our loving Heavenly Father is King of King and Lord of Lords and that He rules the world from His throne. He is in charge of every atom and every virus. The very hairs of our heads have been numbered and a single sparrow does not fall to the ground without His knowledge. We also know that He is a God of Love who rules the world for His glory and our good.
2. Secondly, our Heavenly Father is ruling the world we should pray to Him. We should pray to Him at all times of course but now we should especially pray He would help and comfort all that are in danger and all those who are anxious and afraid. We should also pray that God would mitigate the effects of this virus rejoicing that one day we will all be brought home to a world in which there will be no more sickness, sighing, tears or pain.

In his name,

Steve Burmester