

We are living through an event that is shaking the foundations of our lives. Only a few short weeks ago life as we know it today was unimaginable. I spoke to someone who lives near the sea, they described looking out of their window and seeing the promenade deserted. Usually it is filled with people, many walking dogs, and at the weekend children playing. Today even the sea itself seemed subdued. There was pervading sense of something being terribly not right.

We have listened to the advice from our Government and our churches have acted upon it. Sadly this means that our churches are now closed. This feels wrong, surely in these times people should be able to sit in space where prayer has been valid for generations. There is a sense of bereavement and bewilderment. This devastation has swept upon us without warning or reason. Many are anxious, people are frightened for their loved ones, jobs and livelihoods are in jeopardy. Years of work counts for nothing in the face of an invisible enemy.

You don't need me to tell you that the past weeks have brought out the best in some people and the worst in others. When this is over what matters is how we have lived through it, and what we have learned not to take for granted.

As part of our response to the measures taken to limit the spread of infection we have suspended our parish magazine. This decision has not be taken lightly as many people value this community publication. But we cannot ask people to visit homes to deliver the magazine and since the churches are closed we cannot collect our own copy. We are also aware that things are changing so quickly that by the time the magazine is printed things have moved on a long way. So we are trying to offer weekly letter and reflection via our website. Please look in regularly so we can share news and stories.

Please be aware that we do not have telephone numbers for most of our church members so if you feel the need for a chat please get in touch.

I hope many of us have tried the online daily prayers provided on the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org) Click on Prayer and Worship, then on Join us in Daily Prayer. It is all free and everything is there. Please pray for all those who work with our NHS at this time. They are being tested to the limit and rising to that challenge courageously.

I have said to members of our PCC that when this is over the world will be a very different place. We will need to mourn for those we have lost. We shall not simply pick up where we left off. There will have been too much suffering for that to be possible.

This week we remember Christ's suffering for this is Passontide. The Collects for this season do not try to make sense of suffering, or see a reason or cause within it. We simply hold to the truth that God is always with us, if we know this we can endure, and if we can endure then we can prevail. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, though this is a truth we cannot always see or understand. Faith is often walking in the darkness remembering the light we have seen.

Yours

Paul.