



18th March 2020

Dear Church Family

The leadership team met yesterday to make decisions about church life during this difficult time.

It won't surprise you to hear that after much prayerful discussion it has been decided to suspend all activities and gatherings at CCC for at least a fortnight, until the next leadership meeting when further decisions will be made depending on the circumstances at that time.

So from now and **for the next two weeks there will be no church services, coffee mornings, and prayer meetings in the church** and you are not expected to continue meeting face to face in life groups. The only exception to this is that the youth club, Halo, will still run on Friday night if the schools are still open on Friday.

Of course this decision is inevitable given the guidance for churches from the government and the precedent set by the national denominations. And yet we feel deeply saddened as we take this step, and we know that many of you will feel aggrieved and even angry that this decision has had to be made. In Sunday's sermon (more info below!) James will address some of that sense of grief that you might be feeling over not being able to meet together and worship and pray together.

God consistently brings good out of evil. We should expect and pray to see him do the same in these weeks and months. And so let's keep praying that we can all be attentive to the things he may be showing and teaching us, and alert to all the ways in which he might be prompting us to serve and love people near and far. And let's be creative, perhaps seeing this time as a fresh opportunity to be church in our roads, our families and our workplaces. Let's also be creative in the way we support and stay in touch with each other, researching how we can meet together and converse via Google hang-outs, Zoom and other social media apps.

We'll write to you again in the next days and weeks with specific ideas of things we can do to keep ourselves healthy, and things we could do to bless others, and ways we can stay connected with each other. Please do share with us ideas that you already have. You might also dig out your church directory - it's already set up as a prayer-aide, and you might find some people in there to call too!

We hope to be able to provide resources for worship at home - things that we can do remotely which will help us remain rooted in God and feel connected with each other. Here are three things for now:

- We hope to give you access to a recording of a sermon for this Sunday. A printed copy of the sermon will be posted to those who are technologically challenged.
- Christians Together in England are calling us to pray at 7pm on Sunday evening and to place a lighted candle in a window at home as you do this.
- Dave and Kez will be in touch with our young people and families with children about resources and remote activities for them.

We realise that for lots of you giving is a part of your worship and you may be wondering if you can still give if we are not meeting together for worship. Maybe now is the time to set up a standing order (Bank: HSBC, Account Name: Crediton Congregational Church, Sort Code: 40-18-23, Account no.: 20262064) or please send cheques to the church or drop cash through the manse door in a labelled envelope.

One thing we were planning to do this Sunday is the Gregory family gift day but this will be postponed now until a time when the future is more certain.

These are strange times and yet we worship and love a gracious and compassionate God who will comfort us and guide us. May you be filled with his grace and peace.

James, on behalf of the Leadership Team

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