



THE UNITED CHURCH

Jewry Street, Winchester
(Methodist and United Reformed)



Minister: Revd Tim Searle

Day off: Wednesday

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Building community through the love of Christ

CORONAVIRUS – OUR CHURCH'S RESPONSE

Dear friends,

Church Council met for an emergency meeting to discuss our response to the latest Coronavirus developments.

As of now, all normal activities and events at the church, including services of worship, are cancelled until further notice, in accordance with Methodist and URC advice.

We are exploring how to live-stream or record short services so that people still have access to a regular act of worship online. We will also endeavour to provide these services on tape/CD for distribution to those without internet.

Our pastoral care team are working hard to devise ways of keeping in regular contact with everyone in the church and for identifying those who are at particular risk of isolation and loneliness. In the weeks to come we hope to be able to coordinate these efforts with the Live at Home scheme, as well as other churches, agencies and authorities across the city.

We are building a team of volunteers to help isolated people with tasks like shopping. If you feel able to volunteer in this way, please contact our Pastoral Coordinator, Helen McTiffin.

These are unprecedented times, at least in my lifetime. I pray that we will continue to be a people of hope and encouragement, and to endure the road before us with grace and courage. We will not waver in our commitment to build community through the love of Christ, whatever those 'communities' end up looking like!

Stay safe my friends, and look out for the needs of others.

In Christ,

Tim.

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND HOUSE GROUP RESOURCES

Resources will be appearing on the Church web site – ucw.org.uk – shortly.

We are hoping to provide the following:

- Streamed services from Tim and other local ministers and preachers.
- Streamed services from other Methodist and URC Churches.
- Recordings of past services/sermons.
- Links to prayer resources.
- Links to house group materials with tips on how to have online meetings.

Please request other resources you would like.

DAY OF PRAYER AND ACTION ON SUNDAY 22 MARCH: LIGHT A CANDLE OF HOPE.

Church leaders in Britain and Ireland have urged Christians to take part in a National Day of Prayer and Action about the coronavirus. *People are asked to light a candle in their window at 7 p.m. on Sunday “as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ”. At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.*

As well as calling for prayer for the Government and those working to contain the virus, such as health-care workers, and those who are most vulnerable, the statement lists some actions that Christians might take: “Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, or offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour.”

MESSAGE FROM THE BASICS BANK: You will be aware that many people are going to be in acute financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. This will result in a huge need for food banks. At the same time people shopping online have no obvious way to donate as they do in store. At Waitrose the situation is worse as the store has removed its Food Bank donation box because people have been stealing from it! The Basics Bank have a means of donating online: <https://winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk/donate/>

CHRISTIAN AID - Our global response to the Coronavirus. ‘Christian Aid and its partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience to continue to stand together with communities living in poverty during this period. If infection rates start to develop as they are in Europe, then people in poorer countries will be hit even harder. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. We will be working on the ground to help prepare

communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. Please pray for us in this vital work and support us where you can by making an online donation, pray for all those affected by this new virus, both in Britain and overseas, for all those working on the frontline and for wisdom for our leaders.' Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, Chief Executive, Christian Aid.

TO THE UNITED CHURCH: I wish to thank those people who donate the lovely flowers which grace the church; those who arrange them so beautifully; the people who divide the flowers into bunches; the members who deliver them to the sick (even in poor weather!) and the pleasure they gave me. They are an unexpected measure of delight, love and joy. God bless you all. Yours in Christ, Revd Jim Forster.

THANK YOU FROM DICK PARKER'S FAMILY for the help given to us for Dick's funeral. To Tim for his guidance and for conducting the services, to Tony for playing the organ, to the church members who prepared and served the after-service tea or acted as stewards. The family has particularly wants to convey to the general church community, their gratitude for the fellowship and support shown to our father over recent years, which was much appreciated by him, and also for the kind words and support to us in recent weeks, which is also much appreciated. Sue Parker.

LOCKDOWN – *a reflection by Fr Richard Hendrick, Ireland*

Yes, there is fear.

Yes, there is isolation.

Yes, there is panic buying.

Yes, there is sickness.

Yes, there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again,
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.