

19/03/20

Dear all

We live in extraordinary and challenging times, and, as the parish church of Deeping St James, we want to assure you of our prayers and love.

As I am sure you are aware, the Archbishops have advised that all public worship and meetings are suspended until further notice. Whilst we will miss deeply those significant services of Mothering Sunday, Holy Week and Easter, the Priory Church will be open daily from around 9.00am to 5.00pm for private prayer, and we will look at all other ways we can continue as church. We will be producing various resources that can be used from home.

I will also be available in any way that is appropriate for pastoral care and support. We have received advice regarding the offices of Baptism, Weddings and Funerals at this time – again please contact me for more details. My phone number is 01778 217366, email vicar@dsj.org.uk

In the meantime, I will try to stay in touch with as many as possible by phone and/or email. Please do keep an eye out for one another, and let me know if there is anyone in particular need. I have already had offers of practical help. Local businesses and individuals (including the Priory Church) are also getting together under the 'Love Deepings' banner to offer help and support where needed.

A quote from 'The Fellowship of the Ring', the first part of the 'Lord of the Rings' by JRR Tolkien (himself a committed Christian) is making the rounds at the moment: "I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

Holy God, who created us for and from love, in this time of social distancing hold us close in your arms. Comfort those who are afraid, enliven those who are bored, give courage to those who are distressed, and warm those who feel the cold touch of loneliness. Breathe in, with and through us as we walk through uncertainty into a new future knowing that you are with us now and await us there. In the name of Christ the Beloved we pray. Amen.

With love

Mark