

Dear all

This morning, the PCC met to discuss what our response should be to the current COVID situation, and the lockdown. With great regret we have decided to suspend public worship for the short term.

Although Government guidelines give permission to hold public worship under COVID-safe conditions, and our risk assessment and practice has been as rigorous as possible, we felt that the most responsible course for us was to close the church. We based our decision on the lack of knowledge of the full dangers of the latest strain of the virus, and the vulnerability of many of our congregation. Although currently DSJ is a small 'island' of fairly low infection rate compared to surrounding towns and villages, we did not want to risk further spreading the disease by going against the government advice of 'staying home'.

Sonia and I will continue to contact people via the phone. We have a list and will be working our way through it, between us calling everyone at least every fortnight, if not more often. Please do contact us if you need pastoral support – or just fancy a chat. I would also encourage everyone to phone around their friends, especially if they are on their own.

I wonder how many have made New Year's resolutions... and how many have already failed, whether due

Yearly reminder:
there is no
resolution that, if
kept, will make you
more worthy of love.

You, as your actual
self and not as some
made up ideal, are
already worthy.

-Nadia Bolz-Weber

to COVID restrictions, or to the more normal factors of reluctance, boredom, too much effort, or reality in general! New Year's resolutions should be a positive thing, driven by a desire for improvement, to put things right... and to care for oneself. They should not, in themselves, be another stick we beat ourselves with... another failure...

This comment from Nadia Bolz-Weber needs to be kept close to the heart

Nick Fawcett reflects on the new lockdown:

When I posted the hundredth of a series of coronavirus prayers back on 24 June last year, it looked as though the crisis might be under control and that it would be just a matter of time – a few weeks or months at most – before life got back to normal. How different the reality has turned out to be. Today, more people are hospitalised with coronavirus than at the peak of the first wave last April, and the number of those dying is increasing by thousands each week. People everywhere are overwhelmed by a sense of foreboding, if not despair, and, despite the availability now of vaccines, few expect the pandemic will be over anytime soon. Here, then, is another prayer, seeking God's help in dealing with our fear and frustration during these troubled times.

We thought it was over, Lord –
well, nearly, at any rate:
the end in sight,
the conclusion of this ghastly episode,
this nightmarish year,
at last becoming a reality.
But it hasn't worked out like that;
not a bit of it.
Things have got worse rather than better:
more people infected,
more fighting for their lives,
more dying,

and, inevitably,
as a result,
more restrictions,
more pressure,
more devastating consequences,
not just now,
but potentially for years to come.
We're not just frightened, Lord –
anxious for ourselves and our loved ones,
More than anything, we're weary,
drained,
exhausted,
wondering just how many more punches we can take.
Strengthen us,
protect us,
support us,
renew us.
And grant,
in particular,
your guidance to all tasked with responding to this crisis –
politicians and administrators,
scientists and researchers,
doctors, nurses and other health workers –
as well as those whose jobs put them, personally, at risk.
May their service help to see us safely through the coming weeks and months,
until we can truly say that this pandemic is over,
and finally look forward to a better tomorrow.
Amen.

Once again I would add a plea for anyone who has something to share – especially funnies, or musical links – to let me know.

I'll leave you with this one...



And this piece of music...

This was a real surprise to me. I simply entered 'Epiphany Music' into search, and came across this powerful song by Taylor Swift – who I've never really listened to before. It was not the 'Epiphany' I was expecting!

[Taylor Swift – epiphany \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

This was more of what I was expecting – Cantata for the Feast of the Epiphany by JS Bach

[Cantata of the Week: Feast of Epiphany - J.S. Bach BWV 123 'Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen' - YouTube](#)



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark