

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear friends

## **Church is not about the building, but about the people**

Following the Government's recent announcements, and in line with guidance from The Methodist Church, Ashbourne Methodist Church has agreed to cancel all face-to-face services, events and meetings until further notice.

Nevertheless, even during these unprecedented circumstances, we will continue to be a church family and to serve our community.

### **Serving Our Community**

Our church serves the local community in many ways, including through Craft & Chat, kids@cornerstone, The Cornerstone Coffee Shop, Lunch Club and Messy Church. Many in our community will be feeling worried or lonely, or may be concerned about how they will get supplies if they need to self-isolate.

I encourage everyone to think about how we can support our neighbours and community during this time.

Many members of our church are already involved in the Ashbourne area community support scheme, so please think about whether you can be involved as well. Councillor Ann Smith is coordinating this response.

Ashbourne Food Bank is likely to need additional donations, so please consider whether you can support them. You can contact them on 01335 661237.

If you need help, there are many people in our town who are ready to support you. It is important that you ask for help if you need it.

### **Praying for our World**

As we will be spending more time at home, we can spend time praying for our world, our community and ourselves.

Our website calendar has been adapted to include prompts to pray for specific things throughout the week. We are particularly concerned to pray for those who will be feeling isolated as they cannot attend their usual activities.

This Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, I invite you to respond to the national call to prayer issued by Church Together in England. At 7pm this Sunday, light a candle\* in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

## **Worship**

Although we cannot gather in the same place to worship, we will continue to worship God as his people in this town.

Each week, a service sheet will be made available on our church website and we will share a short video message on our Facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to view this. It is online at [www.facebook.com/ashbournemethodist](https://www.facebook.com/ashbournemethodist)

Our Church building will remain open for people to visit and spend time with God, subject to advice from the government and The Methodist Church. We hope and pray that this will be of benefit to our local community. If you visit, please wash your hands as you arrive and as you leave.

## **Our Calling**

Revd Paul Wood, Interim Director of the Ministries Team of the Methodist Church, said: "As we deal with the practicalities of protecting people from coronavirus we continue to remember Our Calling to care for the other whilst always being mindful that our call is always to respond to the good news in Jesus. We are a people of hope, we need to declare and model good news in these difficult times."

Jesus said:

***"I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart.  
And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give.  
So don't be troubled or afraid."***

John 14:27 (New Living Translation)

---

\* Safety note - please take all necessary fire precautions when using a lit candle. Ensure you remain with the lit candle at all times, and do not leave it to burn if you leave the room. Ensure there are no fabrics or materials such as curtains near the candle. You may wish to use a small electric 'candle' instead.

From Paul's letter to the Romans:

***“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

Romans 8:38-39 (New International Version)

*God of all hope we call on you today.  
We pray for those who are living in fear:  
Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's  
reactions to them.  
May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.  
For those people who are worried about going out.  
For those needing to make decisions in order to care for others  
For those who will feel more isolated.  
Grant us your wisdom.*

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised that  
Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated  
to us in Jesus Christ.  
Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.*

Amen

Your Minister and friend,

