

St Pauls

The Revd Matt Williams - Vicar

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Dear friends,

We are living through a challenging time as a world, nation and church. I do pray that you will know the Lord is with you in these difficult days and in the coming weeks.

In light of the latest advice from the Government, and our Archbishops, we have had to suspend all public worship services, and all the groups and activities that happen throughout the week. This includes the APCM. You don't need me to tell you that this is desperately sad for many reasons. Yet God is sovereign and in control. He rules the universe with absolute power and wisdom, and we can trust him to work his good purposes out. *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."* (Romans 8:28). The Bible is full of examples of God bringing good out of bad, and I'm going to talk about some of them in Sunday's sermon (more about this later!).

If you are feeling anxious or at all worried please consider listening to last Sunday's sermon, if you haven't already. It's full of encouraging truths about God. You can find it in the resources section of the church website, and on our Facebook page.

Since we are currently unable to attend services or our regular groups, we each need to put in place a plan to help us keep going and growing as followers of Jesus. Here is a list of resources which I think you will find helpful...

Sunday Morning Worship Live Online Every Sunday at 10am

The Bible is clear that we need to meet regularly for mutual encouragement (Heb. 3:13). But how can we do that when we're not supposed to gather? I'm currently working with Steve and Jim on recording services for us to broadcast weekly online. The services will include all the usual elements (songs, prayers, Bible readings, a talk etc) and the hope is that we will all watch it at the same time, 10am on Sundays.

If we can get the technology to work, and we don't get sick(!), you will be able to find the video on our Facebook page, this Sunday just before 10am. We'll also put a link on our website (by my photo!) so you can find it easily. Please add your thoughts and encouragements in the comments section on Facebook so that we can build a real community spirit around these times of corporate worship.

I'm also working on finding a way to have the church open at set times for private prayer.

Facebook: If you haven't already, please consider 'liking' our Facebook page as it's the easiest way for us to stay in touch, and I will endeavour to share encouragements, videos, songs and prayers on it.

Personal Study

Ligonier Ministries is an online Bible teaching ministry. It has hundreds of excellent online courses and teaching series which you usually must pay for but are now free. Why not pick a course and set

aside an evening or two for personal study? <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/all-teaching-series-now-free-stream/>.

It's not too late to pick up a good Christian book from the bookshelves at the back of church. Or you could order one from www.thegoodbook.co.uk/.

Nigel and Molly Watts of Precept Ministries UK led our Discipleship Course in 2018. They lead a live online Bible Study every Friday on Facebook. 'Like' Precept Ministries UK at <https://www.facebook.com/preceptminuk/>

www.thesermon.co.uk/ is a website full of good 10 to 15 minutes sermons that you can listen to online. The sermons by Rico Tice and Liam Golligher are especially good.

www.clayton.tv is basically a Christian iPlayer, broadcasting excellent, free, Bible teaching, music and courses for Christians around the world.

Some will find the services of Daily Prayer helpful: www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer. There's even an app you can download.

Don't forget there's a 'Bible Reading Guide' in the resources section of the Church website (www.stpaulscanfordheath.org.uk/). Or you can ask the Church Office to post you a copy. It's full of suggestions and tips for how to read the Bible and pray at home. If you're stuck at home for a prolonged period, why not set yourself the challenge of reading the entire Bible!!!

Children and Young People

As parents we want our children to know and love the Lord, perhaps now more than ever! There are a number of suggestions for children and young people in the 'Bible Reading Guide' mentioned above. With Easter just round the corner consider ordering a resource from <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/christian-living/easter/audience-kids/>

Check out the kids' section under 'Find Programmes' at www.clayton.tv for Bible story animations, music and teaching. There are some talks for those of secondary school age too.

Formerly known as Jelly Telly, Minno is a Christian Netflix for children, packed full of quality programmes. We used to subscribe and know from personal experience how good it is. It's especially good for younger children. www.gominno.com

www.fevr.net is a trustworthy website for teenagers, with lots of interesting articles, videos and more.

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Team consists of Matt Williams (07986 097099), Helen Mellows (01202 697114), Carolyn Martindale (01202 690110), Anne Small (01202 385499) and Doug Smith (01202 698784). They are very happy to help you whenever you find yourself in need of some pastoral support, even if you just want someone to talk to!

Practical help if you need it: We are working on a list of helpers that you can contact if you need help getting shopping, or if you just want someone to talk to. For more information please speak to the church office (01202 605311).

Home Groups

If you lead a Home Group, or are a member of one, please think about how you can continue to support one another practically and spiritually. Perhaps set up a WhatsApp group to share requests (prayer and otherwise). Consider doing together one of the free online courses provided by Ligonier Ministries (see above for details). You could agree to watch the sessions at your usual home group time, and then discuss it on WhatsApp or in a group call.

If you're not yet in a Home Group this may be a good time to join one - so that you're not cut off from your church family. Please contact me or Jill (Church Office) to find out more.

And finally...

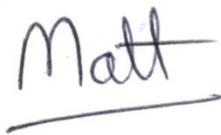
Do please be in touch if you would like to. I am also asking that we all be particularly proactive in helping those in our church and the wider community who are vulnerable and anxious. Let's look out for our neighbours and all around us.

As a church we are following what is happening nationally and we will seek to do what seems right and best. Please pray for all in our Church family, not least that that we keep loving and trusting God, and loving and serving one another. I'm going to do everything I can to continue to pastor and support you any way I can. Natalie keeps reminding me that the Apostle Paul was imprisoned a lot of the time and yet he still had a very fruitful ministry!

If there are major changes I or the Office will let you know, and we will put messages on the web site and on Facebook. If you would like to be added to the email list please let Jill our administrator know (stpauls.canfordheath@btinternet.com, 01202 605311). Similarly, if we don't already have your contact details, and you would like us to, please get in touch.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose." (Philippians 2:12-13)

With much love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Vicar at St. Paul's Church, Canford Heath
www.stpauls.canfordheath.org.uk
www.facebook.com/stpaulschurchcanfordheath