



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

From the Bishop of Huntingdon

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24th March 2020

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Please find attached a letter from the Archbishops and Bishops outlining our response to the Prime Minister's announcement last night. Please read it carefully.

I repeat and clarify my instruction from last night:

You must keep your church buildings closed and locked.

See poster attached for you to customize with your parish details.

All baptisms and weddings are postponed.

Funerals may take place at the graveside or in the Crematorium only. Only immediate family members can attend (if the crematorium allows) – that is, spouse or partner, parents and children, keeping their distance in the prescribed way.

You may NOT say the Daily Office or Eucharist in church, only in your home.

Meanwhile, we are sadly already seeing an increase of parishioners and some of our clergy falling ill with Covid-19.

I ask you with the utmost seriousness to abide both in letter and in spirit by these guidelines.

To clarify:

Baptisms are allowed if there is the danger of imminent death.

Weddings are allowed for emergency weddings only where a prospective spouse is expected to die, hence not in church. It will require my permission.

We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ

Again, please don't worry if you would like to live-stream or record video messages and lack the facility or know-how to do this on your own. As I said yesterday, we belong to one another and there are a number of offerings available both from within our Diocese (as well as other dioceses, of course) and from the national Church of England website and Facebook pages.

It's a good time to remind ourselves of New Testament teaching that the church exists on three levels: in the home/household, in the local gathering (ie local church) and globally. As a Diocese, our priority has been and remains to nurture a confident people of God. So we continue to pray and read Scripture, and as far as possible, if we can safely do so, serve our communities by being part of the wonderful number of Community Action Groups in our neighbourhoods who are looking out for those in greatest need.

Please take good care of yourselves and your loved ones as we continue in prayer for one another.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Deane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.