

The North Hampshire Downs Benefice: the churches of St Mary Greywell, St Mary Herriard, All Saints Long Sutton, St Mary Mapledurwell, St Swithun Nately Scures, St Nicholas Newnham, All Saints Odiham, St Andrew South Warnborough, All Saints Tunworth, St Stephen Up Nately, St Mary Upton Grey, St Lawrence Weston Patrick.

Message from the Revd Simon Butler (Benefice Rector) and the benefice clergy team

March 17th 2020

As you will be aware the Church of England have, in line with government guidance, suspended all Sunday services and mid-week gatherings for the foreseeable future. In a joint letter the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have shared that:

‘Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day...This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly a church for all, or just the church for ourselves? We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.’

Worshipping Together

We are committed to provide opportunities for people to join together in worship either online or through resources that can be emailed or posted out. We will be live streaming a service every Sunday morning on our new Facebook page which can be found by searching for [moretolifechurches](#) and we will also be live streaming morning prayer at 8.30am three mornings a week. If you are not on Facebook a link will be available on our church website, [moretolife.church](#) which will also include a range of other prayer and worship resources for you to access. If you have no access to online resources, please drop me an email and I will do my best to get some printed resources delivered. Let us not stop worshipping together, even if it has to look a little different for a while.

Supporting our Communities

In these challenging times it is important we seek to be Good Samaritans to each other. We are encouraging all those who are safely able to do so, to offer support to their neighbours. Even if you are self isolating we encourage you to commit to pray daily for your neighbours and community. If there is anything we can do to help you during this time please let us know by dropping an email to simon@moretolife.church This could be picking up shopping, or medication, a regular phone call or another urgent task. Let us be those who take care of others and share God’s love with our neighbours.

Open Churches

We are committed, as far as is possible, to keeping our church buildings open in the coming weeks. We hope these can be places of sanctuary for quiet prayer and reflection. We would ask that you wash your hands before entering the church and after leaving and please ensure that you remain at least 2m away from other people in the building. We will continue collections for the Foodbank at a time of increased need. Let us be those who are generous to those who are struggling.

Sharing Good News

Finally, as churches we are called to be light in the darkness and we would love to encourage you to share good news stories with each other. Whether that is a particularly helpful neighbour, a surprise phone call or a beautiful picture you have taken in your garden. You could share these on our Facebook page [@moretolifechurches](#) or on other community groups. Let us be people who spread light and hope.

Please be assured that as a clergy team we are praying for all in our communities. If you have a specific prayer request please email it to simon@moretolife.church and it will be included in the intercessions in our Sunday worship and during Morning Prayer that next week.

For more information about any of the churches please contact Rev Simon Butler on simon@moretolife.church or have a look at our new website www.moretolife.church