

Marksman

April & May 2020



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

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Dear People of St Mark's,

I was saddened to hear the Church of Scotland's advice that all worship services, and all church gatherings should stop but fully understood and agreed with the reasons why. We need to remember that the church is the people, the body of Christ, not just the building, and we need to find new ways of being church, ways that allow for social isolation but that allow us to support one another. I don't have all the answers – we are trying to figure it out as we go along.

There will be no more worship services at St Mark's for the foreseeable future, and at this time it is no longer possible for us to open the church for prayer.

We are now offering a mini-service with prayers, reading and sermon which will be available each Sunday morning on the Church website (stmarksoldhall.org.uk) and a "Word for Wednesday". This may also be available on DVD when we record in church, (but may not be possible if I record at home - Sorry). Please request a copy from the Church office and we will try to get it to you.)

Other services are available on the Church of Scotland website, some will include hymns. <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/services-online>

I was delighted to see that BBC Scotland had commenced a programme of religious broadcasting on Sunday mornings and I hope this will be continued.

Our focus should always be foremost on Christ's greatest commandments, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves. ([Mark 12:29-30](#))

Loving God means laying aside fear and anxiety – for God is in control. Jesus warned us that things like this would happen and [not to be anxious](#), but to recognise them as signs of [creation's groaning](#) as it awaits his coming.

We love our neighbours by being concerned about their welfare. How can we protect others by our own actions? By self-isolating and avoiding close contact with others. How can we support neighbours? Do they need shopping? Can we share a grocery delivery? Would they value a phone call just to let them know that they are not on their own? Be the voice of encouragement and comfort to those who are lonely, anxious and afraid.

Panic buying loo-roll and hand sanitizer is not loving God or our neighbour.

Checking on our elderly neighbours, washing hands, staying home, and using the NHS sensibly is.

And importantly we love God and our neighbour by praying:

- **For the vulnerable;** our elderly neighbours, those with serious health problems. But also remember those living in extreme poverty around the world, in slums and barrios, where self-isolation is not really possible, and access to healthcare is limited.
- **For those who are anxious and afraid,** some without good cause, others with very good reason. Pray for reassurance and be prepared to be the one who gives that reassurance.
- **For health workers**– those on the frontline in A&E departments, medical wards, ITUs, GP surgeries and community health services. Pray for protection for their own health, as they care for others, especially as services will become even more overstretched in the coming months.
- **For NHS and Social Care managers,** who will have to make hard decisions to ensure essential services are still running and that the most vulnerable receive the care that they need.
- **For care workers** in nursing homes and in the community.
- **For those in Government and the public health services,** as they make decisions to escalate measures to slow the spread of the virus.

I'll close by quoting from the Church of England's Archbishops' letter.

"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. We may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people. And we can offer practical care and support."

The Marksman will be published but due to our inability to distribute it, since we **all** have to stay at home it will only be available on the church website.

Please email me with any comments, thoughts, suggestions, or pick up the phone if you just want to chat. We are in a rapidly changing time and I don't have all the answers - I've never dealt with a situation like this before (but neither has anyone else!)

Let's trust in God's promises to be with us.

Let's practice faith, hope and love, and pray for each other.

Let's support each other, as best we can.

" And remember, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age." Matt 28:20

"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Ephesians 6:10

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Easter Update

I fully admit that whilst writing my pieces for The Marksman, during the two days when the lockdown was announced and Church was closed and life altered for all of us, I forgot that this issue of The Marksman would be coming out just before Easter.

We will all miss the Easter activities and services - I'd been told tales of bacon rolls after the early morning outdoor Easter service, and a Barbeque for lunchtime. Sadly these events will have to wait until next year - or perhaps a post-Covid 19 celebration when the church can reopen it's doors?

However, we will still journey through Christ's last week with a series of daily recordings throughout Holy Week, which will be on the website and facebook page, and we can celebrate the joy of the resurrection together in Spirit if not in person.

Hope you can join me there.

Sonia

Church Collection

During this time when we cannot meet, anyone wishing to pay their church collection by bank transfer should contact Julie in the office who can assist.

National Prayer Day - Coronavirus, Sunday 21st March

The National Churches called us to pray on Sunday 21st March, and suggested we light a candle in a window at 7pm.

They offered a prayer to use when lighting the candle:

*For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.
May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,
May those who are sick, know healing,
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.
Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,
Bless and guide health workers and key workers,
with strength and well-being,
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.*

*And may the light shining from our windows, across road and wynd,
glen and ben, kyle and isle, be reflected in our hearts and hands and
hopes.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.*

Although the day and time has passed this is a prayer we can continue to use, and it will be good to see little candles of hope burning out around the parish.

You may have noticed that, to this end, lights are lit in the big round window above the front door of the Church in the evening, with the cross of Christ shining out over our parish.

Sonia

Ralston Newsagents

The newsagent on Penilee Road have advised that they plan to be open as normal during the current Coronavirus crisis and that if you are in the at risk group they will (if possible) drop off essential items to your door. You can call them on 0141 880 9789 to place an order. They can take card payments over the phone and leave a bag or a box at your door. If you have a family member or neighbour that requires their help please pass on this information.

Peter's News

In life we are comfortable with what we know and what is familiar. The situation that we find ourselves in is uncomfortable because there are so many uncertainties. It is a difficult time and will be unusual for a number of weeks.

What we were running weekly, fortnightly and monthly cannot happen because of the risks to ourselves and our families. TRASH, Friends and Heroes, Sunday morning Evolution, Messy Church, family nights and all the schools work all can't meet at the moment.

But that doesn't mean that church stops, we are the church of God. The church will always continue as long as people know Jesus Christ and follow him. So we have a challenge at the moment about how we interact with each other, build each other up when we can't meet up.

I am hopefully that Trash will continue with a shorter session online or in a group chat so we can still study the bible, to have discussions and to spend time with each other. I will have some of the Friends and Heroes videos onto the church website and create some activities that the young people will be able to do at home. So some of the Friends and Heroes nights can happen to a degree. We are also looking at providing something on a Sunday morning for the older Evolution group so we keep supporting them through this situation. I am also looking at different ways we could still have an "online" family event.

So over the next few weeks it will not be "business as normal" but as the church we will rise to the challenge of not being able to meet up. We will "do church" differently but we will still be the church and a beacon of hope for our church family and wider community.

God bless, Peter

EVOLUTION

In an effort to keep our teaching fresh and interesting we have started to use Spill the Beans. This is an online resource developed by a number of Church of Scotland Ministers. We had only started to use this for a few weeks but it seems to be a good resource especially for our younger groups. This lectionary resource is for Sunday Schools as well as worship leaders.

Edition 34 from February until the end of May has been purchased and I can send it on to any group or worship leader who might like to see it.

Please contact me at gorjam@ntlworld.com for a copy.

When we were talking about temptation, we made very tempting cakes, and resisted the temptation to eat sweets. When we were covering the story of the Samaritan Woman at the well, we made drinks coasters.



Although we are not meeting at the moment, we still continue to support two children via Plan International UK.

Deo Duc Thao is 8 years old and lives in Vietnam. His family are farmers and he has a younger sister called Deo Thi Tra My.

Angel Makuyana is 12 years old and comes from Zimbabwe. Her parents are also farmers and she also has a younger sister called Praymore. Angel comes from a Christian family.

Prayer

United as a Christian family

United in love through our Saviour Jesus Christ

United as Gods children

United in our faith

United by the gift of technology by the grace of God

United in our appreciation of those in our church who are able to provide us with their gifts of teaching , time and talent at this anxious time, when even more than before we need to hear and learn from Gods word

United in Prayer for our world and for one another

United in our thanks for answered prayer and for God blessing us by giving us our Minister

.....The list is endless as is Gods love

Yours in Christ

Myra

39thA Paisley Brownies – March 2020



Wednesday nights are always busy and, hopefully, full of fun for the Brownies! One of the Brownies, Lottie, has completed the Baking badge and showed us some amazing Harry Potter themed cakes.

We had 5 new girls making their Promise to become Brownies. It was

lovely to be joined by the parents of Aimee, Charlotte, Holly, Juliette, Sarah, Sophie and Zoe for this important event.

On 23rd February, a few of the Brownies attended St Mark's for a Thinking Day Service. Milly K did a great job of carrying the Brownie flag especially as we did not know before the service if any colours would be carried into Church. It was very pleasing that 2 of our youngest Brownies, confidently stepped up to give a reading. Darcy and Ellie did a fabulous job and they had family in Church to encourage them. Also



as part of the Thinking Day activities, the Brownies were encouraged to promote Girlguiding by wearing their uniform to school and many of them were happy to show off their affiliation to Girlguiding.



The Pack continue to work through aspects of the programme. We have completed Unit Meeting Activities that included a range of diverse activities from looking at world records to making a golf club and designing a hole for crazy golf!! Another activity carried out was linked with Take Action in the community. Over a couple of meetings, all the girls drew a picture

on the postcard and then wrote a message. These have been sent to local Nursing Homes to stimulate conversation. The girls are working towards another Skill Builder badge and this time it is to complete the theme Know Myself. One group have been looking at "life goals" and we discovered we have one girl who wants to be first woman on the moon. Watch this space for updates!!!



It was with great sadness that following advice from Girlguiding, we had to cancel our weekly meetings. Our meetings are now "on hold" and we hope we can pick up Skill Builders and Unit Meeting Activity soon.

We had lots of plans including a swimming outing, a final meeting in front of parents and a Pack Holiday in May when 8 of the girls are due to go for a weekend to Dalguise House. In these uncertain times, we will just have to wait and see what happens.

Christine Hair

[Brown Owl]

24th Paisley Company Boys' Brigade

This session has been a particularly productive one across the various sections of the Company. Our senior boys have been getting creative in the kitchen producing a delicious stir fry, chilli and pancakes. All of the physical evidence was devoured on the night but our "would be chefs" were caught on camera.



The Company Section 1st years have enjoyed building Airfix Spitfires almost as much as the Company Captain. This was a recognition of Battle of Britain 80th anniversary. The boys were particularly interested to discover that the engines were produced just down the road at Hillington.

The Juniors have produced transport models from wooden kits often without instructions or with instructions in Chinese which did make it tricky. We do like to challenge them and it is probably good practice for flatpack assembly in later life.

Not to be out done the Anchors have produced all manner of crafts over the weeks which probably explains why we keep finding glitter in the small hall. The Anchors all set themselves the challenge of New Year resolutions. Many may have lapsed but I know Mrs Boyd's was achieved.... It was "to do more crafts!"

At the time of writing, and “building” on the productive theme of this session, we are still planning for a special “Lego Night” for the combined Anchor and Junior Section. We hope to invite parents to join with the boys and our visitors from Lego in a night of building and creativity. Apparently lego means “play well” in Danish which chimes with much of what we try to do in the Brigade. Our Senior swimmers certainly did play well – they again won the Paisley & District Championship. The successful team of Euan Houston, Jack Young and Matthew Martin are pictured along with the impressive Coats Shield.



The Boys’ Brigade is very much about building firm foundations. By sharing parables such as that of the Two Builders, for example, we hope to provide the boys with a basis for their own faith journey. Jesus said that when we are listening to his words about how to live our lives we are like the wise builder: building our lives on the rock. On a weekly basis we share the gospel hopefully whilst “playing well” too. We are living in challenging and uncertain times but what a wonderful encouragement it is: to know that if our lives are built on the strong foundation of faith we can stand “sure and steadfast” no matter what challenges we face. That is a great thing to be able to share with our young folk.

Give to St Mark's whilst you shop online

Many of us are shopping more online during the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Did you know that if you shop on smile.amazon.co.uk rather than the normal Amazon website, Amazon will donate a portion of what you spend to your chosen charity. You can choose to nominate St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley as your chosen charity.

Simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk on your computer or mobile device. And select St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley, as your charitable organisation, we will then receive donations from eligible purchases when you are shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.co.uk will result in a donation to the church. All you then need do is to remember after that to shop at [Smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) instead of [Amazon.co.uk](https://amazon.co.uk).

Millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations to charities by Amazon. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for smile.amazon.co.uk donation" on their product detail pages. AmazonSmile will occasionally contact you about donation amounts disbursed to your chosen charity or about the programme.

Christmas 2020

I know that you are thinking "jings this winter is not even over yet", however we are called upon to spread the Good News and there surely can be no better news than proclaiming the birth of our Saviour. Having been inspired by other parishes who have spread the Christmas message in their communities in a novel way, our Ladies Bible study group decided to do likewise.

We are going to distribute ANGELS, (yes little knitted messengers of GOD), around our parish in the run up to next Christmas. These angels will be a gift to whoever finds them. They will carry a Christmas message and an invitation to join us in a special Christmas family service. If nothing else, may homes will have a symbol of Christmas on their tree, a little gift from our church, a little reminder of the true meaning of the season. We can but try to spread God's love, it is what all of us are called to do.

As you know we have a large parish, so we are appealing to any knitters who would like to help with this initiative, the pattern is easy; contact the office for it to be emailed to you.

Our aim is to knit and distribute as many as possible. If you cannot knit maybe you can donate some white wool, sew on the ribbon and message, or be one of the volunteers who hang them randomly around the parish – this is something everyone can be part of.

Thank you in advance for assisting us share the Christmas story, your help is greatly appreciated. We go forward in faith, trusting God to guide us in all our endeavours.

Karen Marshall

WORLD MISSION

I am lifting the information from the covering letter to explain the changes to the World Mission Council.

“Our interim working name is the Faith Impact Forum. This comprises of the departments that were World Mission Council, Church and Society and Interfaith. The Council has been wound up and we have a new governing body in the Forum which has 15 members including Very Rev Dr Susan Brown as Convenor and Rev Dr Alan Miller as Vice Convenor..... The Interim Head of Department is Rev Ian Alexander. We are now working through a period of change and as we do so work continues in a very similar fashion to before at present. In terms of WM magazine, it has been decided, apart from one small change that we will continue in the same format for the next 3 editions which will take us up to the General Assembly **(which has now been cancelled)** and hopefully a new name and remit.....We look forward to staying in touch with you about global issues and partnerships as the Church of Scotland continues to support and learn from its partner churches around the world.

If you have a Guild and are preparing your syllabus for next session then we have many topics related to the Global Church which we can share with you, including the Journeying Together project

The magazine itself is titled Encountering Others and looks at Fairtrade Fortnight (which has just gone), Mustard Seed Stories of peoples first encounters with the world church and how they've grown, an article on a visit to Pakistan as part of Glasgow Presbytery Twinning, along with one or two other articles and the Stamp Appeal



PRAYER FOCUS:

Heavenly Father,
 We praise and thank you for the diversity of gifts that you have shared. For the beautiful variety and variance of the characters, personalities, peoples and interests that are represented throughout your Church.

Help us to remember that we are all one family, united together by your love for us all and joined together in our faith.

Remind us to put aside any personal agendas or selfish deeds, looking instead to serve one another, to love one another, to support one another, just as Jesus taught us to do.

Heavenly Father, open our eyes, hearts and hands to help us see that as we worship together, we grow stronger in Christ, until your grace and goodness will be revealed to all.

In Jesus' name we pray - AMEN

MISSION PARTNER PRAYER FOCUS



Gary Brough is one of our Mission Partners in Malawi. He works with Livingstonia Synod's Church and Society Programme as Communications and Resource Mobilisation Manager. Gary has asked that we join him and his family in prayer:

- Join us in giving thanks for a year in Malawi as a family. We're thankful for friendships, working relationships, a church family and good health.
- Continue to pray for the political situation in Malawi, for resolution to ongoing disagreement and for unity to address the needs of the country. Pray that the work of the Church and Society Programme can continue despite this and offer some input to help address the unrest.
- Please pray for preparations to return home to visit our supporting congregations and presbyteries. Pray that would be an encouragement for us and the local church.

This year the **Stamp Appeal is for Women's Development Centre in Sri Lanka.**

This started in 1986 when Pearl Stephen began a women's project in the garage of the Scots Kirk in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Her husband George, was the minister. This grew to become the Women's Development Centre, providing education for disabled children, and community development for sex workers vulnerable to HIV.

However it's best known work is for victims of sexual violence.

Pearl's daughter-in-law has carried on the work after her death in 2013.

The Centre cares for 50 girls and young women under the age of 16 who have been sexually abused for many years. A history of brutalisation of society caused by decades of war has led to this.

The Centre helps girls care for their babies, trains them in crafts and weaving to give them skills to help when they leave. Counselling for parents is offered to help rebuild broken relationships. Opportunities to attend school is given.

Social enterprise projects and a café are now in place, helping to raise the girls from their most vulnerable state to one of dignity and worth.

Every penny raised by the Stamp Appeal goes towards supporting these women who have been through so much.



Bob and I still collect your stamps. Obviously at the moment, with the situation with Coronavirus, you won't be able to put them in the church as before.

Please still collect them at home and we will get them at a later date.

Should anyone wish to have a magazine to read go to this link online

https://churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/64297/WM94-FINAL.pdf

Thank you. Irene

Ladies Lunch and Fashion Show

On 22nd February, there was a new social function on the Church calendar. The Ladies Lunch and Fashion Show took place at Ralston Bowling Club and there were over 80 ladies who came along, despite the awful weather!!

There were many non-church members who joined the event and a fun afternoon was shared. It was lovely that Sonia was able to attend this, her first social event as Minister of St Mark's and we were delighted that she said grace before we enjoyed the buffet lunch.



Tea and coffee was made and served after lunch by several gentlemen of the congregation. Their contribution to what appeared to be a "ladies only" event, was very much appreciated. They did, however, draw the line at modelling some outfits!!!

The fashion show entertained the ladies with lots of different outfits. After this, the clothes were available to try on and buy. Judging by the number of shopping bags going out the door, many people found clothes to suit them.

Grateful thanks are sent to all who contributed to this successful event – those who donated prizes, helped with set up on Friday, served drinks, provided traybakes for the tables, made teas, came along on the day and brought friends with them and cleared up after the event. As a result, the church funds have been swollen by over £1200.

Another demonstration that St Mark's is alive and open to welcome everyone.

The Social Committee

Renfrewshire Foodbank

Thank you for all your previous support and donations.

Just to let you know that due to the coronavirus outbreak, we are having to make some changes to our current operating model.

We will be working with less volunteers and we will be closing our Abercorn street unit on Friday 20th March, which has been our main donation point.

All donations can now be made at our main warehouse which is at Westway Park, Porterfield Road, Renfrew, PA4 8DJ. It will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-12 noon

If you wish to make a donation outwith this time then please phone us on 0300 102 2500 and we will see what we can arrange.

Our distributions at Paisley, Johnstone and Renfrew will continue as normal.

At this time we are running short of diluting juice, tinned potatoes, tinned tomatoes, tinned meat and fish, jam and soap.

We thank you for your continued support and hope you all keep safe and well.

kind regards

Milly MacKinnon

Renfrewshire Foodbank is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation number SC044200

For more information, please visit www.renfrewshire.foodbank.org.uk

A variation of Psalm 23 for this time

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me sit down inside my house.
He leads me around my garden, he restores my soul.
He leads me away from other people for my health's sake.

Even though I walk through a world filled with coronavirus,
I fear nothing, for God is with me,

And I have washed my hands. (Six times at least today!)

God's faithfulness and steadfast love will comfort me.

God prepares a table before me,
with my family helping with shopping;
He reminds my friends to call me on the telephone,
and my heart overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

Prayer Diary for April and May 2020

Wednesday 1st April We pray for the youngsters who are now off school on a much longer timescale than planned. The Easter Code which should have taken place yesterday would have given an opportunity for them to hear about the Easter message. Pray that there will be other opportunities for them to hear about your message of salvation.

Thursday 2nd April At the start of a new month we thank you for bringing us through the winter, and for giving us the promise of spring. Help us to marvel at your creation and the wonders we see around us. This is World Autism Awareness Day. We pray that God would bring peace to adults and children who find the changes being made due to Coronavirus very difficult. Help them cope.

Friday 3rd April

Remember ROAR. For many of those who attend regularly this a weekly chance to catch up and meet people – for some maybe the only chance in a week. Due to the Coronavirus situation, and self isolation, pray for people who will be feeling lonely and depressed. Pray the God would reach into their lives and touch them with His peace. Pray that His love would be shown in spontaneous kindnesses done for them by others.

Saturday 4th April

We pray for those still recovering from the flooding in our land. For vulnerable people who have been left without homes, that the communities they live in would pull together. May God's love be seen in action.

Bible Studies groups - This is the penultimate meeting in our studies of Elijah. Pray that what we learn we are enabled to act on it. While we are not able to meet together at the moment, we are still studying individually and looking at innovative ways to connect. Pray that we will be able to have a video conference session that works!

Sunday 5th April

Today we think about Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, of the crowds who thronged the way singing Hosannas to Him. Step into the scene and imagine how it must have been to be there.

Pray for Sonia as she is unable to lead services in the Church building.

We ask that You will enable us to develop new ways of 'doing church' and that people will be able to access services online.

Monday 6th April

At the start of Holy Week there is usually the opportunity to take time out of our busy schedules to come along to our Holy Week services. Even if this isn't possible this year, each of us can determine to stop and spend time with You at home. Why not decide to read through the Easter story bit by bit each day?

- Tuesday 7th April This would have been Day Two of the Holiday Club. We remember the children who would have attended, and pray that you will be with them and keep them healthy and occupied. For the additional strain on family life due to restrictions of movement etc., we ask for patience as families adapt to new ways of doing things. Remove the tensions that may come, and build relationships.
- This is also World Health Day. It is even more important that we pray for the health of our world. We especially remember the governments of the world who are having to make decisions. Help them make wise ones, to the benefit of their people.
- We pray that You would stop this virus spreading. Show us Your amazing power Lord.
- Wednesday 8th This day was the day Judas was went to the chief priests to betray Jesus. We pray for those whose lives have been blighted by others who have betrayed them. Help us to reflect on our own lives and confess any sins of betrayal towards our Lord. Give us courage to stand up for You.
- Thursday 9th April Maundy Thursday as it is known remembers the Last Supper, when Christ met with his disciples and washed their feet. Pray that we will learn to be servants of our Lord and follow His example.
- Friday 10th April As we think of Good Friday and the cruel death of Jesus on the cross, help us ponder exactly what that meant for Him. The total separation from His Father and the physical agony and the realisation that this was done for us! Amazing love indeed.
- Saturday 11th April We know with hindsight and the Gospel message the outcome of this amazing story, yet help us think of how Christ's disciples, family and followers must have felt on this day. Pray for those we know who are still lost and haven't yet understood or heard the message of Easter. Help us really get to grips with what this Saturday must have meant to those who loved and walked with Jesus.

- Sunday 12th April Hallelujah, Christ is risen! He has risen indeed!
- Give thanks with countless others throughout this world who are celebrating the wonderful news of Christ's resurrection.
- We have a God who loves us, and is concerned for us, who willingly gave His Son for us. May we grasp this more and more, especially in the present time of uncertainty and insecurity, when people are afraid and anxious. Pray God grant us peace, comfort and joy in the midst of difficult times.
- Monday 13th April Easter People are people of hope. Help us Lord to bring a message of hope to those we are in contact with – even more so when we are having to think of innovative ways to keep in touch.
- Tuesday 14th April Today we think of each other. All those in our congregation – the body of the church here at St Marks. Let us keep each other very much in prayer as we come to terms with the ongoing Virus situation, as we have to adapt to a simpler way of living, as many of our congregation will be finding living alone without human contact very difficult.
- Wed 15th April We move to our Community and remember them in our prayers today. For businesses who are struggling to remain open. For front line workers who are putting themselves at risk to help others.
- Thursday 16th April Continue to pray today for all the children who have their lives turned upside down by the closure of schools. Pray God will protect them and help them understand the reasons for self isolation. Help them articulate their feelings of sadness at not seeing their friends and relatives.
- Friday 17th April Pray for our minister, our elders and youth worker. Help them as they are having to do so many things to support our church without being able to interact physically with them.

- Saturday 18th April As the weekend comes round pray that people who have been working from home, find time to relax despite still being at home.
- Give thanks for our gifts and talents that can allow us to fill our time with hobbies.
- Give thanks for all who have been involved in the Bible Study sessions which conclude today. We are looking at what to study next.
- Sunday 19th April Hopefully we are tuning into our church website or Facebook page to share in the sermon from our minister, Rev Dr Sonia Blakesley.
- Pray that God blesses this use of technology to touch many lives.
- Monday 20th April Today our children should have returned to school. Be with them as those who were due to sit exams now have had that option cancelled. Pray they will be fairly awarded grades.
- Tuesday 21st April Continue praying for those who are facing the fallout from the Coronavirus. For those whose businesses and livelihoods have been ruined by it. For each one, we pray new beginnings and restoration.
- Wed 22nd April Mid week and an opportunity to stop at 7:00 and share in a time of communal prayer – joined together by Gods Spirit even if in our individual homes.
- Thursday 23rd April Pray for missionaries world wide as they work in other countries. Give them encouragement and help them know others are remembering them.
- Friday 24th April Give thanks for the many blessings we have been given. Take time to stop and think about all the good things you have in your life.
- Saturday 25th April This is World Malaria Day. We ask that people who are suffering from this disease would get treatment quickly. Pray for those treating them.

- Sunday 26th April Praise God that we still have freedom to follow Him, for the opportunity to worship even from our own homes. Bless all churches who are live streaming or recording services to keep their church together. Help us remember 'we' are church and that the building is where we meet!
- Monday 27th April We pray for all those in care homes, residential homes, hospices and for the homeless. Especially for those who have no where to stay during this pandemic
- Tuesday 28th April We remember those countries who live in conflict – Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Lydia, Yemen, India/Pakistan to name a few.
- Wed 29th April Help us be a witness here in our community. Show us how we can each play our part to help others we meet.
- Thursday 30th April Thank you Lord, for being with us through this last month. Be with us as we go into the next month, uncertain of what it holds. Calm our anxieties and help us rest in You.

Keeping Safe from Cybercrime Attack

As we have all seen in recent days, the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is bringing out the best in some people, and sadly the worst in others.

The requirement to self-isolate, limit social interaction, and reduce our trips to shops and stores means that more of us are turning to intranet shopping. This in turn means that we are sharing our personal details on line, and potentially leaving ourselves open to cyber-attack. The following is some advice which we can all follow:

- a. Be vigilant when opening emails and ordering goods online.
- b. Research retailers online to make sure they are legitimate.
- c. Make sure the website is secure:
 - Look for the padlock symbol,
 - Look at the **Website address** – this should start with https://. The S stands for secure
- d. Know your rights and the company's returns policy.
- e. Keep software and virus protection up-to-date and use strong passwords for online accounts.
- f. Don't use public Wi-Fi. Your standard data connection is more secure.
- g. Pay using a credit card. You will have more protection. Alternatively, online services like PayPal mean scammers will not be able to get hold of your bank details.
- h. Be aware of pop-up ads. Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and financially-motivated cybercrime, has revealed that they have received multiple reports about Coronavirus-themed phishing emails attempting to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal and financial information.

At a time when members of the public are growing increasingly anxious about the impact of Coronavirus, and are receiving legitimate emails and text messages from their local medical practices, it is easy to see how cyber criminals are exploiting these vulnerabilities.

To prevent against Coronavirus-related cyber-attacks, we have a responsibility to warn and reassure members of our community, and provide preventative cyber security advice communicated by Action Fraud which clearly states that you don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and that you never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details.

Stay safe, stay vigilant. Protect yourself and others

Further information about keeping safe on line can be found at:

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/shop-safely-online>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/internet-security/>

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>