



# CROSTHWAITE CHURCH KESWICK

## ST KENTIGERN'S PARISH CHURCH AND UNDERSKIDDAW CHURCH ROOM

"TO KNOW JESUS AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN"

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Friends,

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3.12)*

We were due to hear these words on Sunday morning, 22<sup>nd</sup> March at our Mothering Sunday Service. They are qualities we need more than ever as we respond to rapidly changing and challenging circumstances. Public worship has been suspended, but prayer has not. It is at a time such as this that our faith and trust in God is both tested and rewarded. We need God's help. We need each other's help. We may be walking through "the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23), but "we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (Hebrews 6). Let us always remember that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" and he will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13).

I'm writing to let you know what arrangements are currently in place for the life and fellowship of the church and to encourage us all to look after one another. We must follow Government guidelines about hygiene and social distancing, but we must also find new ways of being church.

Public worship is suspended, which means that all church rotas are suspended. No one is, or should, be expected to fulfil planned duties in relation to public worship. Sadly, we have also had to take the decision to postpone the Rawnsley Centenary events. Advice may change, but at the moment weddings, funerals and baptisms may continue, with due regard to any Government or Diocesan advice current at the time. If you are in doubt about anything in this regard, please do ring or email me.

However, we *will* be doing the following:

- Church will be open during daylight hours for prayer
- On Sunday at 10.15am at Crosthwaite, I will be saying my prayers. If anyone chooses to join me it must be in a personal capacity and with regard to social distancing measures. We can also pray at home and we will make resources available to help.
- From Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, I propose to pray in church each day at 12.00pm for the duration of this crisis. St. John's will be doing the same at 8.30am and 5.00pm. A bell will be rung to assure the town and surrounding area of our prayers.
- Prayer stations, prayer cards, prayer request boxes, candles and other prayer aids will be available in church. Again, please be mindful of hygiene and social distancing. The Crosthwaite Cairn outside church will also be available for people to place slates in memory of loved ones and in solidarity with those who are suffering.
- The Archbishops have designated Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March as a National Day of Prayer
- Sunday worship will be available on local and national radio

Vicar: Revd Andy Murphie, Crosthwaite Vicarage, Vicarage Hill, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 5QB  
Telephone: 017687 72509 Email: vicar@crosthwaitechurckeswick.co.uk

Parish Office: Main Street, Keswick CA12 5NN, Cumbria  
Telephone: 017687 71187 Email: admin@crosthwaitechurckeswick.co.uk

- As well as prayer aids in church, there are prayer pointers on the Churches Together in Keswick website and on the Church of England national website
- Each Friday, it's my intention to produce a prayer sheet for the forthcoming Sunday, wherever people have chosen to pray. I will also be providing Bible Study material and updates as appropriate. If you are not or know of people who are not already on the weekly email notice distribution list, may I urge you to add yourself to it and draw everyone's attention to it. We will be developing our means of communication in the coming weeks. Please also check Facebook for updates and information.
- In order to make sure we give ourselves every opportunity to be in touch with each other, I'm enclosing an updated consent from which gives the opportunity (where you wish) to be included on an email or WhatsApp group permission list, as well as more conventional methods of communication. Please be assured, however, that there is no obligation and that you are always in control of the ways in which you would like us to keep in touch (or not!).
- Self-isolation doesn't mean that we have to be out of communication with each other. In fact, it's even more important that we keep in touch. **DO** take the initiative to phone and email each other. **DON'T** wait to be asked – just do it!! **DO** consider finding a 'phone friend' and agree to phone each other regularly to check up and chat. Attending to the mental health and wellbeing of all of us will be vital in the coming weeks and beyond.

As requested by Carlisle Diocese we have produced a Continuity Plan to address circumstances where church role holders are not able to fulfil their duties due to illness or self-isolation. PCC members will have a copy of this plan but, for simplicity, if I'm unavailable Keith Rigg as Lay Reader is my nominated deputy and if Keith is also unavailable, Linda Tee will be the next reference point.

Supporting friends, neighbours and church members will be happening naturally and should continue! In terms of the wider community, Keswick Community Emergency Recovery Partnership are looking for volunteers to help with shopping, etc. as well as asking for people to be 'phone friends' to those who are isolated. If you would like to be in touch with them about this, please contact them at: [keswickvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:keswickvolunteers@gmail.com). A similar arrangement is planned for Portinscale.

Thank you for your fellowship in the life of our church. In the coming days we all need to pray for each other, for our community, for our nation and for the wider world. We are facing a great trial, but let us remember that with God we have hope "And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts." (Romans 5)

with very best wishes and prayers,

Yours in Christ,

Andy

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