

TOVE BENEFICE comprises the parishes of:

Towcester with St Augustine, Caldecote
St Bartholomew, Greens Norton,
St Mary, Easton Neston,
St Michael, Bradden.



18th March 2020

Dear Friends

I hope and pray that this letter finds you well? In the light of all that is happening in our world at the moment I thought I should take time to write to you.

I expect that you will have heard the news, on Tuesday, from the Archbishops Office that in light of the Government guidance around non-essential contact, public worship is to be suspended until further notice. This means that across the benefice there will be no public church services on Sundays or mid-week. I know this will come as sad news for many of you (albeit not entirely unexpected), I share your sorrow and deeply lament that we will not be able to meet together for a while. Whilst public acts of worship have been suspended, we are endeavouring to have 3 out of our 5 churches open for quiet reflection and individual prayer between 9am and 3pm. These are St Michael's Bradden, St Bartholomew's Greens Norton & St Lawrence Towcester. However, we are looking at ways we can 'still exist' as church.

For those of you who have access to the internet: we will be using our website and social media pages to keep in touch – with reflections, prayer and links to churches in the deanery who are planning to live stream Sunday services.

<http://www.tovebenefice.org.uk/worship-at-home/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ToveBenefice>

<http://twitter.com/ToveBenefice>

For those of you who do not have access to the internet: we are putting together a 'worship at home' pack. If you would like to receive one of these and have not already spoken to myself or the Benefice Office, please call the Benefice Office (01327 350459) leaving your name, address and telephone number.

The 'weekly news' will be made available through email, our website and Facebook page. Again we recognise that there are people in our congregation who are not online. If that is you please call the Benefice Office (on the number above) and we will see if we can arrange for a physical copy to be popped through your door.

Pastoral care and support at this time is going to be essential - and we all have a role to play in it. We are in the process of compiling a 'pastoral telephone tree' system. It will be impossible for me and Lulu to keep in touch with everyone on a regular basis, so we are sharing this role with retired clergy, ministry team, PCC officers, and the pastoral visiting team. At the moment I am not able to tell you who that person will be but someone will be in touch with you from the church shortly. I will be assuming that unless we hear from you otherwise this is okay with you.

Holy Week and Easter will look very different this year, however I promise you, even if it is just me with the paschal candle at 6am, on Easter Morning, Christ's light will arrive in Tove Benefice.

Over coming weeks the ministry team will be looking at the ways that we can support you and community actions further yet already there are some beautiful stories of hope and of humanity coming together.

Finally, please pray and continue to read your bibles. I and the ministry team will be praying for you daily and we would likewise welcome your prayer, as we seek to guide the church through this time. Pray also for the wider community and particularly those combating this virus.

Blessings

Rev Paula Challen, Rector, Tove Benefice

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