



From St George's Church Vicarage, Graydon Avenue:

Looking outside our windows will, for many of us, become a new pastime; everything looks normal, but turn on the television or radio and you soon realise that life is anything but normal. What might be the subject of a BBC drama is only too real - a pandemic of unimaginable proportions and we must all find a way to live through it.

We have been told to face this invisible enemy as if we were at war, and never more than in wartime does a community pull together. Despite being a small church, St George's is here to support the community in any way we can.

We are offering our website as a forum to connect Donnington and to keep you informed on local developments. You will find a telephone number and an email address on this leaflet to use to request help, ask for someone to talk to or volunteer to help support the community. We cannot promise to solve every difficulty but we will do our best during these challenging times.

Many of you will have been advised to socially distance, or worse still to socially isolate. I don't have a spleen and so the Hospice has relegated me to work from home. Therefore, I understand only too well the need to keep both physically and mentally active. I know this will become more and more difficult in the coming weeks and months, but I am comforted to know that I am part of a caring community. We will see this thing through together.

I finish with the words of Winnie the Pooh: 'If ever there is a tomorrow when we're not together, there is something you must always remember, you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.'

Fr James Cooper

Our Church

Regrettably our regular church services have had to be cancelled. But:

- Everyday we will be saying this prayer at 6.00am midday and 6.00pm. Wherever you are, you can join in.
- Each Sunday we will be posting a 'virtual' church service on our website including the readings for the day, prayers of intercessions, links to hymns and a short video. Our virtual Mothering Sunday service is there now.
- Each Sunday between 10.00am and 4.00pm we will open our church for prayer, lighting candles and silent mediation. Obviously people need to watch hygiene, but there is space to spread out, hand washing facilities and room to walk around our churchyard as Spring arrives. People need to make their own decision as to whether a visit is wise, but we will be open.
- On Good Friday, Easter Sunday and on Easter Monday the church will be open between 10.00am and 5.00pm.

We will continue to review these arrangements so make sure you stay connected.

Keep us, good Lord
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Giving and Receiving

It's great that many Donnington neighbours are helping each other, but is there more we can do as a whole community? We don't know how the weeks and months ahead will unfold, but in the meantime here are some things we are doing. They won't change the world, but they could change a life.

Receiving

- We want to help the elderly and those who have had to self-isolate. And let's not forget others who may appreciate help such as stretched medical staff, staff and volunteers in key worker roles, supermarket workers, delivery drivers.
- We know that often it is those most in need who don't want to ask. Please, allow us to help.
- You can either e-mail or phone and let us know what your needs are.

Giving

- If you would like to volunteer for instance shopping, dog walking, sourcing a book, giving someone in isolation a phone call or any other ideas then send us an email with details of where you live and what you can offer and we will try and marry you up to someone in need of help.
- In addition each Saturday between 10.00am and 12.00pm starting 28th March we will be in the Parish Hall to take donations for the Chichester Foodbank.

In all of this there will be some ground rules on our website - essentially everyone to follow the national guidance on hygiene/ contact with other people and we will be undertaking a vetting process before 'connecting' people.

By the way. Did you know that the ever-resilient **Country Stores** on Stockbridge Road (soon to be renamed Premier) can deliver groceries - you can order by phoning **01243 782474**.

How to make contact and stay in touch

St George's church has stood in this community since Saxon days. It has been tested in that long history. It has met that test through coming together. So, during this time of 'isolation', it is just so important to stay as connected as health allows.

If you would like to contact us to ask for help, to volunteer, to give ideas and suggestions or to share a reflection then you can:

- Email donningtonparish@gmail.com
- Telephone the vicarage on **01243 788321**. The line may be busy, but keep trying and if we are out leave a message

If you would like to find out what is happening:

- Visit our website www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4871.

If you want to be kept up to date:

- Visit our website and sign up to our enewsletter - you can unsubscribe at any time.

And join us in silent prayer each day a 6.00 midday and 6.00pm.

We are together

