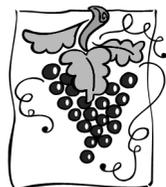


# GRAPEVINE

22nd March  
2020

## Our Vision:

Letting people know about the love of Jesus Christ



“No matter your age, you will always need your mum.”  
– Unknown

## Welcome to St Peter & St Mary’s Church

Last week I saw a rather large and exceptionally smiley and excited lady walking up Ipswich Street with a friend. She laughed and waved at me across the road and said, “Not yet!”

This young lady was pregnant, very pregnant, she must have been just days away from her due date as she waddled gracefully into town to do her shopping.

I remember when Judy, my wife, was in the same state, as we were waiting for our first baby to be born. We were young and inexperienced and didn’t really realize just how much our lives were about to change. Ours was a world that seems much safer than the world we live in now and each new born baby is such a frail and helpless creature, it’s a miracle that any of them survive in the perilous they’re thrown into.

Then on a warm night in May the population of the world (that already had to be counted in the billions) increased by one.

At the same time Judy’s status in life was never to be the same again. Prior to the birth of baby she was a glowing, expectant wife but post-birth Judy, she had become one of the world’s most precious creatures. A mum.

To be a mum is one of the most valuable responsibilities God gives to any person alive. Although not every mum manages to always get it right, we wouldn’t be here without them.

*Michael*

# **CORONAVIRUS - the latest**

## **From the Vicar: Rev'd Michael Eden**

We are living in unprecedented times. Every day new advice is being given by the UK government on how best to contain the outbreak of the coronavirus in order to protect people, especially those who are vulnerable.

As a church, it's important that we respond to this situation prayerfully, wisely, compassionately and responsibly and not out of panic or fear.

At the Parochial Church Council Meeting on Monday 16th March a sub-group was appointed to compile a Parish Continuity Plan, as required by Bishop Martin. Members of that group are Rev'd Michael Eden (Vicar), Marion Gray (Churchwarden), Geoff Marchant (Treasurer) Zoe Davies (PCC Member) & Tony Ingham (PCC Member). The group met 2 days later.

Following the news that Church Services are to be suspended the decision has been made to, also postpone all Church gatherings for the foreseeable future. That includes Housegroups, Home Communion, the PCC, and Committees of the PCC, the APCM, Little Fishes, Boys Brigade & Girls Association, Open the Book and others.

We aim to keep the Church building open daily, for private prayer, from 10am-1pm and 9am-noon on Sundays for as long as is possible although refreshments will not be served. The recommended hygiene precautions will be implemented. We envisage the Church Office still being staffed 10am-1pm Monday to Friday.

We are planning on communicating primarily by Email, Facebook Twitter and the Church Website, although I will be asking some of you to call on the phone or deliver paper copies to those without internet access.

We are setting up a network for Pastoral Care linking you to other Church members who live near to you. Please do all you can to support and help each other as we show God's love.

If you get to the situation that you need to self-isolate and stay at home please let me know (and the Church Office) so that we can pray for you and give support to meet all practical needs. We are here to help you. Don't be too shy to ask.

If you are wondering what to do with your money for the Collection Plate? Please drop it into the black chest as you come into Church. That includes cash, cheques and envelopes.

We are planning to give you a regular weekly update but as the Coronavirus story moves so fast, look out for more frequent correspondence as required.

I am sure that you must have many questions. If you let me know what they are we will try to answer them as soon as we can. I also ask you to be patient with us as we try to find those answers in these turbulent and confusing times.

I would also ask you to pray daily for those mentioned above who are working to do what is best for you and the Church. Continue to pray for those who are on their own or are suffering and grieving. And pray for an end to this pandemic.

We are trying to make sure that we can all keep in touch in new and creative ways, even when physical contact is still risky.

I think we all know that this is a fast-moving situation and our Government are giving daily updates. So keep watching the national news. We will try to contact you each week and pass on further information as the circumstances develop. But in the meantime stay safe, keep your distance and keep washing your hands!

*Revd Michael Eden*

## Foodbank

Mike Smith of New Life Church tells us that Hillside Community Centre will be closed from this weekend. Stowmarket Foodbank, however, will continue to operate from the building as it is designated as an emergency service. Donations will be able to be left outside the building either into a van or gazebo.

Food donations can still be dropped off here at church, when it is open, in the usual way. Supermarket and garage collection points will also continue to operate normally.

This is going to be a challenging period for many people, so donations will be needed even more than usual. Please help if you possibly can.

Urgent needs this week are for tinned hot meats, tinned fish and packets of instant mash.



## National Day of Prayer

Collective worship may have been suspended for the time being but Sunday 22nd March (Mothering Sunday) has been designated as a National Day of Prayer for the global pandemic of coronavirus. Churches Together in England has called for churches to get behind it by lighting candles at 7pm on Sunday.

Please pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

## Climate Petition

Christian Aid are raising a petition to demand a new deal for climate justice. Those who have done the least to change the climate are now living with the consequences. To find out more or sign the petition go to the Christian Aid website.

## Please Pray

- To resist temptations that will harm us
- That the Government will be able to fulfil promises they are making.
- For Unity and Understanding
- An end to the spread of Coronavirus

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**Regd Charity Number 1132857**