

FROM THE MODERATOR

Both The Clerk of Synod and myself took the decision to call for the suspension of Church Sunday Service From next Sunday, 22nd March. We did this along with our other denominations and prudently in line with public health advise. I hope the suspension of Sunday Service will be for as short a period as possible.

I did this in conjunction with the Clerk, Robert McKee and in my role as Moderator. I was receiving enquiries from individuals and our congregations. Robert and I felt we had to act having considered carefully the statements coming from the Chief Medical Officer and Health Secretary Mat Hancock MP. The Minister sadly stated that churches would be expected to close in order to keep our distance from each other and avoid infection. It is strange at this time that solidarity with each other is expressed by separation.

I will be meeting with Lynda Kane and in contact with others to assist in creating innovative ways to keep church life going both by music and using social media. We are fortunate that we live in a highly technological age where we can keep in touch with each other. We now have a Denominational Facebook page and youtube Channel, NSPCI Youtube. We have a couple of pieces on this and with everyone participation will make it very inclusive of all our congregations.

This is a very anxious time and people are genuinely concerned about the impact of this virus on our families, community and neighbourhood. It rests on each of us to help lift the spirits of each other. We can rise above this and come out the other side stronger. When we look at the history of our church we know our community has been through incredible times and remained true to our liberal and tolerant faith. It is important at this difficult time that we watch out for each other and in particular the vulnerable. I would advise that we all pay heed to the various warnings and advise from the NHS in Northern Ireland and the HSE in the Republic of Ireland. We have to be serious about tackling this virus, some of the public response has been poor to say the least

As a religious community we can use this time wisely. I emphasise that the closing will be reviewed regularly plus we will look at other services or events that are in accordance with Public Health obligations. This is a strange interregnum in our lives with it's own time frame, which presently is unknown to us. Remember this will also pass and on a lighter note it won't be long before we are planning holiday breaks Harvest and suggesting Carols for Christmas and saying to each other "where did the year go"

If you need to contact me are have a chat please do so on 07969059993 and email HUDSON351@BTINTERNET.COM

I leave you with the following Scriptural Text, Jeremiah 29: 11, which will bring comfort and reassurance

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Right Rev. Chris Hudson, Moderator