



CORONAVIRUS: YOUR CHURCH'S RESPONSE APRIL 2020

Beloved in Christ: for as long as we cannot come together...

To say the suspension of public services goes against the grain for me is an understatement. The last time I wasn't in a church on a Sunday morning was because we were walking through a rainforest in New Zealand. Hebrews 10:25 talks about the spiritual danger of "neglecting to meet together". While I take that warning very seriously, so much of my life as a rector is about the joy of gathering, the delight of meeting and the very real sense of the risen Lord Himself being among us as we do so, especially when we worship and break bread with one another.

Over coming weeks and maybe months, our priority as Rector, Staff Team and Select Vestry is to keep our Church family as prayerfully and practically connected as possible. New ways of loving God and loving our neighbour are already presenting themselves. Rest assured, I am here and, at present anyway, I am not self-isolating. Serving Christ through all this still means serving you and we are all in this together. For now, please keep in touch: with Him and with us. Thank you to all those who are making offers to help.

Subject to change in forthcoming Government Directives and to the well-being of church staff and volunteers, our plans for how we will continue to do things are laid out below.

Blessings to you and all yours

Simon D, Jan S, Kelly McC, Karen B, Andrew W, Paula L, Ian B

Pastoral Care: Visits, Emergencies & Funerals

Hospital visits will continue for as long as we are allowed in. For now clergy will try to visit you at home in case of emergencies and serious illness if you contact them, but it seems likely that we will soon have to rely on phone calls. As part of everyone's efforts to combat cross-infection, routine clergy home and nursing home pastoral visits have now stopped. Should a loved one die, contact an undertaker and one of the clergy. We are to conduct private family funerals only. Roselawn have already suspended public attendance entirely. A separate memorial service can be arranged when social gathering restrictions have been lifted.

Worship: www.youtube.com/channel/UCwW5HvtCU8yGg0WjSgIcQeA

With all public services in the Church of Ireland now suspended, please plan to join the clergy and lay readers for worship online. Services (two of us plus our cameraman!) will be available on YouTube each week on Sundays. Church remains open for personal prayer and meditation each weekday from 9.30am to 12.30pm and devotional materials will be available on the table on your way in – please always take these home with you to reduce contamination. Choir and 10 o'clock singers' rehearsals are also, for now, suspended.

Seniors: Phone Calls

In the absence of Friday Lunches, Monday Coffee and Scones and The Wednesday Club and because we're under medical advice not to visit, we are keen to stay in regular touch by phone. We don't want anyone to feel cut off or alone. Should there be anything you need special help with, please phone the office.

Community Outreach: WhatsApp or videocall

Community Outreach takes on a whole new meaning in our present situation. We encourage everyone to be good neighbours and offer assistance to people in whatever way you feel you can. The Storehouse Food Trolley will be left in Church and your donations will be more appreciated than ever as we all try to overcome our instinct to hold and hoard. When things get back to normal Alpha will begin with a Launch Party on Wednesday 30 September. Jan is now launching Prayer Triplets for us to join in from home. Prayer Triplets are 3 people agreeing to pray together by using WhatsApp or videocall. They can pray about personal family concerns or wider community issues. Please pray yourself about who to ask to join you. Jan is happy to organise this and is keen to know about your group so she can provide oversight: janstevensonballyholme@gmail.com

Youth: Instagram & Facebook

Until further notice, all meetings for our youth programme (YF, Emerge, Bible Study and Mentoring) are now suspended. However, this does not mean that we will be out of contact – far from it! Andrew will be putting lots of resources online for our young people to engage with, the aim being to bring faith-based content, self-care content and structure to their days. This will be based on Instagram (@ballyholmeyouth), Facebook ('Bally HolmeYouth') and YouTube ('All Things Theology'). We may also set up video calls with groups of young people but will ensure that we abide by Safeguarding Trust – informing parents and having more than one leader.

Children: email

The Diocesan Children's Worker has put together some wonderful ideas and website links which Paula will email to all our church families. In addition to Sunday School-type material it provides a daily schedule to help give children structure to their day, and lots of ideas to provide inspiration for busy parents. We will also email a DIY Children's Church lesson each week. This will contain a YouTube link for a song, a 'To-Do' task, a teaching point, a memory verse, a creative prayer activity and a creative task. Please use these guidelines together as a family and enjoy! Keep your eye on our church Facebook page for other helpful content.

Office: Parish Business

The Parish Office will now be working through email and telephone calls. For those with Freewill Offering envelopes, please bring them after the present crisis is over, post a cheque to the Office, or transfer to Standing Order. A heartfelt thank you to those who have already transferred to this method of giving and perhaps others will now make the switch: outgoings and wages through this period will continue and forms are available at the back of Church and on the parish website at [Make a Donation](#). Cleaning of church premises (especially door handles and surfaces) will be stepped up. Easter Vestry will now be held as soon as possible after the Sunday we re-open. All current church office bearers remain in post until then.

Prayer & Staying in Touch: Magazine, Website, Social Media

Prayer for people by name will be offered every week. There will be no new editions of The Parishioner and no weekly News in the Pews bulletins until we re-open for worship, but we will be posting regularly on the parish website and Facebook page.

Parish Office	02891 274912 (open 9.30am to 12.30pm)
Parish Email	office@ballyholmeparish.co.uk
Rectory	02891 274901
Parish Prayer Line	07531 806167
Parish Website	www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk
Facebook	search for Ballyholme Parish and Like our page
Down and Dromore Website	www.downanddromorediocese.org