

We are very sorry that worship and other church activities have been suspended under guidance from the Methodist Church and the Government. Please be assured that although the building has been closed for all but essential use (i.e. Foodbanks or the Free Fridge), we continue to be spiritual people who believe and trust in a God of love. We will also continue in prayer and worship in our own homes.

Here is are some words you could use (download for the isolation service).

There is a hymn which begins "*When our confidence is shaken in beliefs we thought secure*", in the current national and international situation that is everybody's experience; our confidence is shaken by the turn of events which we could not predict at the start of the year.

Our confidence in the Health Service remains though we are anxious whether it can cope with the extra demand. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the staff – local GPs and nurses; consultants, doctors, nurses, administrators and ancillary staff in the hospitals; the home care and residential care workers.

Our confidence in Parliament has taken a knock over recent years; now we must trust them to do the right things in difficult circumstances. We pray for the Prime Minister and Government, their advisors and experts, to make appropriate decisions, recognising that things are constantly changing which makes planning so hard.

Our confidence in God might be shaken, by the uncertainty of life and the possibility of illness and death. Where is God in all this? I was led to a Bible verse in the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy 1 v 7: Which says we should not be afraid "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

We trust in a God who powerfully has brought us through difficult times before – people have referenced the war time spirit and the Spanish 'flu of 1919 coming so soon after the First World War. One could even go back to the Plague and other catastrophes of the past. At all times and in all places God is with us – giving strength and comfort as humanity tries to work out the best way to deal with the unknown.

We trust in a God of love who encourages us to "love our neighbour" which inspires people to offer community support and assistance to those who are in need. As the church we want to respond to those who are ill or in isolation, and working with community networks will try to answer any calls upon us

We trust in a God who has blessed humanity with a mind to work out a medical solution with drugs and vaccines which will, in time, keep us safe. As Christians we pray for healing but also pray for those whose skills and expertise look after our health.

Verse 3 of that hymn says:

In the discipline of praying, when it's hardest to believe;  
In the drudgery of caring, when it's not enough to grieve:  
Faith maturing, learns acceptance of the insights we receive.

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We will face weeks, even months of fear and uncertainty, as well as much frantic action, and we live through this storm which billows around us. With prayer let us seek guidance and comfort, and trust God to be with us in and through it all.

God bless    Rev Peter Sheasby

If you personally need any help, prayer or advice please contact  
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