



**From:** Bishop of Exeter  
**Sent:** 17 March 2020 17:03  
**To:** All Licensed Clergy, PtO Clergy, Readers, Churchwardens & Lay Chairs  
**Subject:** Ad Clerum - Coronavirus Update 5

**TO ALL LICENSED CLERGY, PTO CLERGY, READERS, CHURCHWARDENS  
& LAY CHAIRS**

## **AD CLERUM Update 5**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

You will all have seen or heard yesterday's announcements of the Government in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic. We are entering a very challenging time in the life our nation. This is uncharted territory for all of us and we need to stay in touch with one another and support one another to the best of our ability. I am conscious of the additional strain that will be placed upon you in the coming weeks, as you endeavour to care for your congregations and local communities. Thank you for all you are doing. Be assured of my prayers for you and your people.

Attached to this email you will find the joint letter that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued today. Public services are suspended, but this does not mean that 'the Church of England has shut up shop'. In fact, it is precisely at this time of national crisis that as Christians we need to reach out to our neighbours in their need. Within the constraints set out by the Government, we need to find new ways of serving our communities, new ways of being Church.

Our church buildings are one of the glories of Devon. Although we cannot hold public services for the time being, they need to remain open. Indeed, we anticipate that people will want to use them, to light a candle, to pray for loved ones. The Cathedral will be open without charge from 10am to 4pm every day. People are free to meet to pray inside our churches, provided they observe public health guidelines:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishops-call-church-england-become-radically-different-public-worship>

I know you have many questions about church life, funerals, baptisms, weddings, meetings and small groups. The National Church is working on a series of FAQs to bring clarity in all these areas. They will publish these as soon as they are able and I will share them with you as soon as I have them. Please keep yourself up-to-date by checking for the latest guidance: <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

**The Palace, Exeter EX1 1HY Tel: 01392 272362**

The Church of England website has special prayer resources for those who are ill or in self-isolation. You will find prayers to be said with children at night, particularly if they become anxious. There are simple forms of Morning Prayer and Night Prayer, which can help sustain people during the weeks when we are unable to gather in church. Meanwhile our Diocesan staff are busy working on a range of resources to help you stay connected and able to 'do church differently'. Please look at our website to find out more:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/coronavirus-guidance/coronavirus-resources/>

We know there is already amazing work going on in our communities with people being 'good neighbours' and reaching out to those who need help. Please check the information page about what is available: <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/coronavirus-guidance/covid-mutual-aid/>

During this period when public worship is suspended, we are planning to broadcast a regular Sunday 'service' on the Diocese of Exeter Youtube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter channels, starting this week with Mothering Sunday, which the Archbishops have designated a Day of Prayer and Intercession for all affected by the Coronavirus, including our Health Service. Bishop Jackie will lead the reflection. We will publish advice about how to watch these services and reflections on our resources page:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/coronavirus-guidance/coronavirus-resources/>

May God sustain you and our nation during this challenging time and bless us with his peace, mindful that 'the eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms'.

+ Robert Exon