5th January 2021

Dear Friends,

Once again we face testing times, but we seek to face them together.

In the light of yesterday’s announcement by Boris Johnson of a further national lockdown Robert and I have decided that we should close our churches for communal worship for the month of January, but remain open for funerals, in order to keep safe and serve the community as best we can.

The Standing Committee will be meeting on 18th January, at which point we shall decide what to do about February.

In making this decision we have taken into account the Prime Minister’s urgency in bringing in the national lockdown, how schools were intended to open but that decision needed to be reversed, how Christmas relaxations in the restrictions were reduced from five days to just one, and how there is a general call to reduce the number of contacts we have with other people. Covid-19 is a quickly spreading virus and we want to play our part in reducing the opportunities for it to spread, and to prevent further pressure being placed on the NHS. We are also aware that the vaccines are being made available, and so this closure will come to an end, hopefully sooner rather than later.

We recognise that our decision will be met with different reactions: for some it will be a disappointment, for others it will be a relief, but let’s make the most of the opportunities of remaining connected together as churches.

The online service continues to meet at 11:00am each Sunday, and we are re-introducing the contrasting quieter and more traditional online service at 6:30pm each Sunday during January. In addition, St Cassian’s are working on a monthly Worship 4 All online service (watch out for details).

We also continue to meet at 8:00am on Mondays to Thursdays, as well as Saturdays, for a short service of Morning Prayer, and on Thursday evenings for the Contemplative Service at 7:00pm. There is also the fortnightly parish prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:30pm (6th & 20th).

A request to parishcomms@kidderminstereast.org.uk will ensure that you have access to the online services. If you are unable to attend these via a computer there are options for phoning in to some of them, and there is the possibility of receiving the Order of Service that is used so you can follow it through on your own.

We can also keep connected by reading the Bible together. There are daily suggestions on the newsletter, and there are two videos a week (available via Youtube and Facebook) which reflect on these readings.

In addition, let’s express our fellowship together as churches by each of us doing what we can to keep in touch especially with those who are on their own. Let’s continue to pray for each other and offer support where it is safe to do so. This morning’s psalm at Morning Prayer was Psalm 48, which speaks of God’s greatness. At the end it says, “For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end”. We share in the confidence of the psalmist that our God is with us, even in the midst of this messy pandemic.

Let’s keep safe and also seek to shine as lights for Christ, sharing his love and hope wherever we can.

Yours,

David & Robert