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A Message from the Holyford Mission Community

To all members of our church communities in Colyton, Colyford, Branscombe, Southleigh, Musbury and Northleigh:

As you will have heard, following the instructions issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Tuesday, all public worship is suspended. I am writing to keep in touch with you and to reassure you of my prayers and support during what is for many a frightening, disorientating and frustrating time.

The suspension of public worship does not mean that we have 'shut up shop'. Our churches will stay open daily for people to come in and pray.

A priest will continue to offer Morning Prayer at Colyton and Evening Prayer in one of our other churches each day, and will celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays and Feast Days on behalf of the whole Mission Community. Sadly, **it is not possible for congregations to join us for these services in person.** However, you may wish to join in at home. Morning Prayer will be said at 8.30am and Evening Prayer at 5pm. If you are looking for a form of prayer to use, there are suggestions on the Church of England website (type 'Church of England Daily Prayer' in to the search engine). If you do not have access to the internet, you will find similar services in your Book of Common Prayer.

Over the coming weeks I am sure that a lot of online resources will spring up, not least via the Diocese of Exeter website. We are also looking at adding things to our Holyford.org website, so do keep an eye there. As you may know, you can also listen to services on the local and national radio or download them, such as the Daily Service (9.45am each day, BBC Radio 4 Longwave) and Choral Evensong (BBC Radio 3, Wednesdays 3.30pm, repeated on Sundays). BBC Radio Devon broadcast a service at 6.30am on Sundays, as do BBC Radio 4 (Sunday Worship at 8.10am).

This Sunday is Mothering Sunday, when we give thanks for our mothers and all those who have nurtured and supported us. Churches Together in England has called for a National Day of Prayer and Action in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Our prayers are asked for all those suffering at this time and for those who care for us. At 7pm we are asked to place a lighted candle in the windows of our homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our companion and source of hope at this time. Alongside our prayers, we are also encouraged to telephone or email someone we know who may feel isolated, or if we can, offer to deliver shopping to a vulnerable neighbour.

It is important that we as parishes and as a Mission Community support one other during these difficult days. My contact details are above. Please let me or a member of the Ministry Team know if you are self-isolating, or poorly. Visiting in person is very difficult now, and sadly we cannot bring Home Communion, but until restrictions are lifted we can keep in touch by telephone or email. There may also be a possibility for virtual meetings over the computer. Please let me know if you would be interested in joining in with this.

Be assured of my continued prayers for you and the life of our parishes. If you would like us to pray for a particular intention (someone in particular you may be worried about, wish to give thanks for, or for an issue or situation on your mind at this time), please let me know and I shall add them to my own.

When his friends approached him, anxious and uncertain about the future, Jesus said to them 'do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid' (John 14: 27). The message of Lent and Easter is that Jesus came through the forty days in the wilderness, the isolation and suffering of the cross in order to demonstrate his love and give us life. God has made us for far more than being afraid or anxious; Christ came that we may have life and have it in abundance (John 10:10).

This letter has been sent by email to those we have email addresses for, and by post to others for whom we have no email address. If you are aware of people who may not have received this letter (because they are not on our Electoral Rolls) please be in touch with them. And if you think someone may not have had this email or letter, please forward it—better they see it twice than not at all.

Please continue to pray for all of us within the Holyford Mission Community, as we shall for you.

With every good wish and blessing,

Fr. Steven.

The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4: 5–7)