St Mary THE VIRGIN MONKSEATON

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Covid-19 Continuity Plan

Rationale

The aim of this plan is to ensure as far as possible the continued mission and ministry of our church and the maintenance of the critical ongoing business of the parish, balancing our duty of care to our congregations and the wider community with our aims and objectives as a parish church.

Review of Plan

There are many unknowns about the development of this virus over the coming weeks and months; this plan will need to be revisited at various times as circumstances change. This plan will be reviewed in line with updates in guidance from the Government and the national Church of England and the Diocese of Newcastle. It will be reviewed weekly on Tuesdays by the Staff Team and whenever Standing Committee and PCC meet.

Current Level of risk:

MODERATE (in line with Government and PHE judgement)

Current national phase:

SUPPRESSION

Structures

1. Rachel, the incumbent, is the key point of contact currently. Should Rachel be unwell then Clare Connors will take this role, then Benjamin Jarvis if Clare becomes unwell, then Nicola Denyer. The Key Contact will remain in close contact with the Parish Team listed at the bottom of this plan as well as with PCC members.

2. The Incumbent, or one of the Staff team, will provide a channel for regular communication, by email or phone, with the Area Dean and Archdeacon, as required.

3. Contact details for the Area Dean and the Area Dean's deputy: Tim Mayfield can be reached on 07414 601351, Adrian Hughes on 01912521817, Archdeacon Mark Wroe can be reached on 0191 2704151 or 07469950198

4. Key critical leadership roles are the content, coordination and provision of the weekly service, pastoral care via telephone, provision of occasional offices, especially funerals, oversight of buidings, finance and parish office communications.

5. We aim over the coming weeks to cross-train people for essential tasks in the parish so that if a person needs to self-isolate or becomes ill, essential tasks can still be undertaken.

Communication

1. We will keep in touch by phone and share contact details as stated in the above section.

2. Consideration will be given as to how to communicate information about the virus and any appropriate advice. Church leaders can play a key role in addressing rumours, misinformation, fear and anxiety.

General Hygiene

1. As the church building is now closed no guidelines are required for the moment.

2. Cleaner Debra and colleague have been asked not to attend to clean until further notice.

Worship

1. a. We will produce a weekly worship / notice sheet with readings, prayer resources and reflections – we will explore posting these out to those who are not online and particularly vulnerable (approx. 20 currently) We will try and include voices from the congregation for readings and prayers.
   b. We will experiment with the possibilities of live streaming services via social media.
   c. Groups will be encouraged to 'meet' online and to check in with each other by phone.
   d. We will encourage the whole parish to join in prayer at regular times through the week to maintain a sense of corporate prayer and community.

2. We will research worship material to link to and recommend including:
   a. Daily prayer apps
   b. Books and other physical resources for those who are not online
   c. Online resources prepared in response to this situation
   d. Preparing copies of prayers for the sick and the dying and a copy of the funeral service to offer by email to those unable to attend the funeral of a friend or relative.

Pastoral

1. We will continue to identify and brief lay people who can provide telephone support and prayer for those who are fearful or otherwise distressed.

2. We will invite those who live alone to share with the team, if they wish, details of their next of kin and/or emergency contacts to be held for use in an emergency.

3. We will help with the distribution of government advice, via our online and social media challenge and as appropriate, aiming to ensure that isolated members of the community are aware of the precautions they can take. We will not share unauthorised material or speculations on our church social media channels.

4. We will connect those in need with local health, welfare, safety networks, funeral directors and other service providers that may be helpful. A contact details list for these key service providers will be held by Staff team and office.

5. The pastoral and practical support of those who are vulnerable or housebound in the parish is held currently by Clare Connors, assited by Eileen Noble, Beryl Austoni and Jane Walker.

6. For those who are needing to self-isolate in the medium to long term, we will work with them to consider how they can be supported with phone calls, emails and via social media, and helped with the delivery of shopping and / or medication, as well as mental health support. It is very important all church members involved in any such support are very clear on and committed to adhering to the Government's isolation advice.

Activities

1. All groups have now ceased to meet in the Hall and Church buildings. When advice changes we will consider how this impacts on our buildings and any users of the buildings.

Finance

1. There should be at least one other person, as well as the Treasurer, who is familiar with the church accounts, gift aid and regular giving and is able to administer them appropriately. The Treasurer will investigate how to authorise a/n additional person(s) on online banking and plan for how financial management would be passed over if he were to become unwell.

2. An initial risk assessment around cash flow has been completed with Roland and Rosie Tate. Currently, risk is low, income is being received and payments are being made.

3. We are continuing to pay honoraria to our Parish Office staff and to our organist and paying our cleaners. Office Staff are continuing to work their hours from home. Our organist contract will end on June 30th and so this payment will cease on this date. We will monitor and review these payments as the situation continues.

4. Anyone handling cash should protect themselves from virus transmission by washing hands or using hand gel beforehand and afterwards, or by wearing appropriate gloves.

Parish Team overseeing and implementing this plan:
Rachel Wood, Clare Connors, Ben Jarvis, Nicola Denyer, Beryl Austoni, Roland Tate, Sue Johnson, Jane Walker, David Tompkins (as prospective Church Warden), Liz Hayes (Lay Chair), Eileen Noble, Carol Nesbitt, Dot Clarke.
PCC to be kept updated monthly.