



Dear Parishioners

I am writing in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, to let you know what is happening in your parish.

Firstly, and importantly, we are regularly receiving advice from the Bishops of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington relating to the care and support of parishioners at this difficult time.

Yesterday we were told by the Bishops that all public services of worship have been cancelled in the Diocese until further notice. Most immediately, that means that **there will be no services this Sunday, 22 March, at St James or All Saints' Church, and midweek services in the coming week are also cancelled.**

**Services will not start again until further notice.** Out of concern to avoid the spread of the virus, **meetings with more than 20 people attending have also been cancelled or postponed, with the effect that the Parish AGM will NOT now be held on Sunday 29 March.** At this time **Lent groups can continue to meet in church and in people's homes if they choose to**, observing the physical distancing of 1 metre and other pandemic protocols. However, please see the attached document "Diocesan guidelines for public gatherings – 20 March 2020", which was received today. It urges caution from anyone most at risk from the Covid-19 virus.

St James' Church will continue to be open from 9am to 12 noon on Tuesday to Friday mornings, and **this coming Sunday, 22 March, St James' Church will be opened for anyone to come in and pray.** No refreshments will be offered, and you are requested to observe a physical distance of one metre from others, and other pandemic protocols. Hand sanitiser and tissues will be available for people to use. Please do not come at exactly the time that you usually come to worship. The public health guideline is that we must not have more than 100 people inside a building. **On subsequent Sundays we are planning to offer parishioners some online worship options.**

**Please do not enter any church building if you have any flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty breathing, a runny nose or a sore throat). Instead, please stay home, contact the Covid-19 Healthline (0800 358 5453) and take advice.**

You are also asked please not to come into the parish offices at St James's to consult or talk to staff unless you positively have to meet in person with them. Instead **please communicate by phone/text or email.** If necessary, leave a message on the phone and we can access those messages even from off site. The office phone number is (04) 569-6737. Please dial extension 800 for reception, 801 for the Vicar and 802 for the Parish Administrator.



Relevant emails are: [reception@stjames.net.nz](mailto:reception@stjames.net.nz); [vicar@stjames.net.nz](mailto:vicar@stjames.net.nz); and [parish.admin@stjames.net.nz](mailto:parish.admin@stjames.net.nz). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. If you need to consult a priest urgently, please call me, Peter Bengé, on 0212541354.

You are asked please to follow the government's guidelines during this pandemic. These can be found at [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz) .

It needs to be said that with the progress of this pandemic, things are changing rapidly. So, there may well be subsequent changes to the advice given above. I will continue to update you with further information about what is happening in the parish, and how we all can be of service and support to one another. Further information will be available on our website: [www.stjames.net.nz](http://www.stjames.net.nz). We are counselled to be aware of risks and duly cautious, but to continue caring for others in our community and trusting in a God who truly loves and provides for us.

With my prayers for you all

The Revd Peter Bengé  
Vicar