

Dear friends

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." James 4:13-14

We're obviously living in a time of weird global shock. Whole countries in quarantine. Share prices crashing. Daily - hourly - counting of deaths. Cruise ships unable to dock.

I expect your plans have become oddly fluid, too. Everyone at work keeping their distance, and discussing whether planned conferences go ahead. Or perhaps you're rethinking that anniversary meal out.

And for fifty of us at St James, a trip to Israel suddenly cancelled.

How do we process all this?

First, be humble. Notice what James criticises, *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow*. It's the arrogance, that says we are in charge of tomorrow. Captains of our destiny. We plan, but ignore that we are fragile, dependent creatures. Taken down by a virus that we could catch from a coffee cup.

Second, be faithful. Notice what James assumes: *If it is the Lord's will...* God has a plan, doesn't he?

He *does* know what will happen tomorrow. And is coronavirus outside that plan? Of course not. That means - and this has been hard for me to remember this week - that every hour we've spent getting ready for the Israel trip has not been time wasted. God knew - *willed* - all along that it would be postponed, and yet he allowed us to prepare. What has he been teaching us?

And rearranging a holiday is a pretty trivial event in the grand scheme of things. Because James is writing about our life and death being in God's will. And if God has that planned, we don't need to be among the fearful.

Third, be active. Notice what James teaches: *Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."* That is, God expects us to plan and act, as long as we do it humbly and faithfully. A generation ago Christians would regularly make their plans, and then routinely comment 'God willing.' I think they were right.

Let's plan and pray, and act humbly.

Have a great week, and I'll see you on Sunday. God willing.

Chris

THIS SUNDAY

The theme for this Sunday at our 9:30, 11:15am and 6:00pm services will be Discipleship: A Heart of Flesh. This is also a Newcomers' Sunday when those new to St James have the opportunity to chat with Chris over coffee in the Vicarage.

CARING AND TAKING CARE AT ST JAMES

As the coronavirus spreads, please use all the current health advice, and if you have a cough or snuffle - or are a little nervous about catching something - don't feel guilty about staying away.

Remember, this is about loving one another by reducing the risks.

We're planning that all our main service will be live-streamed on YouTube in the near future, so you can still take part at home. We shall keep you informed.

We are going to be as safe a community as we can manage, so let's stay clean, and keep encouraging one another. Our practices are probably going to vary each week, as the advice changes.

As people stay away, it's going to be easy not to notice them, and some folk may be very lonely and frightened.

Take a moment to think about who is not around that you'd expect to see. It's really important that we support one another when someone might be quarantined. If someone's missing, give them a call, and let Mark Murthen know if they're shut in. If it's you, get him a message at mark.murthen@st-james.org.uk, or ring him on 0208 883 6277 extension 113. We want to care for each other, as well as be careful.

ST JAMES PRESCHOOL OPEN DAY

Enrol now for September 2020. Come to the Preschool Open day on Saturday 14 March, from 10:00 to 11:30am. Please contact Tracey on 0208 4444033 or info@stjamespreschool.org.uk to arrange a visit. For more information visit www.stjamespreschool.org.uk.

GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Sign up [here](#) for 'Growing Spiritually', a course to help you develop the necessary habits for jump-starting your spiritual growth. We'll cover the four basic spiritual habits every Christian needs in order to grow: daily time in the Bible, daily prayer, giving and fellowship. Cost: £5. Saturday 14 March, 9:30 – 1:00 in the Vicarage.

LONDON METROPOLITAN BRASS BAND CONCERT

Come and raise the roof for a superb night of musical entertainment at St James! London Metropolitan Brass is teaming up with all-female choir The Orpheus Singers in a special concert on Saturday 4 April at 7:00pm. Funds raised will go towards our 'Raise the Roof' renovation project. Tickets – at only £5 – can be bought [here](#).

BOOKSHOP CARDS

Mothering Sunday and Easter cards are now available in the Bookshop.

PCC/DEANERY SYNOD PLACES

We have 7 places on the PCC and 1 place on Deanery Synod available from 27 April, the date of our APCM. If you would like to stand for either of these, you will find application forms at the back of church from this Sunday. Please fill these in and place in the box provided.

WINTER NIGHT SHELTER LAUNDRY

Thank you to everyone who has helped with our Winter Night Shelter. For 13 weeks we have had the privilege of hosting people who needed shelter, food and warmth! Every week has needed 6 different shifts with a total of 25-30 volunteers. To finish this season, we need to wash all our duvets, pillows and blankets. If you could pick up a bag or box, take it home (or to a laundrette) to wash, and return, we would be very grateful.

MISSION OF THE MONTH – EMMA AND MICHAEL KENYON

Please pray for finances to improve the electricity supply to the 'Hard Places Community' building; for the provision of a new Cambodian staff member; for the expansion of Michael's restaurant. Pray particularly for them as a family at a time when complications have arisen with Emma's pregnancy; peace for them and wisdom for the doctors looking after Emma and the baby.

WEEKLY PRAYER DIARY

If you use the app 'PrayerMate', you can find St James in the section 'UK Churches' and subscribe to the daily prayer topic. If you use Google calendars, upload [here](#).

Please pray for St Michael's, Highgate.

Wed	Pastorates For one-to-one bible study
Thurs	Mission partner, or global issue For those affected by the coronavirus
Fri	National and denominational issue For hospital chaplains
Sat	Tomorrow's preachers, teachers and worship leaders
Sun	For those who won't be in church today because they think Christianity is out of date
Mon	Work-Place, Career or Home-Life Issues For those working in tourism
Tues	Staff and Ministry Areas For Leona Akass