



# St Bridget's, West Kirby with Caldy Church

*Seeking to follow Jesus with open hearts, open minds and open hands*

From the Revd Alex Williams, Rector designate

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Dear Friends,

In less than a week I will be licensed as the new Rector of the parish of West Kirby. Although it may be unusual for me to write a letter before being licensed, I am sure you will agree that there is nothing very 'usual' at the moment.

I write firstly to thank you for your welcome and support. I also want to particularly thank everyone who has worked so hard during the interregnum to keep things running smoothly despite the many unexpected challenges. Thank you to all who have planned and led services, for those working in St Bridget's Centre and everyone who has been involved in practical arrangements which means that the church has continued to offer support to our communities

Second, I want to update you about the new measures and our response to these, and assure you that you are all very much on my mind and in my prayers. The new national lockdown will last at least a month and the more detailed government regulations make it clear that places of worship must be closed for Sunday worship.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictionsfrom-5-november>

In summary, this says that Places of Worship will be closed unless they are being used for:

- Funerals
- To broadcast acts of worship
- Individual prayer
- Formal childcare or where part of a school
- Essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks
- Other exempted activities such as some support groups

The Church of England is liaising with Government departments and will be clarifying guidance for us in the next week

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

I fully understand and share the frustration and disappointment of many of you when, after so much work to open our churches, we are having to close them once again. But, however frustrated we may feel, the data clearly shows that the NHS is heading into a severe challenge in the coming weeks. The forecasts show that we

will have exceeded the capacity of our hospitals by Christmas week if COVID is left unchecked.

Whilst we wait for clarification there are a few things we are already planning for:

- my licensing service which can now be watched on Zoom, 7pm on Monday 9th November
- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89851925486>
- continuing the Zoom Sunday morning 10am service and introducing more weekday Zooms
- where possible livestreaming services We will let you know soon how to access these.
- continuing to open churches for personal prayer
- providing prayer and other resources for people to use at home.
- offering pastoral care, including phone calls, Zoom and visits if safe to do so.

Finally, I encourage you all to pray.

We need to seek God's strength, wisdom and patience as we navigate the coming weeks and months and there are many areas of our country which need holding in prayer. Please pray...

- for those who are ill with COVID and are struggling with the symptoms
- for those who are quarantining after being in contact with someone that has COVID
- for the lonely and afraid, those who are anxious and whose mental health is fragile
- for those having medical treatment or operations delayed or postponed
- for our local businesses, many of them already struggling after the last lockdown
- for our NHS. Many of the staff are exhausted by the stresses of dealing with the last wave of the virus and feel daunted by the magnitude predicted for the second wave.
- for those whose jobs were already at risk and will be even more so with this new lockdown
- for our schools, those who lead and teach, and all who work in them.
- for families and young people
- for wedding couples, who have had their plans disrupted yet again.
- for the bereaved
- for those who continue to provide the essential care our communities need, the businesses, shops and foodbanks which will continue to operate
- for our wardens and all who lead in our local churches as they navigate these changes
- for our communities as we support each other through this time and for the many volunteers who will be supporting the ill and those shielding.
- for wisdom and insight for those who govern us, as they navigate this difficult

path, that they would make decisions for the good of all.

- for one another, that we will learn to draw even more on the deep well of love that God has for us and be a light in the darkness for our communities at this time.

Yours in Christ

Alex

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