



NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

## St Columba's Presbyterian Church

### MINISTER

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24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear friends,

It goes without saying that the speech of our President last night (which was excellent, assured, and displayed strong leadership) has left many of us with something akin to a hang-over this morning.

Joining the action of millions of people from a number of countries across the globe, we've all been instructed to stay at home from midnight on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March to midnight on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. An instruction which the UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, describes as "simple". While the instruction to stay at home seems simple enough, the implications are far reaching indeed. And we would like to take a moment to reflect on our Christian responsibility in this regard...

As we come to terms with new living conditions for the next three weeks, as we reach out to loved ones to check in and remind them that we're only a phone call away, as we do stock-take of our pantries and fridges to make sure we have all the essentials, as we scour the internet to find easy-to-do at home activities for our children or how to tackle that DIY project (for which we'll now finally have the time); let us not forget our privilege and responsibility and duty to pray.

It's easy, in a time like this, to default back to things we might imagine to be of a more measurable and practical nature (like projects, and shopping lists, and phone calls), but it is crucial that we not forget one of the unique contributions we can make in these times... prayer. The plea of our Chief Justice, Mogoeng Mogoeng, for Christians to join in prayer, is a deeply moving and challenging one. Because it recognizes, from the highest legal office in the land, this very unique contribution we can make in the fight against Covid-19. And it calls us to action on the frontline as a faith community along the lines of a much-repeated instruction in the Scriptures: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* (Philippians 4:6)

To this end we would like to offer a prayer for our families and friends to use during this time:

*Most gracious Lord Jesus Christ;*

*In your gentle touch and welcoming embrace of those who were ill and infirm, you made known to us the healing love of the Father.*

*As you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness”, you brought near the very healing presence of God into the midst of suffering.*

*Do it again Lord!*

*Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.*

*Heal those who are sick with the virus. Grant them strength and health through quality medical care.*

*Heal us from our fear, which prevents us from working together and helping one another.*

*Heal us from our pride, which makes us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.*

*Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. Grant them your peace.*

*Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. Grant them protection.*

*Be with the leaders of all nations. Grant them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Grant them wisdom.*

*Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace. Amen*

May you all know the abiding and healing love of God in this very unsettling time. Be assured that we are praying for you, and for our world... and “yes”, we are just a phone call away.

Grace & peace to you all,

The St Columba's Team