



FIRST RATHFRILAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“A light on the hill.”

Message from Rev. Trevor Boyd 18th March 2020.

Good morning folks! Yesterday evening a letter was sent from the Moderator of the General Assembly to all ministers in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This letter contained instructions which will make changes to our lives and our weekly routine as a result of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. This letter has huge implications for us as human beings and as a congregation here in First Rathfriland Presbyterian Church. Our Elders met for a briefing and discussion last night which has resulted in some actions which I will explain to you. Rather than inform you by a Facebook post I wanted to speak to you in person as your minister.

All organisations and meetings in First Rathfriland have now ceased until further notice.

ALL SUNDAY SERVICES have ceased in the church. Currently we are looking at how best to broadcast online at 11.30am on a Sunday morning with Prayer, Bible reading and a message from the Bible. We will also continue to develop our CD ministry which is available free of charge to anyone who wishes to sign up.

Funerals and Weddings are currently the only permitted services and families will be made aware of the guidelines at the appropriate time.

PASTORAL CARE – Kirk Session will seek to keep in contact using digital and electronic means, including the telephone. Please be assured that if

you need ANY HELP at all with anything it is vital that you let us know. We are putting arrangements in place involving, minister, Elders, Committee members and Community Outreach Coordinator. It is vital that you contact us if you are in need of help. Use the manse number 028 40630272 or go to our website for more contact information. The ministry and the calling and the Gospel message of First Rathfriland has not changed - we are working out how to do it differently at this time.

To be isolated or to have reduced contact with people is not a natural thing, God has created us for horizontal relationships with one another and a vertical relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. It is our desire that we continue to keep in contact with people to minimise the impact of isolation measure on the health of our people. To keep up to date please get linked into our Social Media platforms.

We are also mindful that this will not end in a few days and will require a sustained effort by all our people.

Our Kirk Session is posting out a letter to all our families with written information and contact telephone numbers. They have also agreed to make contact by telephone as part of our Pastoral Care.

We plan to communicate with you regularly and we hope that would be a two way process.

In conclusion folks this is an explanation of our practical arrangements but of much greater importance are our Spiritual arrangements.

For the followers of Jesus this is a time to pray, a time to bring hope and a time to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are many in our congregation and community who are afraid and are panicked about death because they have no faith and no hope for eternity. For those who have no saving faith this is an incredibly huge wake up call to get right with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

We understand that these are unprecedented times and graciously ask that you bear with us as we work out the right course of action over the coming months. These days are uncertain, but we are choosing to believe fully in God's sovereignty. We are trusting that God is in full control and His plan is being worked out at this time.

I conclude with some words of the Lord given to Joshua in 1v9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"