

East Kilbride Old Parish Church
SC000609

Responding in Challenging Times: Minister's East Kilbride News Message No 1

Over the last few days and weeks, we've heard so much about "social isolation" and quite rightly so as we face these unprecedented times of corona virus. But I wonder if the phrase we should be using is not "social isolation" but "physical isolation?" I think that in difficult times, and this is surely one of the most uncertain times many of us have faced, that what we need is not less social contact, but more social contact. We can't meet a friend for a coffee, we can't invite our family to our home for a meal, and we as a church can no longer meet together to worship God. Yet our need for each other has not changed, indeed our need for each other has increased.

So, we're going to have to go about our daily business in different ways. On our church website (www.ekopc.org.uk) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EKOLDPC) I recorded a short video last week letting people know that even although we cannot physically meet together, the church is not closed for business. The work of the church goes on through the people, and while we will surely miss all the opportunities to meet with one another, the people of God can continue to be the church, because a church is not a building, it is a people. And the people need to do things differently to respond to the needs we see around us.

Our use of technology allows us to be socially connected to each other while we physically isolate, and like many I'm making use of the various apps which allow us to see and chat with our friends and family although we cannot physically be with them. It's not the same as being with them in the same room, but it helps us to feel connected. But, not everyone has the technology or the friendship group to be able to engage in that way, and I am concerned that as the days turn into weeks, there are some in our community who will experience real social isolation as well as physical isolation.

Someone suggested to me that when this crisis is over, we should have an event to showcase what people did during the corona virus. Some might have taken up a new hobby, learned a language, cleared out all their cupboards or read countless books and watched all their box sets. But I would hope that when we look back to this time in history, what stands out for us is the way people pulled together, and looked after each other. Yes, this is a time to physically isolate from one another, but surely it is not a time to socially isolate. So in these worrying times, is it not up to all of us to step up to the mark and look out for one another, keep in touch, especially with those who are feeling isolated, and trust that when this is over we can give thanks for our humanity.