

Dear Friends

I suppose it is a natural thing for the church to remember and pray for people who are ill and the dedicated and talented people who look after them. We have long done so and I think that in a lot of ways we do it well. I am delighted to say that to the best of my knowledge no one has become ill from the spread of COVID-19 in our congregation thus far. With all my heart I pray that continues.

Perhaps it comes less naturally for us to pray for the people who are affected by the economic stress that we are experiencing. There are members of our community who have become unemployed or under-employed. This is something that affects young people and parents of young children particularly hard and we need to remember them. The time for practical help may come later when activity resumes. But for now we can remember to pray with thanksgiving for the many people in our community and indeed, in our country, whose day to day living is sorely impacted by this unprecedented crisis.

One of the things that has occurred to me as I follow the daily events is the ways that restaurants seem to be a symbol for all the things that are good and robust and healthy and community building in our life. Even though most of us don't eat in restaurants all that often, they are places where people gather and enjoy one another's company. (I'm particularly fond of them because I don't have to do the dishes afterwards). It will be a joyful day when restaurants (and stores and theatres and gyms and pools and so much more) re-open and those who work in them are re-employed. When, like at church, the fellowship of gathering around the table is re-stored. Symbolically it will be the answer to many prayers.

Grace and peace,

Michael