

Dear friends,

I have recently returned from a ten day break in Connemara in the west of Ireland. I returned to empty streets in Lossiemouth and I have started the period of life behind closed doors that many of you have already begun.

On holiday, I visited the beautiful woods at Coole Park, by Gort, near to Galway city. There in the walled garden stands a copper beech tree on which several famous Irish writers such as George Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats have carved their names. Yeats, living in a very different era, with different concerns, wrote of everything having changed, changed utterly. I'm sure we are all feeling and experiencing an utter change to

our lives and circumstances. We are uncertain what will come our way and how long it will all last.

In the midst of the uncertainty, we need to turn to our God who is ever faithful in his love and care and we need to do all we can to support one another. We will miss our gathering together for worship each week and with time we will appreciate, all the more, how precious our freedom, in normal times, is.

However, with the benefit of technology, we can still communicate. We can phone one another; some of us can communicate via online technology. Each week I will endeavour to make available online my Sunday sermon and prayers via the St. James' Church website. I encourage those in St. Gerardine's High Church to access the material from the St. James' Church website and in that way the churches can work together to support one another. I am aware that many in our

congregations are not able to access online material and so arrangements will be put in place to help distribute worship material. I encourage everyone to listen to church services broadcast on the radio. This is an excellent way to experience participation in community worship which we miss so much at this time. The following web page links to excellent resources from the wider Church of Scotland family <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship>

Please be assured of my thoughts and prayers during these troubling times.

Your minister and friend,

Geoff