



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**My message to Churches in Redcar & Cleveland**

8<sup>th</sup> April 2020

*To the Congregation .*

I was looking forward to writing to you at this Holy time during Easter week and visiting some of the services around Redcar & Cleveland. Unfortunately, we are living in unprecedented times and what is normally an opportunity for great togetherness – we are separated from our friends and family.

At Easter we celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins. This story is more pertinent than ever in the wake of Coronavirus, as we battle the question of mortality, for ourselves, for our friends and family and even for our Nation's leaders. But our current crisis also presents people of faith with the opportunity to focus our energy, and to begin to learn from Christ's lessons for us – to love.

Whenever I think of Easter, I think of John 3:16, For God so loved the world, he gave his only son. The story of Easter is one of God's selfless unconditional love for us all.

In these weeks of great difficulty, I have been overwhelmed by the same outpouring from our emerging voluntary sector in Redcar & Cleveland and the selfless love and care that they are showing to our community. And in that same act of selflessness, our key workers continue to push through the frontline; caring for us, keeping us safe, and enabling us to keep going – they are all in our prayers.

Many residents in our borough will be self-isolating in line with the Government guidance, and I want to say thank you to members of your congregation who are protecting themselves and our community at this time. I hope using modern media, you are still able to connect regularly and have found new ways to worship.

Lastly, I wanted to let you know that you remain in my prayers, and to say that I know this is an uncertain time, but we believe in a certain God and the Bible tells us cast our burdens and anxieties onto him. We will get through this together and I look forward to meeting you face-to-face when we do.

*Yours ever, Jacob*