

# The Parish of Christchurch

*The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch  
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell*



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Dear Friends

On a regular basis, Charles catches me on my own and asks this question. “How are you doing?” I usually reply that I am fine and then attempt to change the subject and deflect from a possible follow up enquiry. These tactics never work, after all, we have worked together for five years now and our vicar can read me rather too well! So Charles’ second question goes like this, “Now how are you really doing?” And then I try and answer with the truth!

So how are you doing? Or can I just ask the second question directly, how are you really doing and coping and managing? These are strange times, unique times but also ones that can leave us feeling scared, alone and vulnerable, and if you are experiencing these emotions you are not alone, in fact if we all answer honestly, surely all of us feel this way, even if we try to persuade ourselves and other people, and perhaps those closest to us, that we are ok.

In normal times we can give each other a hug, we can look into each other’s eyes and can offer hands on care, support and reassurance. But these are of course not normal times and the face to face pastoral care we would like to offer one another is simply not possible. But this does not mean that you are out of sight and out of mind. I promise you so much has been going on behind the scenes as it were, and all of this with the specific intent of ensuring that the Church, Your Church is here to support you and to continue showing the love of God in action, all be it in new and ever evolving ways. In the following paragraphs I am going to set out some of the initiatives that we as a team have already put in place, together with other ideas in the pipeline. But nobody has a monopoly on good ideas, and if you have suggestions of how we can improve practical or pastoral help, please let one of us know, either by email or by phoning us.

It is wonderful to be part of the one family of the Church in our parish. We have many individual groups associated with the living church in Christchurch, and to a degree at least, each has its own identity. Trying to produce a single list of everyone with links to the parish has been a complex and time consuming process, but also one that I hope will help us all in the difficult days, weeks and months ahead of us. We are determined that nobody should be overlooked and so my first request to you is to check with everyone you speak with from the church family to ensure that each and every one of them received last week’s pastoral letter from the vicar, either by email or through the post. Again, if they have not, please do let me know and I can add them to the central list that our PCC secretary Sue Haxby has been working so hard on, and which Roger has been ensuring complies with all matters relating to data protection.

Charles, Jonathan and I have looked closely at this list with the purpose of identifying all those who we believe live on their own. It is our intention to call anyone who lives alone once a week. We have also asked those who head up a group associated with the parish to communicate with others in that grouping on a regular basis and to update the clergy with any pastoral concerns that come to their attention.

We are fully aware that these measures do not catch everyone with an association to the parish and to this end we have two dedicated phone lines now in operation.

**01202 800888** is the number to call for any practical help that you might need, shopping for essentials and the like. Now we only have a handful of adult safeguarding authorised persons available to offer this help. The diocese have asked each parish to work with the other statutory and voluntary groups that have already been formed for this purpose, and that is precisely what we will do if demand becomes too great for our limited human resources. We will therefore “sign post” to the most appropriate group to offer such support. The associated email for this is [contact@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:contact@christchurchpriory.org) and Heidi is leading the team providing this support. BCP Council now has a dedicated phone line for those who need practical help, **03001237052** and this line is open from 8am to 8pm seven days a week.

**0800 0487463** is a dedicated number for pastoral care, whatever the need. Charles, Jonathan and I take it in turn to be on call for a 24 hour period. In addition, there is an email address for any prayer requests: [prayerrequest@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:prayerrequest@christchurchpriory.org) and for those without online access, you can use this number for such requests as well. We will of course seek your permission to share your prayer requests with the wider Church family.

Again, those of you who have computer access will by now hopefully be aware that the homepage of the website holds other up to date information and is updated on a daily basis. There is a “thought for the day” copies of Sunday sermons preached during Lent and access to the two recorded Sundays Services from 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April. Jonathan has worked very hard on these matters and now Colin Bacchus has taken over this responsibility. There is also a link to our You Tube channel which hosts the wonderful work that Heidi has been doing with children and families during the lockdown. Heidi has written:

*For the last two Sundays we have live streamed at 10 am on the Children and Families Facebook page. Heidi and her puppet dog Scruffy have chatted with those people watching, read Bible stories and been creative. Last week’s video has had 274 views to date, the week before 308. Many people have been watching, especially families that attend our churches, but also those we know through the Stay and Plays and from local schools. The videos are now up for all to see on the Christchurch Priory You tube channel; and next week there will be videos each day for Holy week helping families journey through the Easter story together. We have also launched an Easter window decoration competition, encouraging children and young people to decorate their windows with great Easter art, spreading the message of Hope this Easter.*

We have received truly humbling messages of thanks for the recorded Sunday Services from the Priory, and far more people have viewed them than usually come to Church for Worship in the parish. We are indebted to Will Howard who is producing and editing the recordings to such an amazingly high standard.

Today a Palm Sunday Eucharist will be broadcast, again from our three homes but this week, thanks to Simon Earl, we have three hymns to join in with. Charles has also produced a text for the entire Service which you will find on the homepage. You will I trust find yourselves just having to sing along with the first two hymns even if this wakes up your neighbours.

We also enter into Holy Week today, the most important week of the Church year. Usually we would have additional Services in the Church, this year we are going to follow the same format but from our homes. The below Services will replace the daily reflections this coming week.

On Monday you will find a version of Stations of the Cross from my garden.

Charles is looking at an online Taize Service for Tuesday.

Jonathan and Simon with some other voices are preparing Compline for Wednesday.

On Thursday evening, Charles will lead a Maundy Thursday Eucharist.

Planning for Good Friday is still ongoing.

Holy Saturday will see one of our daily reflections.

On Easter Sunday a sung Eucharist from the vicarage with Charles Presiding and Preaching.

In addition, Tim Daykin from BBC Radio Solent has given permission for us to broadcast the Easter morning Service that Radio Solent recorded in the Priory in 2015, a few days before Charles and Pat joined us.

Looking further afield, we hope to have a simpler Wednesday Eucharist and we also hope to persuade by any methods available to us, the retired clergy to record the occasional daily reflection.

Perhaps the most encouraging point to emerge from this crisis is to be found in the number of you who are joining us for Morning Prayer on the platform "Zoom" at 8.30am, Monday to Saturday. Now picking up the point I mentioned earlier, if I can do it, you certainly can. You are just a few clicks away from joining us for daily prayer and Pat Stewart is just a phone call or email away from talking you step by step in to how you can join us. It is very special I promise you. Pat is available at [conference@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:conference@christchurchpriory.org)

Now I am fully aware that about 100 of you have no computer or online access, or are scared of the computer and never turn it on. I hope a family member would assist in helping you get to the only line you need to type in: **christchurchpriory.org**. Everything I have referred to above appears on that homepage. Perhaps they could access it from home and play it to you in a phone call. But if this is not a possibility you can join us by reading the bible passages and praying the collect from your home.

Palm Sunday: Philippians 2. 5 – 11 and Matthew 21. 1 – 11. Matthew 26. 14 – 27 end.

Monday: Lamentation: 1. 1 – 12a. Luke 22. 1 – 23 and John 12. 1 – 11

Tuesday: Lamentation: 3. 1 – 18. Luke 22. 24 – 53 and John 12. 20 – 36.

Wednesday: Jeremiah: 11. 18 – 20. Luke 22. 54 – end and John 13. 21 – 32.

Thursday; Leviticus: 16. 2 – 24. Luke 23. 1 – 25 and John 13. 1 – 17 and 31 – 35.

Good Friday: Genesis: 22. 1 – 18. John chapters 18 and 19.

Saturday: Hosea: 6. 1 – 6. John 2. 18 – 22.

The Collect for Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

*Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross, grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Some sad news to share with you now. Shortly after the current restrictions came into place, our much loved sister in Christ Joy Burbidge died. Joy had suffered with cancer for many years but never lost her faith. Her funeral Service has already taken place. It is also with sadness that I have to inform you that Ian Elkins died on Tuesday afternoon. I had the enormous privilege of administering the Last Rites of the Church through his bedroom window with Mary present. It was a very moving time of prayer. Ian's funeral will take place on Tuesday afternoon. Please do hold Mary and her family in your prayers and also Cleo, Ian's sister. When we are able to gather again in Church, we will of course have memorial Services for both Joy and Ian.

In closing I want to borrow one of the many good ideas that Jonathan has introduced to us through the CPN, and that is to think about some things that we can introduce into our daily lives this week. The first is to consider making a financial donation to the Christchurch Foodbank. We have all read about panic buying and stock piling. One of the effects of this is that our foodbank is running low on donations to those within our Town who need the support of this charity. By making a generous financial donation, we allow the staff to make the required purchases on our behalf. Please support them by making a direct donation by bank transfer to 40-52-40 a/c 00015300 using the reference CFBFood. Alternatively, we can send a cheque to them, payable to the Christchurch foodbank. I can't find the full postal address so can I suggest sending it to our Administrator Ian Penny at The Priory, Quay Road, Christchurch, BH23 1BX and we will forward it.

This is also the address to send donations for the ministry and mission of the parish. You can imagine that virtually all of our sources of income have dried up. If you usually give to the Church using the envelope or Sunday collections, please do consider making a bank transfer to PCC XCH FREEWILL sort code: 52-21-34 account no: 52428036 or by sending a cheque to Ian Penny at the Priory, payable to The Parish of Christchurch. There is also a donate button on the website through PayPal but we do have to pay an administration charge on donations received through this route.

But perhaps the top tip for the week comes at the end of this letter. Keep phoning one another, you might never know how much someone else will appreciate and be uplifted by this simple act of kindness that we can all do. And promise me also that you will call the clergy hotline mentioned above when you need pastoral support, support that we will all need at some point in the coming days and weeks. We are always here for all of you in your hour of need.

So let me leave you with the Palm Sunday and Holy Week Blessing from Charles, Jonathan and myself.

*“Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation. Give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.*

**Reverend Richard Partridge.**