

# The Parish of Christchurch



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

for Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020 – Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Dear Friends,

A week is alleged to be a long time in politics. This past week suggests it's also a long time in lockdown easing and the issuing of guidance.

Since last I wrote to you all, the Government has issued its new guidance on the opening of places of worship. The Church of England's national response emerged late on Tuesday evening, followed by a further tranche of documents on Wednesday. There's been a lot to take in!

I apologise, therefore, that this letter is bound to feel more administrative than pastoral. That was probably unavoidable this week, but I hope you will understand that it's in a good cause.

Please read what follows carefully and keep it to hand, as it contains a lot of practical detail about how our services are going to work safely. To this end the PCC has approved a detailed Risk Assessment, which was prepared by Roger Haxby, to whom I am very grateful.

Let me begin by giving you the timetable for the restarting of services in the Priory:

**from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Evening Prayer at 5.00 in the Great Quire, daily.**

- If you have a tablet or smartphone, you can preload the service from the CofE website or app.
- Or you can order the 'Common Worship: Daily Prayer' book and bring it with you.
- Please sit in the back row of the stalls, with two seats clear between you and the next person.

**from Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> Midweek Eucharist at 11.00am in the Lady Chapel, weekly**

- Please approach the Lady Chapel from the North Quire Aisle, rather than the familiar route; this will help us maintain a **one-way system**.
- Seating in the Lady Chapel has been re-arranged so as to promote social distancing. If you are coming on your own, please sit in one of the available single seats (whenever possible).
- No-one should expect to be able to sit in your customary seat, or beside people from a different household, even if they are friends.
- A new order of service will be produced each week to avoid transmission issues. These service booklets will already be on the seats in the Lady Chapel when you arrive.
- Instructions about the administration of Communion will be given on the day, including how to return to your seat.
- Please do not leave your service sheet on your seat, but either take it home or place it in the bin at the back of the Lady Chapel.
- Please leave the Lady Chapel via the South Quire Aisle and exit via Cloister Way.

**from Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday Eucharist at 10.00am in the Nave, weekly note different time**

- Please do not stop for a chat on the way in; that will lead to a possible breach of social distancing.
- We have prepared a seating plan for the Nave, in line with social distancing. If you are coming on your own, please sit in one of the available single seats (whenever possible).
- **Please observe the one-way system at all times.** NB, if you intend to sit in either of the side aisles, you will have to come in via the main entrance, go up the central Nave aisle, go right or left at the front, and then back up the side aisle to your chosen seat.
- No-one should expect to be able to sit in your customary seat, or beside people from a different household, even if they are friends.

- A new order of service will be produced each week to avoid transmission issues. These service booklets will already be on the seats in the Nave when you arrive.
- We shall be offering Communion in one kind only, at a standing Communion station.
- Other instructions about the administration of Communion will be given on the day, including how to return to your seat.
- Please do not leave your service sheet on your seat, but either take it home or place it in the bin on your way out. This will help us with the cleaning process that must take place after every service, as well as on other occasions.
- We are asking everyone to leave as directed by the sidesmen, probably row by row.
- Everyone must leave by the Cloister Way exit, in line with the one-way system, and move out into the car park, without bunching.
- *We hope to be able to record the live Sunday service and put it on the website later in the morning.*

## General Guidance

Church of England guidance documents emphasise that people who may be at increased risk of severe disease from Covid-19 – including those who are aged 70 or over and the ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’, i.e. those who have been encouraged to stay at home as much as possible – should be advised of the risks of attending public worship: but the decision to do so is yours alone. No-one should feel under any pressure to attend.

Anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend the place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

Next, some detailed guidance that applies to all services:

1. **A one-way system is in place. Please follow this at all times, as directed.**
2. Please bring a piece of paper with you, on which you have written your name and contact details. This is to help any track-and-trace requirements. As you leave the church, please put your slip of paper into the box provided; we are required to keep these for three weeks.
3. Wearing a face covering is not obligatory, but is your decision: “Worshippers may choose to wear face coverings to offer protection to others ...”
4. Please try to avoid arriving at the last minute: this will help us avoid queuing and potential infringements of social distancing.
5. Please enter the Priory by the North Porch only and use the hand-sanitizer; please also use the hand-sanitizer on your way out via Cloister Way.
6. We need to observe social distancing at all times. In relation to churches and other places of worship, the 2 metre rule still applies and is still the norm.
7. Please use the contactless machine whenever possible, either on entry or on leaving via Cloister Way. Alternatively, there will be a basket at the entrance, in which you can place an envelope or other donation. There will be no plate collections until further notice.
8. We are not allowed to sing. We are also encouraged to say any congregational responses quietly, and not to talk loudly over music: loud talking, like singing, is reckoned to increase the risk.
9. Toilets at the West End will be open, on a one-in, one-out system.

We shall continue to hold Morning Prayer on Zoom from our homes until further notice; joining details are available from [conference@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:conference@christchurchpriory.org);

I apologise that there is such a lot of information to take in. Please understand that this is an indication of the lengths we are going to ensure your safety and wellbeing as we return back to church services. This guidance will also be available on the website in the coming days.

## One-Off-Ask

Thank you to everyone who has already made a donation in response to my 'One-Off-Ask' appeal last week. The impact of Covid-19 on parish finances is severe: our income has fallen by around £100,000 from the start of lockdown to just after the close of this appeal later this month, based on last year's figures and projections from this year (including the Music Festival, which was scheduled for June).

In response a question, let me clarify one point: the £100,000 is the gross figure, not net. As by the end of June, however, we had only received just over £10,000 in respect of the four parish furloughed employees, that does not make an appreciable difference. Furthermore, we need to recognise that our income is likely to go on falling for the rest of the year, so in fact £100,000 might even be considered conservative.

Last week I asked us all to consider a one-off gift of £250, if possible with Gift Aid, to mitigate or eliminate the £100,000 drop in income and so secure our ministry and mission. I also acknowledge that some of us may not be able to afford £250, and that this is completely understandable. For others, our circumstances mean we might consider giving more than £250. All I can ask is that we give what we feel we can.

- a) If you decide to give by bank transfer, please pay whatever you have decided to give to the PCC of Christchurch General Account: sort code 52-21-34, account number 52427900; and in the space for the reference, please type ONE OFF ASK. If you are able to apply Gift Aid to your donation, please also send Ian Penny an email at [prioryhouse@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:prioryhouse@christchurchpriory.org)
- b) If you would prefer to give by cheque, please make it payable to PCC of Christchurch General Account: send your donation to: the Administrator, Priory House, Quay Road, Christchurch, BH23 1BX, again indicating whether Gift Aid may be applied.

Whichever method you prefer, may I encourage you to make your donation as soon as possible. I had mentioned St Swithun's Day, July 15<sup>th</sup>, as the closing date for the One-Off-Ask appeal. In hindsight, that was probably too early: so, instead, please may I suggest that your gift arrive by July 25<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of St James the Apostle? And, of course, no-one is obliged to give.

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It would be strange if in these days of gradual easing of lockdown, with all its potential for unclarity, many of us were not experiencing a degree of uncertainty, perhaps even fear. The road back to life and worshipping together, even in a church that we know and love, and with familiar people, may feel like a journey through unfamiliar terrain. It may help to hold in our minds and hearts this OT verse:

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31.8).

And may we all know the abiding presence of Christ, in the words of 'St Patrick's Breastplate':

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all who love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Thank you for reading all this, for your generosity, your encouragement and your prayers. Wishing you all God's blessing,

