

The Parish of Christchurch



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

for Sunday 20th September 2020 – Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that, in reflecting week by week about our journey through these weeks of the pandemic, I have found it hard to get away from the fruit of the Spirit: those nine qualities, listed by Paul in Galatians 5.22-23, none of which comes to us easily or naturally. Let me remind you how it begins: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience ...”

A fortnight ago, in a sermon preached in the Priory, I suggested that the reason love is placed first in the fruit of the Spirit is because love is the foundation for all the rest; and that unless Christ-like love and deep joy are in the frame, it's near impossible to come to that “peace that passes all understanding.” This week, I have found myself considering patience, the fourth in Paul's list of Spirit-grown qualities; and, increasingly, it has struck me that an absence of patience can undermine what comes before it. Let me explain.

We can all be impatient, of course; but have you noticed how impatience so readily chips away at our inner peace? If being at peace within ourselves reduces the likelihood of us becoming impatient or irritable, the reverse is also true. Similarly, our impatience quickly erodes joy and, unless we are vigilant, makes it harder to will to love, as Christ loved us.

We are at another of the many testing times in our collective response to Covid-19. Much of the North of England is now under strong measures. As I write, the news is full of speculation that all England may be returned to some kind of lockdown. We don't need to be social commentators or political pundits to have noticed that this is happening at a time when patience with the constraints and restrictions asked of us all seems to be a bit thin. That's completely understandable.

Part of the trouble with impatience is that, like anger, it often ends up being directed at the wrong target. Just think of the hapless station worker, verbally assailed by a frustrated commuter because his/her train has been cancelled: it's not the attendant's fault, decision or responsibility. They just happen to be there.

Which makes it all the more important that we collaborate with the Holy Spirit in growing his kind of patience within us. We need to ask for the Spirit's help in recognising the true reason for our lack of patience, and to have the self-control (also on the list!) not to direct it inappropriately. And we can also ask for the Spirit's help in calling us back to the Christ-like love, joy and peace which will all help us live intentionally with the kind of patience that, left to our own devices, we cannot manufacture.

To be patient with the current restrictions, with the rule-makers and guidance-givers, to be patient with one another and, crucially, with ourselves: that's the challenge I'm setting myself this week. Will you join me?

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And now I'm going to ask you to be patient with me: there is a lot of information to pass on this week.

Sunday 4 October is an important day in our parish calendar, for two main reasons. First, it is our Harvest festival, both at the Priory and at St George's. I invite you, whether in person or online, to join us for worship that day. As you may imagine, the traditional procession of harvest gifts which would normally feature in our Harvest Festival service cannot happen this year. Yet, Christchurch Foodbank+ needs our Harvest gifts more than ever. Therefore, both the Priory and St George's will be open between 2.00pm and 5.00pm on Sunday 4 October, to give you all an opportunity to bring in your Harvest gifts. They will then be distributed as usual. Alternatively, if you would prefer to make a donation directly to Christchurch Foodbank+, you can do so by bank transfer to 40-52-40 a/c 00015300 using the reference CFBFood.

Sunday 4 October is also the day of our **Annual Meetings**, deferred from their normal position in late April because of the lockdown. The public notices for both meets have been posted as usual, in line with Church Representation Rules.

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners (the meeting that elects the Churchwardens) will take place in the Priory at 11.30am. This will give those worshipping at St George's that morning time to make the journey to the Priory. Please note: the Annual Meeting of Parishioners may only be attended by residents of the Parish or Christchurch and those who are on the parish Electoral Roll.

This will be followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, as usual. This meeting may only be attended by those who are on the Electoral Roll; i.e. unfortunately, regular worshippers who are not on the Electoral Roll are not permitted to attend.

This year, for the first time, we are working to make it possible for people to join the service online. This is in accordance with a paper produced by the Diocese last month. The technical aspects of this are being finalised; further detail on how to join the meeting online will be provided next week.

Nomination forms for the various elections – for Churchwardens, members of the PCC and members of Deanery Synod – can either be picked up from the Vestry in the Priory, or by email from Sue Haxby, whose contact details are: pccsecretary@christchurchpriory.org telephone 01202 480789. NB All nomination forms must be proposed and seconded by 2 members of our Electoral Roll; nomination forms for Churchwardens may also be signed by residents in the Parish of Christchurch.

In preparation for the Annual Meetings, copies of the **Annual Report and Accounts** will be available from the Priory from Wednesday 23 September. If you would like a copy of the report by email, please contact parishoffice@christchurchpriory.org. If you would like a copy posted to you, please send a stamped self-addressed A4 envelope to the parish office.

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New seating plan in the Priory

Ever since we were able to open the Priory, first for personal prayer, then to visitors and for public worship, we have been using a seating plan which was carefully formulated in preparation to welcome people back to the building. That seating plan has served us well.

Two months after our first Sunday service in the Priory, the time has come to revise our seating plan, which will be implemented at some point in the next two weeks. Every other row in the Nave and Side Aisles will be removed; and, in the Nave, a tall Perspex screen will be positioned in the middle of each remaining row. This will create a 'pod' of three seats, which may be occupied by one, two or (in some cases) three people. We think this scheme makes sense and will work well. I am grateful to Ian Penny and Colin Bacchus for their work in developing this new seating plan.

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Phase 5B, internal scaffolding and Lady Chapel services

Many of you will have seen scaffolding going up at the East end of the Priory. This is the deferred work on Phase 5B of the conservation of the Priory. From Monday 28th September, there will also be some internal scaffolding in the Lady Chapel (and later in St Stephen's Chapel and the South Nave Aisle).

This internal scaffolding has implications for the services that are currently take place in the Lady Chapel, in that the Chapel will be out of use from the end of this month until the end of January. During this period alternative arrangements will be in place:

- From Wednesday 30 September, therefore, the Wednesday 11.00am Eucharist will be transferred to the front of the Nave. Only the front six rows of seats will be in use.
- From Thursday 1 October, the 11.00am BCP Communion Service will transfer to St George's Church. This will also enable the members at St George's who had regularly attended the pre-lockdown morning service to resume a midweek service there.
- From Sunday 4 October, the Sunday 8.00am BCP Communion Service will move to the front of the Nave. In order to minimise the cleansing of seats etc., it is important that the congregation only sit in the front six rows of seats (i.e. not in the seats you would normally have occupied pre-lockdown.

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A reminder that the first of this term's Thursday lunchtime **Organ Recitals** is on Thursday September 24th, at 12.30pm. The first recital will be given by Geoffrey Morgan. I look forward to seeing you there.

As with so many aspects of life at the moment, current legislation and Church of England guidance have a number of consequences for our Organ Recitals. These include:

- Keep to social distancing at all times, wear a face-covering and follow the one-way system, i.e. leave by Cloister Way.
- We shall all need to complete a track and trace form.
- Those attending will be able to sit only in the marked seats (i.e. not our pre-lockdown favourite).
- In order to avoid bunching at the end of the recital, people will be asked to remain in their seats until invited to move by one of the stewards.
- If you are intending to go to the Café for lunch after the recital, please be especially careful to observe social distancing.

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Heidi writes:

Last week we launched our new **“Bubble Junior Church”**, where we invite families with children to do church with us at St. Georges hall on Sunday mornings at 10am. It was a great morning and wonderful to be able to gather again after 6 months. The children stay with their grown-ups the whole time and engage together in activities we provide, as well as prayers, Bible story and chats from those at the front. The response from the families was very positive; we hope to be able to welcome more families during the term. Each week families must book a space, as there are a limited number of spaces. *Maybe you know someone who would be interested in going?*

Also this term we are offering the **“Parenting for Faith”** course on Zoom. It is an 8-session video-based course aimed at equipping parents, grandparents and other carers to show children and young people the reality of a life with God, and how to support them in getting to know God for themselves. The course will run on a Tuesday evening fortnightly starting on the 6th October, finishing in early February (no sessions in December). The sessions will be on Zoom, and will consist of watching a video together, then a discussion around the topic for the day. I encourage you to consider if this is something you would benefit from, or perhaps you know someone who may be interested. You can also visit the website and watch a trailer, www.parentingforfaith.org/course

Please contact myself for more information or to book your free place. for either Bubble Junior Church or the Parenting for Faith course, at heidi@christchurchpriory.org or call/text 07494 900567. Thank you.

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Barry Beesley writes:

RIDE AND STRIDE EVENT

After the uncertainty of the Dorset Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride event taking place this year, it is pleasing to know that eight participants from Christchurch have joined in. They are: Les Hiley, John Priest, Barbara Gardener, Charlie Merivale, Brenda Pearmain, Tim Butler, Diane Wright and Jill Barr (All Saints, Mundeford). We are grateful for those who have already sponsored the participants and it is not too late if anyone else wishes to do so. To donate, please contact one of the riders named above.

The income from our ‘team’ is shared in proportion between the DHCT, the Priory and All Saints. Although the income will be much reduced this year our participation helps to keep the event alive and will bring much needed support to churches struggling in these unusual times.

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Tolstoy once wrote that “The two most powerful warriors are patience and time”. I suspect he was right. God give us the grace to live by Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 4.2, to live “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” With every blessing,

