

# The Parish of Christchurch

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



Associate Priest: The Reverend Richard Partridge, The Paddocks, Holly Lane, Walkford, Dorset, BH23 5QQ  
T 07903 252230 E richardpartridge310@btinternet.com

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Dear Friends

Before going to bed last night I watched the BBC news, and I am sure in the same way that you did, I learned the dreadful truth concerning the number of people who have contracted the Covid 19 virus. During the last 24 hours, 23,065 individuals within the United Kingdom had tested positive, a further 280 deaths had been reported in the same period from those who had tested positive within the last 28 days which brought the total number of people who have died from the disease to 45,955. We are told that the real figure of those being infected each day is likely to be in the region of 96,000 and that this figure is set to double within the next nine days. In our own BCP region, the latest figures inform us that 208 people per 100,000 are currently infected and there remains a possibility, even a probability, that in the not too distant future that our area will be placed into tier two restrictions.

In my letter this week I want to explore these figures and statistics from two different perspectives. First, and most immediate as a priority, they remind us all that we need to be ever vigilant. Sometimes when I hear people being interviewed concerning the effects of living under tiered restrictions, it seems to be that they view the regulations or guidance as a form of punishment, rather than being measures designed to help and protect us all. Further, as the time period of living with this disease increases, there comes the temptation to break the rules, to take a chance and hope that all will be well. And of course we can all understand this point of view, after all, who amongst us does not pray for the day when the science and medicine can provide us with a vaccination that will allow normality within our daily lives to return. But again as we all know, we are not at that point yet, and until we are we must all remain vigilant and aware of potential dangers, and yes, follow the rules.

We all have to complete our own “risk assessments” and to consider if going out from the safety of our homes for a specific reason is sensible and justifiable. Many of you have decided that coming to Church, to the Priory or St George’s is not the right thing for you to do at this time. We both understand that and also fully support you in your decision, but we, your friends and fellow Christians, also want you to know that we are here for you, that we pray for you, that we all remain part of the one Church of Christ in this parish and that we want each and every one of you to feel that brotherly and sisterly Christian love afresh, each and every day. If you are not feeling it, please do let Charles, Jonathan or myself know what we could do in addition to what is currently in place or in a different way.

The second reason for choosing to quote the latest figures in this letter is linked to my last point. Each and every single person in the aggregate total of those who have been infected within the last day is exactly that, an individual. Each and every person who has died from the disease was similarly an individual and not just a statistic or part of a numerical list. When we view on television or read in our newspapers the individual life story of such a person, our eyes and ears are opened afresh to the truth of this fact, and we feel in our heart and can show empathy with their pain and suffering, we can put ourselves in their own shoes. That is how God sees each individual person and how He loves each individual human being, sharing in their pain and walking with them in their sufferings, fears and anxieties. And that should not be a

surprise to any of us who hold faith and belief, that we are indeed made in the image and likeness of God himself. The Church is at its best when it comes together as the one body of Christ in recognition of just that fact, and when it chooses to place that at its heart in terms of its ministry and mission and in outreach to other individual people.

Well with all that in mind, let me remind you that November is traditionally the month most closely associated with the theme of “Remembrance.” That is going to be so poignant and important to many people this year, and quite possibly in a way, in a human way, not experienced by many within our community before. We have the chance to show to other individual people what joy and peace can flow from our faith, what hope can spring up from allowing Jesus himself to take the centre place within our hearts and just how the love of God for each and every individual human being can shine in a world or in a life where darkness and despair have seemingly become the expected norm.

Wherever you are and whatever your current situation is, I so hope that you will feel the prayers of the faithful people in our parish with you today, and indeed on every day.

With my love

Richard.

### **Remembrance Sunday Parish arrangements.**

On **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November** there will **NOT** be an 8.00 BCP Service of Holy Communion at the Priory neither will there be a 10.00am Sung Eucharist. Instead there will be a **9.00am said Eucharist**, a shortened Service and without a sermon. This will **NOT** be livestreamed or recorded.

There will also be a said Eucharist at 9.00am at St George’s, again without a sermon. (Please note the change of time.)

Also at 9.00am, the Vicar will lead a short act of Remembrance in the Memorial Garden at Purewell Cross.

You are welcome to attend any one of these three Service at 9.00am.

### **The Royal British Legion Service of Remembrance will take place at the Priory at 10.50am.**

As a result of the current regulations concerning social distancing, this will be very different to such Services held in previous years. Whereas in previous years we have welcomed 1500 people to this Service, this year our maximum capacity will be in the region of 280 people and that, only if all of our socially distanced “pods” have all three seats occupied. This is highly unlikely as only those from the same household, (not family) are permitted to sit next to each other in these pods. It is therefore far more likely that our maximum numbers will be in the region of 180. We know that this is going to be a great disappointment to many people, not least to members of our own congregation. However, given the theme of this letter is that of **safety first**, I hope that you will appreciate just why we have taken the decisions that we have with regards to this Service.

The Parish clergy and churchwardens have met to discuss all matters concerning this Service and have decided that for the first time, **it will be a ticket only service**. We have a maximum of 95 pods. Approximately one third of tickets for these pods will be allocated to the RBL and Service Organisations within our Town and associated youth groups and Civic leaders. The remaining two thirds will be distributed from the parish box office on a first come first served basis. **The box office will open at 10.00am on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November for these tickets**. When booking, you will be allocated a pod either in the centre nave, one of the side aisles or one of the transepts. The TV screens will be in operation during the Service for those sat in the side aisles or transepts. You will be asked for the names of those who will occupy the pod with you and for one contact number for track and trace purposes, this is a legal requirement.

The entry point to the Priory on Remembrance Sunday will be through the north porch only. The doors will open at 10.10am. There will be two entry queues to ensure we can get everyone in as quickly and as safely as possible. The Churchwardens will have a list of all those who have been allocated a seat within a pod and will tick off those entering the Priory and direct you to this pod via the safest route. No entry to the Priory will be granted after 10.40am and a health and safety briefing will take place at 10.45am. The

one way system operating within the Priory will be lifted for this short period to allow everyone to reach their nominated pod via the safest route. Service sheets will be placed within the pods together with a health and safety risk assessment. Once in your pod you will be asked to sit quietly until the Service begins and to remain there at the end of the Service until directed to leave by the stewards. There will be no congregation singing during the Service but a section of our Priory choir will sing two hymns, an anthem and the National Anthem.

We have thought and prayed about the best and most safe way to allow this Service to take place this year. We have liaised closely with the RBL and the Town Council and have unanimously agreed that the above arrangements are the fairest and most sensible way to proceed. We appreciate that many of you who may have wished to attend this Service will simply not be able to do so this year, given available capacity. **I can tell you however that this Service will be livestreamed at 10.50am and will be available via the link on our website homepage, [christchurchpriory.org](http://christchurchpriory.org)**

### **Choral Evensong**

We have decided to hold three Services of Choral Evensong this year. The first will be on **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, Remembrance Sunday at 6.30pm**. Hopefully those of you who are unable to obtain a ticket for the RBL Service at 10.50am might like to attend this instead. It will be a shortened Service, with no sermon but with our choir singing the Office.

The other dates for Choral Evensong, again at 6.30pm will be on **22<sup>nd</sup> November, Christ the King and in Advent on 6<sup>th</sup> December**.

**Other Dates in November.** (Subject of course to change if legislation prohibits us from holding them.)

**Advent Carol Service: Darkness to Light. Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.** Ticket only and further information will be provided at a later date.

**Advent Fayre.** It is with sadness that I have to let you know that we will NOT be holding an Advent Fayre this year. We are planning to hold an "Easter Fayre" next year instead.

### **The Venerable Dr Peter Rouch.**

It was announced by the diocese last weekend that the Archdeacon of Bournemouth, The Venerable Dr Peter Rouch has resigned his post with immediate effect in order to take up a position with the Church of England Institutions in London. Peter has been a great friend and supporter of our parish, not least during the last Vacancy before Canon Charles joined us in 2015. We wish him well in his new appointment and thank him for his loyal and dedicated service to the diocese, often in very difficult circumstances.