

The Parish of Christchurch

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



For February 14th, 2021

Dear Friends,

Over the past 2 years and 10 months I have seen how much the Parish here in Christchurch is loved and respected. With that respect and reputation comes responsibility: responsibility, of course, to care for the church buildings, offer support for our congregations and serve the local community where we can; but ultimately responsibility to use what we are and what we have to spread the Good News of Jesus and see peoples' lives transformed by his love.

There are many children and young people growing up here in Christchurch who are just not hearing about the true nature of God. It's not like it was years ago when the tradition of Christianity was much stronger in schools and other places. We need to have a sense of urgency about changing this. God yearns to bless his people and see new children and their families come to have a relationship with him. Families need God now, more than ever. I can't imagine what it would be like going through this pandemic without my faith and without being able to hold on to scripture like; "**He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.**" (Psalm 91 v 4)

For this reason, it has not surprised me that we have seen an increase in the number of families we are in contact with during this past year – people are searching even more so during this time. And God is wanting to use us to help people find him. If we can be open to the Holy Spirit, realise how he is guiding each of us to love our neighbour, and most importantly to reach out to the next generations, I fully believe we will see more and experience more of the fullness of joy we have in Jesus Christ. It's available to everyone and it's our job to share, encourage and love – our children are ultimately the **future church**.

We are those who know God and his love. We are in the know, we are in the light; and it's important we don't cover up this light, but share and shine the light around Christchurch. We are to be aware of where God is calling us to shine our light, both individually and as a church community. One of the first hymns I remember singing at the Priory was "**There's a wideness in God's mercy**". In fact, I loved the text so much I have had it printed out, up on my office wall ever since! The last two verses read,

“For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of our mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all gladness
In the joy of Christ our Lord.“

It's my prayer that each of you would be confident in knowing how huge and perfect God's love is for you so that you can't help but let it shine through you to those around you. Let us keep **fixing our eyes on Jesus, be brave and keep sharing!**

At the end, I would just like to personally write a HUGE thank you. Firstly, to everyone who has been so supportive of me and my family since we arrived in Christchurch and secondly thank you for everyone who has been so faithful in serving the children, young people and families in our local community, both those who have served in the past and those who continue to serve today. We have seen first-hand how God opens doors, and if we are willing to push through them, we get to serve in the new opportunities he puts before us.

I pray that God will continue to grow his church here in Christchurch, that each of you will be renewed in faith each day, standing strong whilst facing the challenges that may lie ahead. Many blessings to you all.

Heidi

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Lent Groups

As I wrote last week, this year's Lent Course is based on the recent book by Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream*. This book is timely and prophetic; it invites us to consider how we may emerge from the pandemic well through seeing clearly, choosing well and acting rightly.

As on our previous Lent Courses, this "Let Us Dream" will have five sessions. Each will feature extracts from the book, together with a passage of scripture to help us think about one of the key themes. There will also be questions for reflection and discussion and an opportunity to pray.

Because we are unable to meet in person, the course will be held via Zoom, with which so many of us have become familiar in the past year. The sessions will be on:

Mondays at 2.30pm, beginning February 22nd

Wednesdays at 2.30pm, beginning February 24th

Wednesday at 7.30pm. beginning February 24th

If you would like to join the Lent Course, please send an email to conference@christchurchpriory.org or use the email contact form on the website. Please indicate which of the days/times you would prefer. We will then give you details of how to join the Zoom call for each session and send you the course booklet. If you are unable to use Zoom (or even if you can!), the best suggestion I can make is to get the book: it's an inspiring read. CS

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The Revd Jonathan Evans

On Thursday evening, our friend Jonathan was duly licensed as Priest-in-Charge of the Benefice of Bruton, Brewham, Pitcombe and Shepton Montague. Only he and Alice were in the church itself, with the Bishop, Archdeacon and members of the local community on Zoom. As promised, I have been sent a link to the recording of the Licensing Service:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/QYWFE2I8S2mw8an-7T97SLn8jFfnVR2449PZeThoUoxZIY2s9gtBNYcKdkSkI5tu.D2ACFTXUsIE8JIrL>

The passcode for this is: #pT3uv!G – I am told that copying and pasting the passcode won't work and that we will need to type in the characters as given. CS

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Thank you to Heidi

Finally, on behalf of us all, I want to thank Heidi for everything she has done in our parish and for its children, young people and families, since May 2018. She has had a remarkable ministry here and we wish her well for her new post at St Michael's, Bournemouth. Please pray for Heidi, for Haakon, Benjamin and Jamie, as the next chapter of her ministry begins. CS