

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

Several years ago now I was asked to take part in leading a Service of Evensong in one of our neighbouring parishes, during which thanks were offered for a faithful couple who had been so active in both that parish and here in Christchurch, and who had taken the decision to move house to live closer to their children. For the purposes of this letter I am calling them James and Lucy. During his sermon, the vicar of the neighbouring parish posed the question, "What are we going to do without James and Lucy?" The couple had become so involved in Church life and lying at the heart of the question posed was this point, "Who is going to do everything that this couple have done for us in so many ways and over so many years?"

We might quite rightly ask the same questions as a parish this month as we have said goodbye to both Jonathan and to Heidi and wished them every blessing in their new ministries in the service of God. Yes we wish them well and yes we give thanks to God for all that both of them have done for God and for us all in Christchurch, but I suspect we might also ask that same question, "What are we going to do without them?"

Each time we open our bibles and read a text from scripture we learn afresh of the loving kindness and goodness of God and of the love that He has for all of his people. Each time we pray or listen for God's voice speaking to us, we likewise hopefully sense something of that love and of His Grace. And each time we allow ourselves the space to just be alone in God's presence we learn afresh that we are never alone and that He is always with us, guiding us, inspiring us, teaching us, leading us and calling us in new and imaginative ways to His service. Taken together, these characteristics surely form the vision that we individually and collectively need to move forward together, and in a similar way, always inspire others to respond to His calling and to take on new positions within the ministry and the mission of the Church. The fact that the Church is still here some two thousand years after our Lord's earthly life surely pays testimony to that very fact.

During the last year, as we have lived with the global pandemic we have adapted to as many challenges that have been put in our path as is humanly possible. We have done this by working together as the one faithful people in this parish. New people have answered the call to serve and I am sure that we will read more about this in the annual report in April. We have had six new Lay Pastoral Visitors trained and licensed, one member of our Church family is currently undertaking the training course to preach in our acts of Worship, new volunteers have stepped forward to assist in the ministry to children and families and others have come forward to assist in the good order of parish life by serving on our various committees.

You might have a calling to serve in one of the many and varied forms of ministry that our wonderful parish has to offer, and if you have, why not use this season of Lent to consider it further, to listen again to the voice of God and then to speak to either Charles or myself. So yes, I make no bones about it, we are going to miss enormously both Jonathan and Heidi, but at the same time, together we can achieve great things for the Kingdom of God in Christchurch. To steal the title of our Lent course, "Let us dare to

dream” let us do that together, and then let us wait and see what God will call us to do in the next stage of our vision for the future.

So with all of that in mind, below are two ways that you might like to join us during Lent this year. The first is that Lent course that I have just written about and which starts this coming week, and the second is a quiet day to be held in March. I commend them both to you for your information and your prayers.

Finally may I take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to you all for your prayers and kind messages after my mother’s fall last week. Suzanne fell over one of our dogs in the kitchen and fractured her hip. She was taken to Poole hospital and has had it pinned back together and she came home on Wednesday afternoon, together with several items of equipment to assist her in her recovery. She sends her love to you all.

With my love and prayers

Richard.

The Parish Lent Course.

From Canon Charles: 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 and 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

Parish Quiet Day

Angela and Graham Newton have arranged a Parish Quiet Day to be held on Zoom on **Saturday 27th March** between 10.00am and 3.30pm. The title for the day will be “The Sign of Jonah.” The day will offer us an opportunity to reflect and prepare for Holy Week and the feast of Easter. There will be three themed addresses followed by periods for reflection and prayer.

For further details and a full outline of the day, and to book your place, please contact Angela and Graham.

revdghnewton@gmail.com

angelanewton48@gmail.com