

The Parish of Christchurch



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

For 7 March, 2021

Dear Friends,

This week's pastoral letter is being written ten days after the announcement of the "roadmap", with its stages to take us out of lockdown by (not before) 21 June. In the days since then, I have been discussing with colleagues and with the PCC what the different stages or steps out of lockdown might mean for us as a parish, and specifically when and how we might lift the suspension on public worship.

This is a complex decision, as so many factors are involved. If I had to sum up the PCC's approach, it would be in the old Latin phrase, "festina lente" – which means make haste slowly. In other words, our approach to re-opening for worship aims to be reasonable, cautious, and not rushed. In reaching their decision, the PCC kept these factors in mind:

- In law, it has been possible to hold public services throughout the current lockdown. That we have not done so was, principally, based on the very high infection rate in Christchurch Town and across BCP at the time. Recently, the infection rate locally has been falling, broadly in line with the national picture. At the time of writing, the infection rate for Christchurch town is 41.3 per 100k resident population, and that for BCP is 68.8 per 100k. These levels are lower than those before Christmas.
- The vaccination programme is now well advanced; by now, many of you will have had your first jab.
- Although, as Professor Jonathan Van Tam made clear a few days ago, now is not the time to be careless or sloppy over social distancing (such as the 2-metre rule, wearing a face-covering, hand sanitizing, or other provisions, whether mandatory or guidance), the arrangements in the Priory for reduced seating, Perspex screens, etc. are very good, and have been recognised as such.

With all this in mind, the PCC has agreed what might be described as our own parish 'roadmap' back to a pattern of live services in the Priory and St George's, along these lines:

Sunday 4 Apr	Easter Day	9.30 & 11.30am Eucharist (Priory) <i>both</i> <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30 Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 11 Apr	Easter 2	10.00am Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30 Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 18 Apr	Easter 3	10.00am Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30 Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 25 Apr	Easter 4	8.00am BCP Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30 Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)

Thereafter, the pattern of services would continue along similar lines as 25 April, with other elements added as circumstances permit. In particular, we look forward to learning when it may be possible for amateur choirs to rehearse again. The hope is that this may be permitted in time for Pentecost on Sunday 23 May.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christchurch Holy Trinity • Charity Number 1130918 • www.christchurchpriory.org
The Parish Office, Priory House, Quay Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 1BX • T/F 01202 485804

Vicar: The Reverend Canon Charles Stewart, The Vicarage, 13a Church Street, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 1BW
• Email: vicar@christchurchpriory.org

It may also be possible in due course to reintroduce Choral Evensong, though in the first instance this would probably not be weekly. Pending the choir's return, and with no end in sight to the ban on congregational singing, we are planning to have one person singing the hymns on our behalf at the Priory 10.00am Eucharist, as permitted by the regulations; this chorister would sing from behind one of the screens in the Sanctuary.

In the meantime, updated Risk Assessments will be prepared for both the Priory and St George's, to reflect the current situation and include lessons from the experience of Christmas. In line with Professor Jonathan Van Tam's exhortation of a few days ago, we all need to go on observing the 2-metre rule at all times. This is particularly challenging at the end of services, when we are trying to leave the church. The staff team will be considering how best to ensure this works efficiently and securely.

Not for the first time, this weekly letter contains a lot of information. I hope, however, that it may nevertheless come across as truly pastoral, not least because the prevailing theme in lifting the suspension of public worship is that everyone who attends a service in person is not only kept as safe as possible, but also feels safe.

Above all, no one should feel obliged to return to 'live' services unless and until you are ready to do so. Whether you worship in church or at home, you remain a valued member of our worshipping, praying, serving and caring community. May God bless us all as we continue to journey together through this Lent.

Charles Stewart

* * * * *

Midweek Reflection

A Midweek Reflection has been posted on our website again this week. In the main, these consist of recorded readings from one of the two books used at Morning Prayer to supply our 'third reading', normally from one of the many spiritual giants of our Christian heritage. I hope you find the recordings helpful.

* * * * *

Bibles for Priory School Leavers

Around this time of year we generally aim to raise funds to present each of the year 6 leavers from the Priory CofE School with a Bible. These cost around £10 each. If you would like to give a Bible:

- **by bank transfer**, please use: Account Name - P.C.C. of Christchurch No.2 Account; Sort Code 52-21-34; Account Number 52428001. Please use "Priory School Bible" as the reference and email Ian Penny on prioryhouse@christchurchpriory.org,
- **by cheque**: please make cheques payable to P.C.C of Christchurch No.2. Account and mark for Ian's attention. If posted, to Priory House, Quay Road, BH23 1BU. Whether by post or by hand, please clearly mark "Priory School Bible" on or in the envelope.
- **by cash**: please put in an envelope for Ian and bring to the Priory, clearly marked as above.

* * * * *

Electoral Roll *Robert Phillipson, Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll Officer, writes*

Notice is hereby given that the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll is being REVISED.

Any person whose name is NOT ALREADY on the Electoral Roll needs to fill out a form,

- or if you have changed your address since this time last year,
- or if you know of anybody whose name is on the Roll but who has either died,
- or have moved during the year.

When filled out, please return the form to me either by email electoralroll@christchurchpriory.org, via the Priory Vestry, or directly by the 4th April 2021 at the latest. Failure to have your name on our Electoral Roll will mean you will be unable to vote at the Parish AGM, stand for a member of the PCC, Deanery Synod or Churchwarden. In line with the Diocese, you are being asked to provide telephone numbers and an email address (if you have one). This extra information will make it much easier for the clergy to make contact should the need arise, as they use the Electoral Roll as a means of identifying and communicating with members of their congregation. It is, therefore, essential that the Roll is kept up to date.