

Dear Friends,

Positive test results for Donald Trump and the First Lady. Tighter restrictions in the North-west (though none of the new regulations impact any areas of our own Diocese). Anger over the actions of an MP. The news remains pretty grim.

But – we promised a jollier edition of the briefing today!

There may still be 82 shopping days until Christmas, but it is clear that many parishes are already doing a great deal of thinking about how Christmas can be a time of joy for our communities whilst we continue to live with the pandemic. Today we feature some resources and ideas which might help with your planning we have also set up a closed Facebook group where people can share ideas (more information about that below too).

Updates today also on:

- Worship this Sunday
- The Weekly Message
- #HomeGrown Conference Bookings
- Baptism
- Ordination Coverage
- Relive a Holy Land Pilgrimage

### **Worship this Sunday**

Online worship is available in two places from 9am onwards this Sunday. Either:

- 9am Live from the Diocese of Blackburn, led this week by the Revd Sarah Gill and with a sermon from Archdeacon Mark. This will be on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#) and has a multi-lingual element. B
- From Blackburn Cathedral. This is on the [Cathedral website](#).

### **Weekly Message**

Bishop Philip has recorded this week's message which explores the inequality that the pandemic has revealed and how churches can respond to it. It can be viewed [on the Diocesan YouTube channel](#).

### **Book soon for #HomeGrown online conference**

From early next week booking will begin for the huge range of events which make up our first ever online conference on October 13 and 14. Some of the sessions will be live on YouTube and you don't need to book for those! All you need to do is tune into the channel, [which is here](#). Then there will be various seminars and workshops on Zoom. Although booking is not open until next week you can set aside the times.

On October 14 there will be six seminars/workshops at 11.15am and another six running at 2.30pm so you can choose two to attend. The Zoom sessions are limited to 30 places each.

The main booking page for #HomeGrown is here [on the Diocesan website](#) and the events will all appear here soon, with links to Eventbrite to book places. Finally, don't forget to watch and share the promotional video from Bishop Jill; [you can watch it here](#).

## **Baptisms**

A number of enquiries have come in about baptism. For a standalone baptism the rule of six applies, so only six may attend excluding the priest and volunteers. If the baptism takes place within the main Sunday act of worship there is no restriction on numbers beyond the risk assessment that you will have made for your church building.

## **Ordination Coverage**

Thank you for keeping our Deacons and Priests in your prayers as seven ordination services took place at the weekend.

Bishop Julian says: "It was a privilege for Bishop Philip, Bishop Jill and I to ordain our 23 candidates at the weekend's services. May their future ministry bring great glory to God as they share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those they live and minister amongst."

[Click here for our full coverage](#), including photos taken after the services and this year's official ordinations video. The video features two of the Priests, two of the Deacons and our bishops. [On this page on the Diocesan website](#) you will find a full list of all the ordinands and where they will serve.

Meanwhile this coming Sunday, on Premier Christian Radio, their 'Sunday Night Live' programme has a feature on ordinations taking place across the country. They have chosen to focus on our diocese to illustrate the piece. The programme, presented by Pam Rhodes, will broadcast in audio form at 6pm but is already available in video form on the PCR [YouTube channel to watch here](#) (from 25m 40s). Also included in the programme is a sequence about looking forward to Christmas that features Archdeacon David's recent 'Christmas is not cancelled' midweek message (from 5m 13s).

Finally, look out for coverage in your local and regional media. Our ordinations also featured on BBC Radio Lancashire on Sunday. Listen via [this page](#) on BBC Sounds (from 3h 11m 12s and then from 3h 51m 40s).

## **Relive a Holy Land Pilgrimage on Whalley Abbey Facebook page**

The Whalley Abbey steering group is offering a daily reflection from the Holy Land. These reflections were originally recorded during the pilgrimage to Israel, Palestine and Jordan which took place this time last year, led by Archdeacon Mark. To access the reflections, please visit [the Whalley Abbey Facebook page](#) and remember that you can join in with midday prayer every Tuesday on the same Facebook page.

## **Advent and Christmas**

Although we face the challenge of planning Christmas in the context of Covid, there are no end of creative resources available to help us offer a varied menu of services and events. This will of course depend on our resources, available building(s) and our target 'congregation' at any one time. Here Fr Neil Kelley offers some resources and ideas:

### **Preparing for Advent and Christmas 2020: Comfort and Joy**

The national online Christmas campaign for The Church of England this year has the theme 'Comfort and Joy'. [Find out more here](#) and there will be more information and resources to come in relation to this campaign.

**7 ways to create an awesome Christmas event**, even during Covid. This [article from the Premier Christianity website](#) challenges us to consider ...

- **People**
- **Purpose**
- **Problem**
- **Powers**
- **Positioning**
- **Product**
- **Provision**

### **Advent resources.**

Though many of these may need re-framing into a Covid-safe context, there are some [excellent resources here](#) which families could use at home during the Advent season.

### **Crib Service on Zoom** (from the Diocese of St. Albans)

[Here on the St Alban's website](#) you will everything you need to create a crib service on Zoom.

### **Christingle Service at Home**

This can be celebrated by producing a pre-recorded or live-streamed service where people join in at home by providing the orange while members of the church deliver Christingle 'packs' (if it can be done safely) with the various items that are needed to add to the orange as the service develops.

### **Virtual Christingle Service** (The Children's Society)

And [here is some further advice](#) on producing a virtual Christingle service.

### **Share Christmas with J. John, David Suchet, Sir Cliff Richard and Matt Redman**

'Christmas Unwrapped' is an initiative from J. John who has secured contributions from some well-known names and provided other resources to allow churches to present a special and unique online Christmas service. [Everything you need is here.](#)

### **The 12 Revelations of Christmas**

[These can be used](#) as a geocache trail or similar around your community.

### **'Relay' Crib Service**

Depending on the content of your Crib Service and the size of your building, consider separating the different components of your customary service with a number of smaller services focussing on different elements. At each service focus on one element (animals, shepherds, angels, Mary and Joseph, the birth of Jesus) so that over five smaller services the Crib is built and the story told.

### **Carol Singing**

It may be possible for some churches to do street-to-street 'socially distanced' carol singing as a means of witness (perhaps with a banner to explain to certain twitchers who's making the angelic sounds!)

### **Online services**

If you are keen to embrace online services but have never done this, or have few resources at your disposal, contact the Diocesan Online Resourcing Group and someone will be able to help you think through the issues. Email Joy Rushton at [joy.rushton@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:joy.rushton@blackburn.anglican.org)

### **Facebook Worship Group**

Finally for this briefing, we are pleased to be able to tell you the Diocese has created a closed Facebook group for clergy and worship leaders to share ideas, resources and support each other ahead of Advent and Christmas this year.

It will include contributions from Fr Neil Kelley; Ruth Hassall, Director of Discipleship; Joy Rushton, Being Witnesses Manager and Ronnie Semley, Communications Manager. If you would like access, please email [ruth.hassall@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:ruth.hassall@blackburn.anglican.org) and she will add you to the group.

### **The Coronavirus Email Address**

If you have questions or problems, please get in touch: [coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org).

**Please email if you are off work or shielding.**

**Keep us, good Lord,**

**under the shadow of your mercy**

**in this time of uncertainty and distress.**

**Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,**

**and lift up all who are brought low;**

**that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Yours,

The Coronavirus Task Group