

Dear Friends,

Let's face it, the news in recent days has been dispiriting in the extreme! We have been told that we are in the grip of a second wave of the virus and our own region is the worst hit area of the country. Extra restrictions have been imposed with the high likelihood of more. Many people face financial insecurity and the loss of jobs and there are no clear indications of a way out of the crisis. A long, hard winter lies ahead of us.

As Christians we are called to be joy-givers and as leaders within our communities we need to be doing all we can to raise morale and speak words of hope. Especially we need to be alert to the needs of the hungry, the vulnerable and the lonely. Service is the best remedy for introspection.

But it's hard to be a joy-giver when you don't feel much joy yourself! So please give time for yourself and try to surround yourself with people and plans that can sustain you.

It is critical to give attention to your own morale and wellbeing.

- Find ways of supporting each other within local networks, Deaneries or the other support structures of which you are a part;
- Make sure you are taking time off and have holiday booked. You can't defer indefinitely!
- Don't forget our #HomeGrown online conference which is being organised by Bishop Jill, who spoke about the event on [BBC Radio Lancashire](#) recently (listen from 1h 51m 50s). You can find [more information here](#).
- Above all keep praying! Joy is God's gift, not something that can be self-generated.

We will come back to this issue in a later briefing with some more detailed advice and suggestions on establishing sustainable rhythms of ministry.

In today's briefing we have information on:

- The latest Government regulations
- Updated Church of England advice
- Baptisms
- Remembrance Sunday
- NHS Test and Trace App
- QR Codes in churches
- October and RWA Count
- Archbishops' Letter
- Ordinations
- Sunday Worship

The latest Government regulations

You will be aware of the government guidelines restricting pub opening times and toughening up measures around face masks etc. There is also the threat of stricter measures if the infection rate continues to rise. Please note especially:

- **Public worship continues** and it is critical that we continue to offer worship where we can do so safely unless and until the government regulations change.
- **Weddings** are now restricted to 15 people.
- The limit for **funerals** remains at 30 except in those parts of the Diocese where stricter measures apply in which case it is 20.

Updated Church of England advice

Advice from the Church of England has been updated to be in tune with the new regulations and with information on Test and Trace. [You can find it here:](#)

Please note on that page the very helpful section on Parish Continuity Plans which has advice on what steps to take in the event of an outbreak.

Baptisms

It appears to be the case that attendance at Baptisms will be restricted to six people from September 28. The government advice is currently confused and clarity is being sought so please check in to the Church of England website to stay up to speed.

Remembrance Sunday

We have had a number queries about Remembrance Sunday, a big day for many Lancashire parishes but one that cannot be observed in the usual way this year.

- You can of course observe Remembrance Sunday within a regular church service as long as numbers do not exceed your risk assessment.
- It would be wise to offer a streamed or pre-recorded service or advertise the Diocesan or Cathedral equivalent.
- We would counsel against Parishes organising outdoor acts of remembrance because it will be so hard to manage numbers and maintain social distancing.
- Please work with your local authority with regard to events at cenotaphs so that they take responsibility for event management.

NHS Test and Trace App

This is now available for phones and devices and you may wish to encourage your people to download it. It is called 'NHS COVID-19.' Make sure you download the right app!

QR Codes in churches

All buildings which are open to the public must now display their own QR code to be scanned by all who enter the premises using the NHS Test and Trace app. You can make your own QR poster [here](#).

If your building is used by a number of different organisations, they should make their own QR code which traces back to their meetings and is maintained by them.

The QR codes should be clearly displayed at every entrance of the property. This is now a matter of law.

October and RWA Count

The Diocesan RWA count will NOT be taking place this year. It seems unlikely that the national October count will be going ahead but there is as yet no final decision on this from the national church.

Ordinations

Please hold our new Deacons and Priests in your prayers as they prepare for their ordination services on Saturday and Sunday. If you visit [this page on the Diocesan website](#) you will find more information and a full list of all the ordinands and where they will serve.

For obvious reasons, places at each of these services are very limited but arrangements have been made to livestream each service on parish and (in two cases) Diocesan social media channels. All the links you need to follow each service can be found [on this website page](#). You can be active on social media about the ordinations too, using #NewRevs for retweets etc.

We have arranged for pictures to be taken after each service and there will be follow-up coverage of the services on the Diocesan website and in the local media next week. Also look out for a video which is also being prepared, featuring two Deacons, two Priests and our Bishops.

Archbishops' Letter

The Archbishops' Letter to churches [can be seen here](#).

Harvest Appeal update

Don't forget to make a donation or to organise collections for the Bishop's annual Harvest Appeal. All the information you need, including this year's beneficiaries, online donating options and a video from Bishop Julian to watch and share [can be found here](#). Bishop Jill spoke about the Appeal on [BBC Radio Lancashire](#) recently (listen from 1h 54m 50s). Please encourage friends and family to donate as well as your own church family.

Sunday Worship

This week you can share in Sunday worship from two places.

- St Stephen's Preston, where worship will be led by the Rev Dave Hanson. You can join in on [the Diocesan YouTube Channel](#), with the liturgy for this Sunday [here](#).
- Blackburn Cathedral which can be viewed on [the Cathedral website](#).

You can join in with both services from 9am on Sunday onwards.

The Coronavirus Email Address

If you have questions or problems, please get in touch:

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