

Dear Friends,

There seems to be a significant chance of extended restrictions as the rate of the spread of the virus increases in every part of Lancashire. The good news is that the early indications of the tiered system that the government is developing to bring greater clarity to local measures appears to allow public worship to continue even at the highest tier, but this is yet to be officially confirmed and policy can change very suddenly. It is both a recognition of the outstanding work that church leaders like you have done across the country in offering worship safely, and also an encouragement to keep going and not allow the high standards we have set to slip.

Please remember that we need to go on reducing social contacts with others to the minimum. We all need to become expert risk-assessors!

We tried to cut down to one briefing this week but it turns out to be rather a bumper edition including:

- Home Grown Conference
- Weekly Message
- Worship this Week
- IICSA Report
- Managing a Positive Test in you Congregation
- Is it Safe to Meet Face to Face?
- Christmas Facebook Group
- Digital Ministry in the Diocese
- Statistics for Mission
- Latest C of E Guidance
- Bellringing

#HomeGrown online conference

Have you booked for #HomeGrown yet? Our exciting, first-ever online conference takes place on October 13 and 14. It features live YouTube sessions with our three Bishops; 12 one-hour seminars on Zoom and much more. There are five seminars at 11.15am and seven more at 2.30pm; all on the 14 October. Spaces are limited so choose and book as soon as you can! The YouTube sessions are open to everyone of course.

All the information you need about #HomeGrown, including a full timetable; seminar options (with Eventbrite links to register) plus biographies of all the seminar leaders [is here on the Diocesan website](#). Share the link! Get involved! And don't forget to be active on social media with #HomeGrown throughout the conference as well. See you there!

Weekly Message

Archdeacon Mark Ireland has recorded this week's message. [It can be viewed here.](#)

Worship this Week

It is great that so many churches have continued to make worship available online even though almost all of our churches are now open for public worship. To celebrate this, Sunday worship on the Diocesan YouTube channel will come from a variety of places over the next few weeks.

- This Sunday from 9am you can share in worship with people of Christ Church Fulwood, led by their Vicar Rev Chris Boland, [on the Diocesan YouTube channel](#).
- And as always Sunday worship will be available from our Cathedral from 9am on Sunday which you can view [here](#).

IICSA Report

Parishes will be aware that the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA, published its overarching investigation report on Tuesday into the Anglican Church in England and Wales.

The [154 page report](#) makes eight principal recommendations about a range of issues including the Church's response to victims and survivors, which is an absolute priority. There is much to absorb and consider of course, but Bishop Julian gave an initial reaction on the day the report was published, which you [can read here](#).

Managing a Positive Test in you Congregation

Our briefing on September 30 went through the steps to take if a member of your congregation tests positive for the virus. To add to this:

- If there is a positive test from someone who has attended worship in one of your church buildings within the past two weeks, please email coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org . This is so that we can monitor incidences across the Diocese.
- Remember it is not possible to visit a congregant who has tested positive for obvious reasons, but please do continue to offer care. This can be by phone or zoom, or by offering practical support such as delivering shopping or medication.

Is it Safe to Meet Face to Face?

Increasingly we are having to use judgement rather than simply follow rules, so the issue of when and where not to meet is an increasingly testing one for many of you. It is not possible for the Task Group to give hard and fast answers in every case, but please bear in mind the following:

- Ministry is work and not a social activity! So meetings and visits are not forbidden. Indeed there are some pastoral situations where a face to face meeting is critical or where it may be the only way to resolve a conflict.
- However, if we are to contain the spread of the virus we need to take very seriously government advice to reduce social contacts to the minimum.
- This means asking yourself the following questions before arranging a face to face visit or meeting:
 - Is it essential that we meet face to face?
 - Is there a way of achieving your purpose that avoids a face to face meeting?
 - Does the benefit of meeting face to face outweigh the risk?

Christmas Facebook Group

This is now up and running and, with 83 people already signed up, is proving a useful forum for sharing ideas about a safe and joyful Christmas. To be signed up please email Ruth Hassall: ruth.hassall@blackburn.anglican.org

Digital engagement during the pandemic

Our Being Witnesses Manager, Joy Rushton and the Diocesan Communications Manager, Ronnie Semley, have collaborated on a report looking broadly at digital engagement across the Diocese during the first six months of lockdown.

The report, seen by the Bishop's Leadership Team and Bishop's Council, includes a section on the digital work of the Board of Education, written by Lindsay Wright, their Digital Media and Resources Lead. For more information and a link to the report, [click here](#).

Statistics for Mission 2020

We have been notified that the Statistics for Mission will now be sought this year so please do your best to keep your October attendance data. The appropriate form, which we expect to be shorter and simplified compared to previous years, will be distributed asap.

Latest C of E Guidance

The Church of England has updated its coronavirus guidance and now includes helpful advice on church heating. [You can see it here](#).

Bellringing

The Central Council of Church Bellringers has amended its advice on bellringing for areas such as Lancashire which are impacted by extra restrictions. The restrictions on households mixing for non-essential activities means that, in line with CCCBR, our advice is that teams of bellringers from different households should not be ringing together until the restrictions are relaxed.

[The full advice can be read here.](#)

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