

Dear Friends,

These are odd days. On the one had infection rates continue to increase, especially in the west of the county (see the article by Dominic Harrison, Director of Public health for Blackburn with Darwen, [here](#) for an interesting account of where things stand in Blackburn and across the county.)

On the other hand, most regulations have been dropped and this week we will be able to restore communal singing in our churches and relax the measures that have had such an impact on church life over the past few months.

The evidence is that local churches are taking intelligent and informed decisions about phasing out measures whilst offering reassurance to those who may be anxious and are using risk assessment tools to do so. It is unsurprising that Blackburn clergy and lay leaders are once again rising so admirably and positively to the challenge. Thank you for that.

And it's holiday season! Very few of us will be getting far away from home, but please do make sure you have some time to get away from the phone and the computer terminal, read a book, take it easy and relax!

### **New Guidance from the Church of England**

A reminder that the new detailed guidance from the Church of England can be viewed [here](#). Please note:

- The Risk Assessment tool is now available [on this page](#). This not only provides us with a key tool in making the necessary decisions, but it also provides a shortened version of the guidance.
- Whilst it is now up to churches to make their own decisions informed by local risk assessments, there is strong advice in the guidance on ventilating church and on the need to continue to maintain high levels of hygiene and provide hand sanitising gel.
- The guidance also contains wise advice on the common cup and whether and how to re-introduce it.

### **Test and Trace**

Churches are still strongly advised to keep a record of attendance. Updated advice on test and trace can be seen [here](#).

### **HM Government Guidance**

For the hardcore coronavirus guidance groupies out there, the official advice on places of worship from HM Government can be seen [here](#). Whilst all formal regulations have been removed, Government also urges wise and careful decisions.

### **Vaccine Passports**

The Church of England advice is very clear that our worship should be open to all and so churches should NOT restrict access to worship to those who have not been double vaccinated. There is a Q and A on the issue [here](#).

## **Online Worship this Sunday**

The Revd Sarah Gill will be leading our Multilingual service on Sunday 1 August with songs of praise and worship in different languages. The service will be available [here](#) on our YouTube channel.

An Act of Worship from Blackburn Cathedral will be available every Sunday from 9am. You can view this on the [Cathedral YouTube Channel](#) or on [Facebook](#).

## **The Pingdemic**

In common with other sectors we have a number of clergy who are having to self-isolate following the dreaded ping from the Covid app. If you have to self-isolate please drop us an email. Your Area Dean and Local Network should be able to assist with cover.

## **Future Briefings**

There will be no weekly briefing during the course of the Summer. The Task Group will continue to meet on an occasional basis and we will put out a briefing if there are any dramatic developments.

## **Coronavirus Email Address**

If you have questions or problems and can't find answers on the [advice compendium](#) please email: [coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org).

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.

**Amen.**

Yours,  
Coronavirus Task Group