

Dear Friends,

It is impossible to overstate the importance of what our churches will be doing over the next few days of Holy Week. As Jesus washes the disciples' feet, we his followers commit ourselves anew to continuing service of a nation in need. As Jesus gives his life, we hold up the cross above Lancashire and bear witness to the hope it bears. And as he rises on Easter morning, we proclaim that from the darkness of the tomb new life is born. This year, of all years, preach the message of salvation in Jesus Christ with confidence, simplicity and joy for it is one that the world so needs to hear.

But do it also with care! As we move slowly out of lockdown there is an obvious caution from Government and public health officials that people will push the boundaries at a time when there is still a great deal of the virus around. In Preston and Blackburn especially the infection rates remain stubbornly high. So make sure that people maintain physical distance and do not hang around before and after services. Remember Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, 'Do not touch me.' So no hugging this Easter!

And whilst it is excellent news and a wonderful testimony to your leadership that almost all of our churches will be open for public worship this Easter, there will still be many who are nervous of returning quite yet. Please bear with them.

Bishops' Easter Messages

All three Bishops have recorded messages for Easter. There are links to all three [on this page](#) of the Diocesan Website.

Weekly message next week

The Bishops' messages replace our regular weekly message on this occasion, but it will return on Wednesday next week with Archdeacon David and will be available, as usual, on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#).

Sunday Worship - This Week and Next

- For Easter Day, worship will be led by The Revd Sarah Gill and Bishop Julian will preach in a service that will also reach out to those of other cultures. You can join in on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#).
- The following Sunday, April 11, the service will come from Holy Trinity church in Tarleton and is led by Fr Mark Soady. This will be livestreamed at 10.30 am on their Facebook site which is [here](#). The service will also be mirrored live to the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#) and will remain on the channel as a recording after the live broadcast to watch later if you prefer.

The Next Stage of the Roadmap

April 12 is the next key stage in the Government's roadmap out of lockdown and this will impact on churches in the following ways:

- **Weddings.** From that date the maximum attendance will go from 6 to 15 guests.
- **Children's Activities.** Activities for children and young people can re-start from this date and can take place indoors. The number limit for children is that set by your local risk assessment. No more than 15 adults should be present at any time.
- **Indoor Leisure.** The re-opening of indoor leisure activities may mean increased use of church halls. It would be wise to run water and flush lavatories if the hall has been unused for some time. And please review your risk assessment and ensure Covid-secure cleaning as before.

Updated Church of England Guidance

There is some new guidance on the Church of England website as regulations change over the next few weeks.

- Updated guidance on weddings can be found [here](#).
- There is a helpful guide to permitted activities over the next few weeks as regulations change [here](#).

The Briefing

Barring sudden new developments, there will be no Coronavirus Briefing next week and we will resume in a fortnight.

Singing – Additional Guidance

The Recovery Group in London has written to bring to our attention a number of worrying cases where the popular practice of singing in the shower has led to a small number of clergy re-infecting themselves with COVID-19, and one case where the priest involved had received the vaccine. We would therefore ask clergy and lay leaders who wish to sing whilst showering to observe the following guidelines:

- PPE should be worn throughout your shower along with FFP3 moulded face masks
- Singing should be kept to below 30 decibels. The Property Team will be in touch with clergy to fit decibel meters to all vicarage bathrooms to ensure compliance.
- Words and phrases which encourage more enthusiastic singing should be avoided, especially 'Sing it in the Valleys,' 'Bless the Lord O My Soul' or anything which uses the word 'Alleluia.' In general, please limit your bathroom repertoire to boring hymns or Gregorian chant. The Task Group has compiled a list of boring hymns and can advise.

Coronavirus Email Address

If you have questions or problems please email: coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org.

Almighty Father,
look with mercy on this your family
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed
and given up into the hands of sinners
and to suffer death upon the cross;
who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Yours,

Coronavirus Task Group