

Dear Friends,

I am sure that all of you will have been praying for the people of India as they endure such a terrible time of suffering as a new variant of the virus rips through the nation and causes such appalling levels of sickness and death. The news coverage has been traumatic.

It is a situation that carries for us two important messages. It shows us first the dangers that still await if we allow things to slip too soon and so reminds us of the importance of continuing to adhere to guidance even when we are weary of it. But the Indian situation also shows us the extent to which this is a global crisis which will only come to an end if we have the courage to find global solutions. Vaccine nationalism is cosmetic and will only provide short-term answers. We must pray and act for a spirit of global generosity, that poorer nations will be afforded the same level of protection that we are privileged to enjoy in the west.

Next Stage of the Road Map May 17

The next stage of re-opening is on May 17 and from this stage:

- The regulations on public worship remain unchanged
- Up to 30 people are allowed at weddings and funerals
- Outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people are permitted
- Up to six people or two households may gather indoors
- It may be possible for some churches to serve refreshments after services. However, this must be by table service (not from hatch or counters) and there must be no more than six people to a table
- Performances may take place in church buildings as long as face coverings are worn and people observe social distancing

Sunday Worship

The Revd Sarah Gill will be leading this week's act of worship and Bishop Philip will preach on the theme 'Jesus the True Vine.' You can watch the service, which is the latest in our series of multi-cultural and multi-lingual acts of worship, on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#).

Thy Kingdom Come May 13 – 23

It's not long until Thy Kingdom Come. From Ascension to Pentecost, Christians from 172 countries - including in our Diocese - will once again be joining in prayer for more people to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

As a Diocese, we will be marking #ThyKingdomCome with a series of services available online. Information can be found on [this Diocesan website page](#).

- *There will be an online All-Age Launch service on Wednesday May 12 from 4pm with our Bishops, and the Board of Education team on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#).*
- *There will be daily online services at 4pm led by churches across the Diocese, also on the YouTube channel.*
- *A service for Ascension Day (Thursday, May 13 at 7.30pm) will be livestreamed from the Cathedral.*
- *A special service for Pentecost Sunday (May 23 at 4pm) will be also livestreamed from the Cathedral and this will include the Re-launch of Vision 2026.*

Resources for all ages can also be found on the [#TKC website](#).

From May 13 – 23 the Being Witnesses team will be praying every morning at 8am for half an hour. You are very welcome to join the team.

Email beingwitnesses@blackburn.anglican.org for the Zoom link.

News from the Diocesan Board of Education

As always the intrepid DBE team have been incredibly busy resourcing parishes and schools.

For toddlers...

Many parishes are starting to re-establish toddler groups and **prayer** is vital in this task. The **Toddler Group National Month of Prayer** is coming up in June. The Board of Education have supported this initiative for a number of years by posting on our social media platforms every day in June a series of creative prayer activities aimed at under 5s which can be used both in toddler groups and by families at home. For more details follow the Facebook page: [\(4\) Blackburn Diocese Board of Education | Facebook](#)

For children...

Making our Children's Ministry Appealing to Boys - Wednesday 5 May (7pm - 9pm). Reflection and practical ideas on how we can help boys (who are often under-represented in church) engage with God, the Bible and prayer. [Ministry Appealing to Boys Digital Training Session – Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education \(bducation.org.uk\)](#)

Welcoming Children with Additional Needs - Wednesday 11 May (7pm – 9pm) How we welcome and support children with additional needs into our Children's groups and worshipping communities. This will be delivered by SEND specialist, Lynn McCann. [Welcoming Children with Additional Needs – Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education \(bducation.org.uk\)](#)

Children and Worship – Saturday 22 May (9am – 1pm) The session will cover children's worship experiences, engaging and including children in worship plus how, through mission and outreach, we encourage them to be part of our worshipping communities in the first place. [Children and Worship Training Day – Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education \(bducation.org.uk\)](#)

For young people...

Youth Camp from Home. Youth Camp has gone online with a range of resources and materials to create a youth camp from home for young people. The pack will contain 'how to' videos and pre-recorded talks so you can explore the Bible verse Micah 6:8, PLUS activity plans and an interactive scavenger hunt. More details can be found on the website here: [Youth Camp 2021: Not So Far From Home – Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education \(bducation.org.uk\)](#)

Lift up your Hearts – A Church Times Webinar

The Church Times has organised a webinar in association with RSCM on the future of worship and church music on Tuesday May 18th from 10am until 4pm. You can find out more and book a place [here](#).

Churches Emerging from Lockdown – Lament, Thanksgiving and Mission

As we start to unlock church life, we are sharing stories from across the Diocese of ways different parishes have started to engage with **lament, thanksgiving and mission**.

This week we have a story from St James's Church Clitheroe under the theme of mission:

Forest Church. *From last July our Church families started meeting as Forest Church in the school eco zone, a congregation of families using God's creation to connect with God. This has supported and encouraged family faith as families talk about God together, as they plan and lead activities together. However, it is also growing a team of families that can lead a new congregation.*

Our vision is that Forest Church will develop into an outreach congregation for community families, where families can introduce other families to the good news of Jesus. We pray that it will become a congregation that is welcoming and informal, non-threatening, for all shapes and styles of families. Our gatherings are active and busy, full of variety as we scavenge, explore, make, sit in silence and reflect.

Families meeting together in God's creation, using this to explore who God is, how great his love is for us. Creation provides the most amazing surroundings to worship and connect with God in. No church building can match the architecture of nature and how it so easily points to and glorifies our amazing God.

When we are able, we always finish with hot chocolate.

(Helen Potts, Children's and Families Minister)

Coronavirus Email Address

If you have questions or problems and can't find answers on the [advice compendium](#) please email: 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