

Dear Friends,

Our lives continue to follow its strange and restricted patterns as lockdown continues, but the good news is that our efforts seem to be seeing results. Infection rates have been decreasing consistently across Lancashire and the number of people in our local hospitals with Covid-19 is also reducing. Whilst public officials are still being cagey about any loosening of the restrictions, it is heartening to see things moving broadly in the right direction.

At the same time we are aware that many clergy are still dealing with the impact of the recent surge and many have reported large numbers of funerals, some of them very challenging and distressing. The role that the Church of England plays in deploying priests to every community in the country who want only the wellbeing of those they serve is a powerful witness and is being increasingly acknowledged, but this witness does not come without personal cost. Our prayers for each other are crucial at this time of crisis.

### **The Weekly Message**

Bishop Julian is this week's contributor for the Weekly Message. His short talk can be viewed [here on the Diocesan YouTube Channel](#).

### **Worship this Week**

This week's Sunday Service comes from Buckshaw Village Church and is led by the Rev James Gwyn-Thomas. It will be available [here on the Diocesan YouTube channel](#).

### **Ash Wednesday, Lent and Holy Week**

Next week we enter the season of Lent. For those churches which have remained open for public worship and those planning to re-open soon, there is some good advice on safe observation of the rites of this season, including the imposition of ashes, on the Church of England website. [This can be found here](#).

### **Looking Out in Lent**

The Diocesan Lent Course begins on February 24 and runs each Wednesday on Zoom at 7.30pm thereafter. Full details and booking information [can be found here](#). More Lent resources are also being added to this page this week.

### **Vaccinations for Clergy**

We have very recently received an update about the availability of the vaccine for clergy. The Bishop's Chaplain will be writing to licensed clergy about this as soon as possible so please watch out for that email.

## **Exploring Emotional and Spiritual Wellbeing**

Ali O'Brien, who runs the [Ashar Bringing Hope](#) project, is running a six week course on emotional and spiritual wellbeing. It begins on February 24 with each session lasting ninety minutes. However, because this clashes with the Lent Course, Ali will also be repeating the course from April 14. For more information and to book please email Ali:

[alison@ashar.org.uk](mailto:alison@ashar.org.uk)

## **Annual Parochial Church Meetings**

The Archdeacons have received a number of enquiries about APCMs. Please note that the deadline remains May 31st for these to have taken place.

## **A Letter to Faith Groups from HM Government**

Two Departments of Government have jointly written an encouraging letter to thank faith leaders and to provide a great deal of helpful information in one place. We have added it to [our coronavirus compendium here](#) as a downloadable pdf.

## **Coronavirus Email Address**

If you have questions or problems please email: [coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org). It is important that clergy who are self-isolating send us a note to this address.

Gracious God,  
as we remember before you the thousands  
who have died,  
surround us and all who mourn with your  
strong compassion.  
Be gentle with us in our grief,  
protect us from despair,  
and give us grace to persevere  
and face the future with hope  
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

**Amen.**

Yours

Coronavirus Task Group