

Dear Friends,

It is almost two years since the first Coronavirus Briefing was sent out, and nearly 200 editions later, we very much hope and pray that this will be our last! Thank you for sticking with us.

Thank You

The quality of leadership that clergy and laypeople in our Diocese have shown over the course of the past two years has been remarkable. And this claim is based not on empty sycophancy but on hard data. Our congregations have bounced back faster than any other in the country. And we are also an outlier in the way Parish Share contributions have held up which have left DBF finances in a much better place than we expected.

So this is a very sincere and heartfelt thank you for all you have done: for the faithfulness of your prayer, for the compassion of your service, for your courage in continuing with public worship wherever possible, for your ingenuity in adapting swiftly to new media, for your deep love for your people and above all for your profound trust in Jesus Christ.

Of course the pandemic is not over. We continue to give thanks for keyworkers, especially those in the health service and education who continue to face severe challenges. We remember those around the world, particularly in our link diocese of the Free State, who do not have the access to vaccinations and boosters that we do. We also continue to pray for those with long Covid and those who still feel anxious and afraid.

Advice for Lent and Easter

We are way past the days of asking parishes to enforce clear guidance and the emphasis now is on personal responsibility and local judgement.

Many of you are continuing to offer simplified worship and a toned-down Sunday experience for your people and this has made sense. In some places it will continue to make sense as we pass through the penitential season of Lent.

But as we approach the great feast of the Resurrection, it would seem to us to be time to re-enrich our worship and bring back much of what has been lost. We can begin once again to offer the fullness of Christian ministry (the common cup for those who wish, refreshments after services, a full musical offering and so on) as we look to the glory of Easter.

Parish Update

As the briefings from the Task Group end (we hope), a reminder to continue to keep an eye open for our regular Parish Update ebulletin sent every two weeks to parishes. It features news, information and resources from the teams at the Diocesan Offices. If you don't receive Parish Update already you can [subscribe here](#).

Guidance from the Church of England

The Church of England is continuing to offer guidance to parishes in making local decisions. It can be viewed [here](#).

Clergy who have tested Positive or are Isolating

With the legal obligation to isolate now gone and with low rates locally, there is no longer any need for clergy who test positive to report this using the coronavirus email.

Coronavirus Email Address

We will continue to monitor the email address, so if you have any questions please send an email to: coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org.

A prayer

With the utter horror of what is unfolding in Eastern Europe, our prayers should now turn to the people of Ukraine:

*Almighty God,
seated above all the affairs of humankind
and sovereign over nations and leaders,
hear our prayer for Ukraine at this time of war,
that lives may be spared,
that national boundaries be respected
and that forces of aggression be restrained.
Grant, Lord God, peace in your world in our time.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen*