

Dear Friends,

More and more of us are starting to hear of people, perhaps close family members, who are suffering as the Pandemic sweeps through the nation. On Sunday the church enters the season of Passiontide with its strong focus on the cross of Christ. In the cross Jesus both enters into human suffering and pain and also shows that such things can never triumph. So, over the next few days, in prayer let us place this anxious world at the foot of the cross, knowing that it reveals both the perfect compassion and the invincible hope we find in Jesus.

Today's briefing contains advice on the following:

- This Sunday
- Words from Bishop Jill to families and information from the Board of Education about resources for children whilst at home
- Update on PCR2
- Serving our communities
- Update from EIG

There will be short email tomorrow with information about adult discipleship resources. Over the next week we will also have some advice for parishes on how to keep Holy Week.

Any question or queries, please email: coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org. ***Please also email if you are unwell or self-isolating.***

This Sunday

Bishop Philip has recorded a short service for viewing this Sunday on our [Diocesan YouTube channel](#). The service will last around 25 minutes. This will run 'as live' and be available to watch starting from 9am and will remain on the channel for further viewing. Do remember that clocks go forwards by one hour this Saturday night. We don't want you to miss it!

Meanwhile, for livestream activity from many of our parishes, bookmark the 'A Church Near You' [livestream interactive map](#) page.

Words from Bishop Jill to families and information from the Board of Education

"The last few days have seen seismic changes for children and teenagers. Schools out. Indefinitely. Many young people in Year 6, Year 11 and Year 13 have suddenly found themselves leaving primary or secondary school, cancelling concerts, exams unknown. From Monday many children and teenagers are doing school at home. My 12 year-old son was thrilled – he races through his tasks like a sport; my 15 year old is devastated: his world revolves round friends and structure.

Many parents are juggling work, child-care, solving maths problems and setting new boundaries and routines. Some parents have suddenly found themselves out of work; some parents have found themselves with incredible demands at work.

Please give yourself plenty of slack in this time. I'm conscious that as Christians we are often super-dedicated to the cause. Mother Teresa once said: "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family". My best child-care advice as a new mum was from a nun(!) who observed how our children often reflect back our own moods to us. And anyone who has been coupled up with a toddler for too long can totally understand why tantrums break out at the worst possible times. And that's just the parent! I finished a Zoom meeting with the North West bishops yesterday then went out to play football in the garden. I enjoyed both: though sometimes virtual kids and football with colleagues is tempting.

It can be hard thinking of new ideas to engage and enthuse our children. Can I recommend our marvellous Board of Education Website and Social Media pages. There you'll find lots of resources for children, teenagers, RE and collective and family worship. Take a look at Lisa Horobin's films 'Off the Shelf'. You might even meet her dog.

The Children's and Youth teams in the diocese have produced some fantastic resources, click on the links below:

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/under-5s/>

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/secondary-age/>

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/podcasts/>

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product/podlets-discussion-notes/>

<https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/youth/youth-blog/>

The team have been working hard to adapt many of the church focused resource to being home focused and for parents to use with their children and young people. The best way of keeping up with the new resources and those being adapted is through their Social Media pages, the links for which are below.

<https://www.facebook.com/BDBEupdates/>

<https://twitter.com/BDBofE>

<https://www.instagram.com/bdbofe/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/blackburndiocese>

Jesus Himself faced cataclysmic threats. Herod was always out to kill him. I love his advice when living under that threat: "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough evil of its own" (Matt 6.34). May our Good Father give His peace and wisdom to parents and children at this time."

Update on PCR2 – A note from our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor

I hope you are all well and managing in the current situation. I appreciate that in recent weeks you will have likely had to focus on a number of priorities and may not have had chance to undertake the request made for information in the letter sent from Bishop Julian regarding PCR2. We have received no notice of an extension in the time allowed for these returns to be completed so this is a prompt as well as offer of support so that these returns can still be completed on time.

The information that has been requested can be sought and gathered through email or phone calls. As per the original letter information relating to safeguarding allegation should be returned either via registered mail and clearly marked PCR2, or via email at pcr2@blackburn.anglican.org. Although Clayton House is currently closed mail is being collected weekly. If you are struggling with any aspect of this please do phone the Safeguarding Team on the numbers below. While we expect that the independent review of files will not start in May as originally planned, we still need to complete a list of known cases and we are unable to do this without your parish returns.

Thank you for all you do to make our churches a safe place for people to worship. May you all keep safe and well during the current Coronavirus pandemic.

Kind Regards

*Sharon Hassall on **07711 485170***

*Rachael Campion on **07817 550224***

*Julie Grimshaw on **07368 197069***

Serving our Communities

Utilities and Vulnerable People: Electricity NW and United Utilities both have registers for vulnerable/priority customers to register their details, so that if there is a power cut or water shut-off they are specifically checked on by the utility staff. They can register here:

<https://www.enwl.co.uk/power-cuts/priority-services-register/>

<https://www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/priority-services/>

Food Banks: We are hearing increasing numbers of reports of food banks running very low on stock. If you can donate, or encourage donations, please do so (there are collecting points in most supermarkets). Some foodbanks are now also allowing financial donations to be made.

EIG Insurance

EIG have issued an update relating to the Coronavirus pandemic which can be found here:

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/latest-news/coronavirus-temporary-cover-enhancements/>

*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,

Bishop Philip and the Coronavirus Task Group