Friday 27th March 2020 A letter from the Rector

My dear friends

This is the third letter I have written you in these troubling and anxious times and what would have seemed extraordinary even a couple of weeks ago is gradually settling into a normal pattern. I know that many of you are finding new ways of communicating and though we are all careful when answering the door to imagine a 2 metre (or should I say yard) gap between us our distance is not one of the heart.

For me the low point of the week was the email I received on Monday evening from the Archbishops and my Bishop to tell me that even clergy may not go to Church to pray for you and on your behalf. I think I we prepared for all kinds of scenarios but this one had not entered my head. I was surprised to experience a real anger alongside the shock and sense of loss. You will, I am sure, have experienced similar moments about different things – perhaps no longer being able to walk and collect your daily paper. I know from messages and telephone calls that this has shocked many people in our communities and not only those of us who are ‘church people’.

We are all learning a new way of living our lives and this includes new ways of being the family of God – the Church. Our curate, Catherine, has written you a guide to ‘Being Church at Home’ this contains a number of links to useful things to read and to look at on the internet as well as ……

For me one of the blessings this week has been of praying every day with people far away. Almost by accident I started to ‘broadcast’ a short morning reflection on Facebook – at first from the Abbey and now from home. Whoever dreamt!! Yet now I can pray with many more of you than might have come to Morning Prayer; my Mum, my sister and other members of my family as well as people from almost every community I have been a part of during my life. It has been an extraordinary blessing to pray alongside people with whom I last prayed as long as 40 years ago. Yesterday I was moved to tears to see that Jane, a leader and priest from Kenya who works for the NASIO trust had joined me. I’m not much of a broadcaster but I’m learning!! If you haven’t joined me yet you would be welcome. Prayers are ‘live’ at 8.30am on Facebook (search for Sue Booys) or you can catch up through the Abbey website a little later in the day.

If you aren’t familiar with some of this modern technology and would like to see what is out there to help keep the family together members of the Dorchester Volunteers have specifically volunteered to help with this (on the phone of course) so do give them a call. It’s amazing what’s out there – and how easy it is – you don’t need to be a perfect computer guru to keep in touch.

Things have been changing so fast that what I said last week about services is no longer possible so we have made another plan! Details of the plan for Sunday and the anticipated plan for Easter so that we can join together in worship are at the end of this letter. Please read this now so that you are well prepared for Sunday.

St. Paul wrote many letter and he never failed to remind the communities to whom he wrote that he was praying for them – I am doing just that, please remember this in the most difficult times and remember that just because you cannot see or hear God it doesn’t mean you are abandoned – rather God is like the mountaintop in the clouds – unchanging and present even when not apparent.

Please pray for me as I am for you

God Bless

Rev. Sue

Worship on Sunday

On Sunday there are services being streamed from all kinds of places including a service in which all three Bishops will take part. You can find details of this and some other services as well as all kinds of other helpful advice in the guide that Catherine (our curate) had made for us – ‘Being Church at Home’ which is also attached to this email.

This Sunday (29th March) I shall be experimenting with a different kind of service – you will be able to join in with us on your computer LIVE at 10.30am. The service will be broadcast from the Rectory but there will be readers and intercessors joining us from their own homes and you will be able to see pictures of all the people taking part. There will be a service sheet for you to follow and the Weekly Pew Sheet is already on A Church Near You websites. There is room for 100 people in this ‘Church in your sitting room’. To join in you need to follow this link from your internet browser by clicking on it or cutting and pasting <https://zoom.us/j/936879134?pwd=YjhReDFIbHArNlFSakZVM0laOEkyUT09>

If you want to try this out I will be hosting a Zoom practice on this link on Saturday at 5pm. I’ll be by the computer with a cup of tea and you can join this meeting to make sure you know how things will work on Sunday and for a chat. I look forward to seeing you. If you’d like someone to talk you through this on the phone instead just give us a call! The link for Saturday teatime is <https://zoom.us/j/587178804?pwd=ZU5CZkpObUtISnlsT3ZsN0UzcDZsZz09>

On Palm Sunday we will try a Live-streamed service – this has more limited capacity for joining in but the quality may be better. One reason for doing this two different ways is to help decide which will be the best type of service to hold on Easter Day.

On Good Friday we will broadcast devotions with addresses from the Team Clergy between 12 noon and 3pm. There will be an order of service to go with this as well as some images and music. More details of how and where to find these will be published on websites and sent via email as we discover the best way to do these things.

It is, of course, possible that Guidance will change as the weeks go on for that reason we won’t send or post firm details until we are really clear what is happening.