

8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear All,

**'The next step on a journey.....'**

It was a real pleasure to be able to worship in Dorchester Abbey last Sunday, welcoming people to worship with us in person and online. Strangely the congregation in the Abbey was not the normal Abbey family but a gathering of people from the Toot Baldon community, from the families of those who lost their lives in the Air Crash in 1965, from the Parachute Regimental Associations and from the RAF Airborne Delivery Wing. We continue to exist in unusual times.

The Bishop of London acknowledged this in her statement on the return to public worship in our churches, she wrote, **"We will not be returning to normality overnight - this is the next step on a journey"**. Our priority therefore as we plan to return to worship in our churches is to continue to do everything we can to limit the spread of the virus to protect each other, especially the most vulnerable in our communities. It would also be a shame if we forgot all that we have learned during the lockdown about the value of being 'better together'.

The challenge before us now is to take the next steps carefully and safely, which means that for the next few months we will still be finding our way on the journey. Our plans will evolve and respond to our experience and we may have to try a few things before we find the right path forward; your help with this will be invaluable.

Here's what you can do to help as we discern the way forward

- ❖ Be patient with your clergy! You may not get to attend worship in the church of your first choice as in our smaller churches we may not be able to accommodate everyone safely on a Sunday morning for a Communion service
- ❖ Be prepared to travel to a service in another church across the Team. If we have more requests to attend a service in one church than we can accommodate, we will always offer a Communion service in another church in the Team on that Sunday
- ❖ Be prepared to request a place at a service via email or a phone call and to share information as far as possible with any neighbours who do not have technology
- ❖ Give us feedback on your experience. We are a Team, the Body of Christ, we will grow together if we listen to one another and bear with one another in love

The Team clergy are committed to meeting the needs of all members of our communities, those remaining at home and those taking tentative steps back to familiar routines. Our journey together over the past few months has not been without its blessings, it is our prayer therefore that as we continue this journey we will **'trust in the Lord with all our heart and be not wise in our own sight'** (Proverbs 3:5).

God's blessing to you all.

Dorchester Team Clergy

