

Dear friends,

The previous issue of *The Messenger* was published in April, and due to Coronavirus crisis, we have had to stop its production for the past three months. During lockdown it would not have been safe for our faithful band of helpers to deliver them around the village and there wasn't much to report or advertise.

Now life is slowly returning to a new "normal" and we are getting used to social distancing, face masks and long queues outside shops. I am writing this at the start of the summer holidays, and parents (and children) will welcome a break from the demands of home schooling. Holidays plans involving more exotic destinations may have been put on hold, but we can go and meet outside and spend time with family and friends face to face. Phew, let's hope that the worst is truly over and be sensible in following government guidance, so that, all being well, schools will be able to go back in September as planned and we avoid a further spike and renewed closures.

We've all seen so many changes over the past few months. Some of you may have been furloughed, while others have not been so lucky and may have lost their jobs. I've learnt to use new technology in the form of Zoom online meetings, and while we can't meet face to face, these seem to work very well. After we needed to close our church buildings, we began to record online services and I know that we have reached many people that way. By the time you read this, we will, fingers crossed, have had our first service back in church. We will return at first to the biggest church in our benefice which is St Peter's, as this will help us with social distancing, but we will continue to put the services on Facebook and our website for those who are cautious about coming back to church just yet. Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals can now take place again in church, albeit with many restrictions. Do get in touch if you have any questions about what we call the *Occasional Offices* and we'll be happy to help. One of the biggest changes is that we are not allowed to sing in church. Music is such an important part of our services that it will be very challenging to adjust to the new format of services for the time being.

We won't be publishing a service rota this month as we don't know how things will be progressing. For the first few weeks, we have asked you to book if you wish to attend a service, as social distancing requirements limit the numbers who can attend. We are also required to keep contact details of those attending for three weeks and share those with Track and Trace if someone should test positive for coronavirus. In church we need to observe two-metre social distancing, and everyone needs to use hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the building. Other measures, such as the wearing of face coverings, are now also strongly recommended following the latest government and Church of England guidance. Our main aim is to keep everyone safe, so please don't attend a service if you are in any way unwell.

Details about services and other events will be published on the church website, the Facebook pages for St Peter's and Holy Innocents' Church, and also on our noticeboards. Information will also be published in our weekly pew sheet and a few copies can be found in the church porch. If we can help in any way, please do get in touch with me or with our churchwardens, Tim and Angela; contact details can be found on the inside front cover. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Yours in Christ, Manette