

Pandemic Pastoral Letter #16 | 25th April 2021

When they had entered [Jerusalem], they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Acts 1:12-14, NRSV

Dear «Forenames»,

By early May we will for a third, and I hope final time, reopen our buildings and resume face to face worship. We have had quite a journey these last months, and I want to record my thanks to our Transition Oversight Teams who I have had the privilege of working with this last year to formulate and implement the many aspects of risk assessment and oversight necessary to make our buildings and gatherings as safe as we can for all of us. THANK YOU TO YOU ALL.

We have begun to emerge from lockdown as we journey through the Easter season. As we reflect on the post-resurrection stories of scripture our lectionary readings include passages from Acts – reminding us that the story of the transforming life of Jesus does not end in the gospels, but continues on in those Jesus calls.

Any mention of Acts, especially at this time of year, points us towards Pentecost, with the events we read of in Acts 2 often dubbed the ‘birthday of the church’. It is a wonderful narrative that reminds us of the transforming power of God’s Spirit.

What Acts also tells us is something we have perhaps failed to always note. Acts begins not with the Spirit outpoured, but in Acts 1 where the followers of ‘The Way’ (‘Christian’ isn’t a label that existed at this stage of history!) were waiting and praying with faithful expectancy. They were seeking God despite their uncertainty around what it meant to be followers of Jesus in their day.

As we begin to approach Pentecost, emerge from lockdown, and resume face to face worship, I feel compelled to ask us all to engage afresh in the spiritual practice of faithful expectancy, just as the followers of ‘The Way’ did. We need to seek God’s revelation to us of what it means to be Christians in our day. What it means to be church – and to be ready and expectant for God’s Spirit to be outpoured in perhaps unexpected ways.

In peace & hope, Rev Dan

Worshipping Together Booklets, Prayer Guide

Your Worshipping Together booklet for May is enclosed, along with a prayer guide for the month. Our thanks to Debbie Dean for preparing this for us.

Digital Worship

We continue to encourage you to Worshipping Together as works for you at home, and/or join **Together, each Sunday at 9am** where the service will be led by Dan and team. Connection details, as always, included over the page.

We will also continue to stream a service from Felpham each week at **10:30am**, again available by phone and zoom, joining instructions over the page.

Zoom Coffee

Every **Wednesday at 10am** you can join our zoom and phone-in coffee morning, hosted by Lynne James, and accessed via the Together channel. Bring your favourite brew, biscuit, or cake of your choice and enjoy chance to share fellowship with each other. All welcome.

Small Meet up's

We continue to encourage you to meet together in small groups – which currently means groups of 6 / 2 households. This is a great way of enjoying the sun, sharing fellowship together and beginning to gently build confidence for those who may be feeling anxious about going out.

You could also consider a mini time of fellowship to discuss faith and/or a bible passage. If you feel up for it, please take the opportunity to build one another up in love as we live as disciples together – while also keeping as safe as you can!

Dan's Ordination

After a long delay, Dan's ordination is now scheduled for Saturday June 19th at 3pm. Dan is due to be ordained in Reading, in one of 6 venues where ordinations will happen simultaneously for his cohort of ordinands.

The intention is for these services to, hopefully, be live streamed, and/or recorded. It is unlikely that many tickets will be available to the public due to ongoing covid mitigations, but by early May we hope this will become clearer.

COVID-19 - Update on Transition & Future Planning

As we begin May, all 3 buildings will have reopened, and we will have resumed face to face worship. Until Step 3 of the roadmap, beyond face-to-face worship and some youth and children's activities, we are restricted from resuming much other activity.

At the present time there is a lack of clarity and detail from the government on what will/won't change for us and our varied range of activities in steps 3 and 4. We are fairly certain more activity will be permitted to resume (within appropriate Risk Assessment), but cannot be certain until guidance is released, which is usually a few days before the step-change.

The waiting is frustrating, but we believe may be worthwhile because the government is currently undertaking research to see what sort of mitigations (such as social distancing, face coverings, singing) may or may not continue beyond step 3/4 of the roadmap.

Our TOT teams are minded to be pragmatic in not investing lots of time and energy working on detailed planning for step 3 and beyond until things become a bit more clear, because without the clarity, Risk Assessments cannot be properly worked through.

Our TOT teams continue to monitor all guidance and are always ready to welcome and speak with group leaders who are wanting to explore running an activity in our buildings, now or in future weeks.

Bognor Regis: Our oversight team have put arrangements in place to resume face to face worship from 2nd May. Updated guidance is enclosed. Please take particular note of the key updates to guidance in [purple](#).

Felpham: guidance for face to face worship remains as previous distributed.

Westergate: guidance for face to face worship remains as previous distributed.

Continuing Oversight and feedback

All arrangements will continue to be under review based on the ongoing picture of the pandemic, both locally and nationally.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, now or in the weeks ahead, please contact a church leader or Rev Dan.

Worship in May

The below summarises the circuit plan for our section of the circuit for May, with opportunities for worship by phone, online and face to face.

May 2021	2 nd	9 th	16 th	23 rd <i>Pentecost</i>	30 th <i>Trinity Sunday</i>
Together 9am <i>Zoom and Phone</i>	Dan Balsdon & team	Dan Balsdon & team	Dan Balsdon & team	Dan Balsdon & team	Dan Balsdon & team
Morning Worship @ 10:30am Bognor Regis	Dan Balsdon	Margaret Thompson	Wendy Corney	Dan Balsdon <i>Communion</i>	Tony Brazier
Morning Worship @ 10:30am Streamed by zoom and phone + Face to Face @ Felpham	Joyce Stroud	Dan Balsdon <i>Communion</i>	Adam Cook	Lynne James	Liz Bates
Morning Worship @ 10:30am Westergate	David Booth	---	Dan Balsdon	Malcolm Lindo	Dan Balsdon <i>Communion</i>

Together Channel Details

All services will be held on our shared Together Channel

access details for phone and/or zoom below:

Join Via Telephone

the cost of the call will be equivalent to your standard rate as per your telephone bill.

1. Call **one** of the Dial in by phone numbers from a mobile or landline.

It shouldn't matter which number you call, occasionally one doesn't work, if this happens for you, hang up and try a different number.

📞 **0203 481 5237**

📞 **0203 481 5240**

📞 **0203 051 2874**

📞 **0203 901 7895**

📞 **0131 460 1196**

2. When asked enter the meeting ID. For **Together** this is **878 7997 8475** and press **#**

3. (optional) You will be offered opportunity to add a participant ID, you can skip this step by pressing **#**

4. When asked enter the meeting password. For **Together** this is **473352**

Telephone Controls when in a call.

Get the attention of the host by pressing * 9

Mute/Unmute by pressing * 6

Join Via Zoom (on desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone)

1. Visit <https://zoom.us/> and click 'Join a meeting' – or open the zoom app.

2. Enter the Meeting ID: **878 7997 8475** press enter/return

3. Enter the meeting Password: **473352** press enter/return