

The Four Ways Mission Community

St James, Swimbridge | The Holy Name, Gunn | St Paul, Landkey | St Peter, West Buckland | St Michael, East Buckland

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to the latest letter to our churches in which we update you on news from our Mission Community and the Diocese.

As you all know, we are now holding services in our churches again. At the moment, we are doing Morning Prayer and not full Communion: our PCCs and many of our congregation members still feel a little uneasy regarding the Communion service and the difficulty of social distancing and handling of the elements to avoid cross-contamination.

We are listening to you and taking that into account, so until we feel with you that it is now safe to offer Communion, we will stay with Morning Prayer. I am still broadcasting a Communion service on Wednesday morning so you can join me at that service on our Facebook page Mission Prayer Programme.

The link to Mission Prayer is <https://www.facebook.com/mission.prayerprogramme>

We have been streaming live from our services on a Sunday and they are being watched by so many: at our Landkey service we had over 300 people join us. This is a wonderful advancement for us in our outreach and mission: after all, our main job before anything else is to proclaim the good news to as many as we can.

We are examining the possibility of adding internet connections and live stream cameras to our churches so that we can do a better, more professional, job and hopefully attract larger groups of people. This would also help develop better services for people who have weddings and funerals in our churches. Those unable to attend could view the service online, bringing much joy to many. I hope that you will support us in this effort.

I need once again to thank our wardens who are working in very restricted conditions to maintain the churches and keep them Covid safe for all of us.

Our PCCs are trying all manner of ingenious ways to keep our buildings open for the future. We are experiencing many challenges and are desperate to keep the long term opening of our church buildings viable. Our finances are depleted and we are trying to focus on the future, doing things to keep us open not only as a church but for the communities that we serve.

The whole church throughout the country is in the same position as us, however: we are not alone. With faith, determination and looking forward to growing, we will survive. Like every other organisation, change is upon us: if we don't change to meet the new way of doing things all our church buildings are under threat.

Have you ever seen that old poster "we need you!"? Well that needs to be put on our church doors! We need you, we need our communities to work with us, we need to adapt to meet the world as it is

today in all its technological wonder - or nightmare which ever view you take of it! Change and growth are our only way of securing a bright future. If we do it with prayer, if we do it for God's purposes, not our own, we will succeed.

So, we have been challenged. We have been challenged to grow. We have been challenged to do new things. We have been challenged to adapt. So far, we are meeting the challenges, but we must move ever forward: not stand still, not go backwards. We walk with God and in him nothing is impossible.

May God's blessing be with each of you this day and every day.

Fr Shaun