

St Bartholomew's Orford

The life of St Bartholomew's Church in 2020 was, as might be expected, shaped by the national Lockdown and Covid related restrictions of varying degrees of strictness in respect of how the Church could worship and minister. Our priority during this time has been to ensure that we could continue to worship together as best as possible whilst keeping everyone safe:

- During the first Lockdown (when churches were closed) we had weekly Sunday morning Zoom Morning Worship from my study
- As our churches were able to open up for limited numbers of Sunday worshippers, ensuring that the Sunday 9am Holy Communion Service from Orford was also broadcast on Zoom, as was the Wednesday Evening Prayer service.
- Ensuring that St Bartholomew's Church had in place the required Covid related safeguarding procedures.

In order to achieve this, I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to Graeme Kay (Orford) and Richard Wilson (Tunstall) for providing the necessary technical expertise. Feedback from people is that they like the option of Zoom worship as they can attend even when unwell or if the weather is bad; therefore, having the continued Zooming of our services going forward is important.

Music has continued to play an important part in our worship during Lockdown, even though congregational singing inside has not been possible. We all greatly appreciate the talents of Adrian our organist, Graeme our music director, and our highly skilled and enthusiastic choir

Post Lockdown 1 the church has been open for private prayer on Sunday and Wednesday every week, and from late May 2021 will be open on a daily basis. Special thanks are due to Caroline Gill our PCC Secretary for ensuring the church was a safe place for those visiting and attending services.

The majority of funerals conducted in Orford and across the Benefice over the past year have been simple services in church or graveside services. Interestingly the feedback from many families is they have found this type of service comforting and very personal. Most weddings were rearranged to mid-2021 onwards due to the ongoing and changing Covid Pandemic regulations.

As a church and across the Wilford Benefice we take safeguarding extremely seriously, and I am delighted that I was delighted that Paula Kerr kindly agreed to take up the very important role of Benefice Safeguarding Officer, assisted by Linda Cooper as Safeguarding Administrator.

A 'Nativity Treasure Hunt' was organised around Orford in December for children; thanks to all those shops and households who displayed characters. The families taking part all enjoyed it. We continue to have good relations with Orford School, where I am a Governor. Although in-school assemblies have not been possible due to Covid related restriction, I have been recording Bible stories and assemblies (thanks again to Graeme for the filming) which are emailed to the school and then to parents. The whole school also came down for a Christmas service at St Bartholomew's (sadly no singing allowed) which was broadcast on Zoom to families, with over 70 people attending remotely. Special thanks are due to Gemma Cannon (Senior Leader) and Katie Butler (Head teacher) for their willingness to work with the church.

As with many organisations, we have had to adjust to a drop in income in 2020. To help address this we now have a contactless giving machine in church and are setting up a 'Friends of St Bartholomew's Church'. I would like to thank the people of Orford and Gedgrave for the support shown to the church.

With all blessings

GDTulk

Rvd Giles D Tulk - Team Rector