

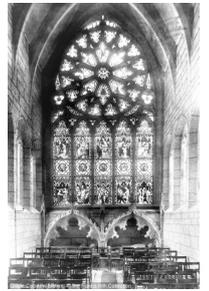
# Benefice of Minchinhampton with Box and Amberley

**The Revd Canon Howard Gilbert**

The Rectory  
Butt Street  
Minchinhampton  
GL6 9JP

Telephone: 01453 882289

[rector@minchchurch.org.uk](mailto:rector@minchchurch.org.uk)  
[www.minchchurch.org.uk](http://www.minchchurch.org.uk)



20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Friend,

We are living in unsettling, if not disturbing times. The church needs to be there for all our community, whilst remaining cautious and trying to be positive. We must engage in new ways, now so many are in isolation and the church has suspended public acts of worship. And may I say that, thus far, all those I have visited and everyone I am bumping into in town, have been remarkably cheerful!

**Archbishop Justin Welby** has called upon the Church of England, not to “shut up shop”, but face this challenge by becoming a radically different kind of church, rooted in prayer and serving others. May I assure you that we are actively working this out, pastorally and prayerfully, whilst trying to serve the needs of our community.

## **Practical Community Care**

Our first priority has been to set up a local support group, with the Baptist Church, the School and Minchkins. This Minchinhampton Coronavirus Response Group now has over 60 volunteers, and if you need anything please do call our parish office (Christine is on 01453 889004.), or email the team directly on [minchcrg@gmail.com](mailto:minchcrg@gmail.com). If you live in Minchinhampton you should by now have received a flyer about this, and you may also be aware that there are similar groups functioning in Box and Amberley that we could put you in touch with if you live there.

## **Prayer and Worship**

I shall be saying **Morning Prayer at 9am and Evening Prayer at 5pm** and will ring the tolling bell so our community knows they are being prayed for. You might like to pray at the same time, wherever you are. You could do this simply by lighting a candle and saying the Lord's Prayer. Or you might like to use a prayer that is more involved, either using the enclosed office of Morning Prayer or using some of the resources on our website, if you have the internet.

On **Sundays at 10am** I shall be saying a simple communion service. Please do pray where you are, at the same time as the rest of our congregation around the parish, as we celebrate the hope of Resurrection each Sunday. If you have access, our website ([www.minchchurch.org.uk](http://www.minchchurch.org.uk)) will have the readings for the day, as well as other resources you might use at home. If you don't have access to this, or would like to do something simpler, you might like to start by lighting a candle and saying your prayers, concluding with the Lord's Prayer. You might then like to read 1 Corinthians 11 or John 6 before consuming a piece of bread and/or sipping some wine, in communion with Christians elsewhere in this parish and around the world.

## **Pastoral Care**

You may well be hoping for some pastoral or spiritual support at this time. The clergy and Pastoral Care Team will be spending an increasing amount of our time telephoning our people. However, I would be very grateful if you would let Christine in the office know if you (or someone you know) would particularly like a telephone call and we will make you a priority. It would be such a shame if we were all very British about this and people got missed out because they didn't say something! Christine is on 01453 889004.

## **Our church is open for personal prayer**

We are in the process of setting up a prayer station, which will be regularly cleaned. We also have The Stations of the Cross set up, and as you enter the church there are red booklets for you to pray with the stations of the cross.

And finally, please remember:

We are not people of fear:

we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety:

we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.

We are not people of greed:

we are people of generosity.

We are the people God,

giving and loving,

wherever we are,

whatever it costs

For as long as it takes

wherever God calls us.

Yours,

***Howard***

Rector