

OCTOBER 2020:

Bishop Christopher ordains deacons and priests at nine separate services, to fit in with Covid guidance about limits on congregation sizes (including Mike Moritz, right). Plans to license Readers the same way are affected by the November lockdown.



NOVEMBER 2020:

Churches can remain open in the November lockdown, meaning clergy and musicians can live-stream services from inside the building. Churches embrace creative ways to mark Christmas, such as this Nativity scene in All Saints Church, Botley (right).



JANUARY 2021:

Congregations can meet in church during the third lockdown, but most churches choose to stick to live-streaming services between January and March 2021, to help keep people safe during the second wave of the virus.



APRIL 2021:

The roadmap sees Covid restrictions beginning to lift. Churches start opening for in-person worship during Holy Week or afterwards. Worshippers can sing outside together (left). A small group of singers can now lead worship inside.

community here are so amazing. They always donate generously at Harvest, and have done so again, even though I'm sure that some of them appreciate themselves what it is to be in need."

Churches from across Portsmouth worked together to help feed those in need on three separate occasions – with a new initiative for Harvest 2020 alongside the annual campaigns in the run-up to Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021. Christians used their Harvest celebrations to gather food and supplies and donate them to those in need via the 'With Thankful Hearts' campaign. It involved the city council, voluntary groups, charities, the News and those who run Foodbanks.

During Advent, those churches took part in the annual Churches Homeless Action campaign to buy vouchers for the homeless and vulnerable – so they can buy Christmas gifts they might not otherwise receive. Thousands of pounds were raised via the 'Comfort and Joy' campaign.

And the annual project to collect chocolate Easter eggs for needy families meant more than 500 eggs could be given out as an Easter treat, along with piles of seeds and gardening equipment. They were distributed via the charities the Roberts Centre and Stop Domestic Abuse.

Mel Goddard, family services manager for the Roberts Centre,

Families grateful for weddings and funerals



Steph Little and Tom Martin

OUR churches have gone the extra mile to ensure weddings and funerals go ahead meaningfully, despite Covid restrictions.

Steph Little and Tom Martin were due to get married at St Faith's, Lee-on-Solent, on July 4, 2020, but initially postponed their wedding for until 2021.

When the government unexpectedly allowed small weddings to go ahead from that date, they decided to go ahead – but only had one week to organise it. They've thanked the clergy and team at St Faith's who obtained a Common Licence and moved the furniture so Steph's dad could walk her down the aisle in a socially-distanced way.

The pair are both paramedics

in London and had been on the frontline during the pandemic.

Our clergy also found sensitive ways to help families to mourn their loved ones, despite the limited attendance allowed at funerals.

When Fred Fryatt died last year aged 99, few members of his family could attend because of underlying health conditions.

His daughter, Elaine Poulton, of Widley, arranged for the hearse to pause for two minutes outside her house. The vicar taking the funeral, the Rev Andy Wilson from Christ Church, offered to be with them to say some prayers at that point.

It meant nine family members could pay their respects as they stood outside the house.

Church, Gosport, raised £680 to help feed hungry families in Gosport via a Christmas appeal for Crisis Food Gosport. Added together with the money that was raised for the charity at Harvest-time, generous worshippers there raised a total of £1,000. The cash was spent by Crisis Food Gosport on special Christmas hampers for needy Gosport families.

Meanwhile, our churches also learnt quickly how to broadcast worship after churches were closed during the first lockdown.

Clergy often broadcast from their own homes initially, but they

said: "We've been blown away by the quantities involved. Everyone is going through difficult times, but it's good to see that so many people still want to help others."

Worshippers from **Holy Trinity and St Columba Churches in Fareham** helped to deliver meals to vulnerable families on behalf of their local school during the first lockdown.

They initially helped to deliver daily packed lunches to around 50 pupils from St Columba C of E Academy who would have qualified for free school meals, if schools had been open. Then they

delivered weekly food and learning parcels to these families.

Headteacher Tracey Marsh said: "We have been absolutely overwhelmed by the support of the local church through this difficult time."

The Foodbank run by **Harbour Church** at St George's, Portsea, has also been open throughout the pandemic. Volunteers handed out food to visitors, and took packages to vulnerable families, those who were isolating, and the victims of domestic abuse.

Churchgoers at **Holy Trinity**

Filmed monologues told the story of Christmas and Easter

ACTORS and writers found an innovative way to tell the stories behind Christmas and Easter during lockdown.

The Havant Passion Play group filmed a series of monologues, telling the stories of Jesus's birth, death and resurrection via the accounts of key eyewitnesses.

They shared a different film on 26 successive days during December 2020, and shared another 12 during Holy Week 2021.

Zoe Skinner, a Reader at St John's Church, Rowlands Castle, played Mary, the mother of Jesus, during the 'Road to Easter' series of films. She had previously acted in the Passion Plays staged in Havant Park in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

She said: "I hadn't acted before the first Passion Play, but I do really enjoy it. I used to work as a teacher, so I know how stand up and talk in public.

"Although it's the Covid restrictions that have prompted us to record performances one person at a time, I do think by sharing it digitally we are reaching people who wouldn't have come along to



Zoe Skinner performs as Mary

Havant Park." The films produced by the ecumenical group can still be seen on www.havantpassionplay.org.uk.

could broadcast from church in the second and third lockdowns.

Even as worshippers began attending physically again this spring, churches have continued to live-stream services, allowing those who might not normally go to church to

engage with worship.

'Hybrid church' has involved worship leaders learning to engage both with those in the building and those watching from home. Find out more on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/digitalworship