

Letter from Revd David

The fact is that we all welcome anything that puts a smile on our faces at the moment, don't we! Levels of confusion and anxiety, coupled with rising feelings of frustration and fear are running high throughout our community at this time and our children are not immune, picking up on everything that is said and broadcast about 'the germ'. I have been humbled by the very real and obvious dedication of everyone in our school who are working so hard to maintain a 'calm and happy' learning environment where every child continues to flourish in a safe and positive environment. A huge thank you to all staff and volunteers at our school.

It was such a joy to welcome the new Robins into St Mike's earlier this week as we welcomed them to the both to their new school and church. As time goes by, St Mike's will become not only familiar to them, but they will enjoy visiting us for class and school events. But even this is not easy, with the latest guidance not permitting visits to community spaces including churches. So, I am especially pleased that we welcomed the Robins and introduced them to 'Mince'. You will have to ask them who Mince is!

Working to a coordinated Collective Worship Plan across the Federation, I continue to visit all classes through the week for their Collective Worship. As is the custom, I always take something related to the theme for the day in my bright and sparkly bag. Already I've taken the biggest and smallest bibles in the church (used as early as 1847), a box of tissues and a cabbage. We have great fun as we discover stories in the Bible which explain the importance of **Love, Respect and Compassion**, the Federation's Core Values. Sadly, no singing at present, but we all look forward to the day when in school and in Church we can all worship God in Song and I get to play the piano again!

Sadly, Remembrance Sunday will not be the same this year, with only six people permitted to gather at War Memorials to remember the fallen. However, we will NOT FORGET this year as we hang a 'FALL OF POPPIES' from the Church Tower (over 4,000 poppies have been handmade not only in the Parish, but across the world – a truly massive effort. I am sure that the Fall of Poppies will feature in our School Act of Remembrance somehow. WE are encouraging everyone to **PAINT** a poppy, **PLACE** it in their window and **PAUSE** at 11am on Remembrance Sunday to remember. The Children will be painting and displaying their own poppies to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Sadly, we have an outbreak of **dry rot** in the church, which along with the need to replace the whole nave floor, present us with significant challenges. Thank you to everyone who has completed and returned our **Community Questionnaire**. The results reveal a strong desire that our fabulous church building should be used for wider community activities without forgetting that we are first and foremost a place of worship in our community which keeps faith alive and hope strong.

We are interviewing for a Children and Families Minister later this month because we are totally committed to support families in our community. We hope that we can make an announcement very soon.

Finally, it has been a real disappointment to many that we have not been able to hold a more traditional Harvest Festival this year. I will be visiting school next week to Celebrate Harvest with each class. The school will notify you about what food items the children can bring in support of the LYNDHURST FOOD BANK. We can all help support this **IMPORTANT** community initiative by providing essential fresh and tinned food, toiletries and household items everytime we shop. For information, call **07485 489275**. **Items can be left in the Church Porch.** **THANK YOU** for everyone involved in supporting the vulnerable in our community, whatever their age.

Our Parish Churches in Lyndhurst, Emery Down and Minstead are committed to keep faith alive and hope strong across our communities in these most testing times. If we can help you, please get in touch via our website www.newforestparishes.com or Benefice Office. 02380 283175.

Encouraging Love, Respect and Compassion in the school and across our community,

Revd David

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