



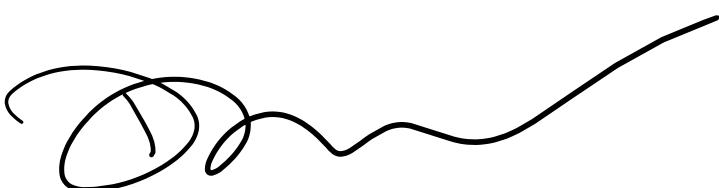
## A statement from the Manningtree Benefice

As you will know, church buildings across the nation have been closed since March, when the nation was asked to 'stay at home' in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the buildings have been closed, our church community remains active and alive; meeting together virtually each week on YouTube and via our telephone worship service, praying with one another, and seeking ways to serve our wider communities. The buildings are closed, but the church is not a building: it is a community of people who follow Jesus Christ.

However, we do have buildings, and for many these are special places which bring comfort and a sense of peace. We are, therefore, pleased that there is now the option for church buildings to be opened for private prayer and, where it can be facilitated, for small funerals.

Revd Dom, the Rector, recently met online with the Church Wardens to discuss whether, and how, we might be able to reopen our buildings in the light of this new guidance. We are happy to be able to tell you that, although the buildings remain closed at the present time, we are working hard towards being Covid secure, in line with government guidelines, so that we can open at least one building for a brief period each week for private prayer. We are unable at the present time to reopen for funerals, as we simply do not have enough people who are not in at-risk groups to facilitate this.

Although our discussions are at a very early stage, and there are many factors to consider, we are optimistic that we will be able to open one, or possibly both, of the buildings once a week for an hour or two by the beginning of August. We will continue to communicate with you all as we make progress towards this goal.



Revd Dom Turner, on behalf of the Wardens and PCCs.

11<sup>th</sup> June 2020.