**Article for parish magazines/websites/local press**

Parish priests should insert their parish and name in the highlighted points in the text.

Please send the amended text to your local press with an appropriate photograph. A well-lit photograph of you in front of your church would be ideal, ensuring you are observing all of the church guidelines with regard to coronavirus. Please also consider the tone you wish to set with the photograph you use.

**Caring for the bereaved in xxxxx**

The Church of England in **xx Grappenhall xx** is launching a programme of additional support for people experiencing a family bereavement.

Bereaved families can still arrange Church of England funerals and in addition, families will be offered the opportunity to organise a memorial or remembrance service at a time when we can freely meet again.

The **xx Revd Jane Proudfoot, Vicar of Grappenhall xx** says: “If you or someone you know has been recently bereaved, the Church of England is here for you. Everyone is welcome to arrange a Church of England funeral, or to plan a future memorial service at a time when we can meet again. Perhaps more importantly, vicars are there if you just want someone to listen to your story and the memories of the loved one you’ve lost. Talk to us, we can help.”

In normal times, a vicar would discuss with a bereaved family exactly how they would like to say goodbye. They would meet with them in person and discuss which music, Bible readings, and prayers they would like.

Much of this has not been able to happen because of restrictions limiting the length of a funeral. Social distancing measures have also reduced the number of people able to attend, and family members have been unable to hug and console each other, adding to their grief.

The Acting Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair says we are living through an incredibly difficult time but urges people to know that the Church is there for them, whatever they may have been through, wherever they are.

“We are living through a profound moment for our nation and the world, the effects of which will be felt for a long time to come.

“But the Church remains a constant Christian presence in every community and an anchor of hope for many. I would wish for everyone to know that the Church is here for you. Talk to us, we can help.

“Contact your local vicar if you would like to talk to us about arranging a funeral, memorial service or attending a remembrance service, and the Church is here for you if you simply want someone to listen to your story.”

Find your local church by searching online for, *A Church Near You.*