



with her husband and children, caught Covid-19.

“We followed all the rules. We were really careful, washing the shopping, washing our hands, but it is highly transmissible,” she said.

At first she experienced it as a bad bout of flu. ‘It was after 10 days that my breathing started to be affected, I was getting very short of breath. I spent about three days in bed laid on my front because it was really the only way I could breathe. I lay there and prayed.’ While the rest of her family recovered, for Revd Jo the illness continued for months with breathlessness, a recurring fever, fatigue and muscle pains.

Revd Jo is Team Vicar of Emmanuel and St Mary’s Church in Weymouth, Dorset. She had another set back to her health recently as a result of the virus, with the return of the fever.

‘Long Covid means that my body seems unable to regulate its temperature’ she said. “I’m fine cognitively but if I put too much physical demand on my body I get a high fever, fatigue, and my joints become stiff and ache.”

She pays tribute to the support of her congregations, colleagues, retired clergy and lay ministers, alongside the support from the Diocese of Salisbury.

A mental health nurse in her former profession and more used to being a care giver than a patient, Revd Jo says “living with Long Covid has highlighted the importance of well being, something that should be a priority for all clergy and lay ministers anyway.”

A group has been formed, meeting with the Bishop of London, to explore how best to support clergy with Long Covid and to look into the longer term impact on ministry and the care of congregations.

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