

21st July 2021

Dear Church family,

We're all exhausted with... almost everything presently!

Yet the invitation to work out the way forward for our community, parish and network remains. We are now free from restrictions - yet with freedom comes responsibility, as the local and national landscape remains concerning. So in this all, if there was ever a time to show love of neighbour by being wise, mindful, and considerate, it's now.

As restrictions have been lifted and Anglican permissions have been given for us to revert to pre-Covid practices at church, I just wanted to outline what may change and what will stay the same in the coming weeks. As a PCC we believe it is right to be cautious and wise; we have a duty of care to all to enable health, welcome and safety in our church buildings - just because we can do some things does not mean that we should from week one so, as Julie speaks about in the church email this week, 'step by step we go forward together' during the school summer holidays with a further review at the end of August. Matthew 22:36-40 rightly calls us to a care for neighbour and stranger. Together we step forward...

So, what will stay the same?

- The timings of our current services will stay the same - 0830 at St Pauls, 0930 online via Facebook or Youtube, and 1030 at St Peters. The use of hand sanitiser will be offered on entering the church building as currently with capacity for extra roomy seating on our return.
- Early Morning prayer on Wednesday at 8am will remain on zoom to encourage as many as can to attend and continue to facilitate those that work from home. You are very welcome!
- The content of our online service will remain the same until the end of the year and, as ever, Julie and I are so very grateful for those who faithfully serve the church through the all age or everyday faith slots and to Adam for putting it together whether on Youtube, Facebook or via DVD.
- The use of hand sanitiser will continue to be offered as you enter our church buildings, good ventilation of the church premises in both locations, and encouragement to enjoy talk together outside rather than inside as the weather allows.
- Church bibles and liturgy books as needed will be reintroduced.
- Lateral flow testing is now part of our now-normal and so despite their lack of accuracy, I will do a lateral flow test every Saturday so that I know I am safe to better serve you each weekend.

What will be different

- We can sing in church! We were thrilled to do this on Monday night together..
- It will be a matter of personal choice whether you wear a mask inside the building or sit physically distanced in your household or bubble; personal choices will be respected and encouraged so, to help us with seating could you let Sue know via the office if you wish to remain physically distanced when seated?
- One-way-systems in our buildings will no longer be in use.
- Communion will continue to be offered at 0830 but now by intinction where I will dip the wafer into the wine and serve you, or offer a prayer of blessing.
- We are sadly not in a position to provide for children and youth separately until September although hope that there may be some pop-up events for families over the summer holidays.
- We will not be providing hospitality before or after church until September as part of our phased return.
- Communion will be restarted monthly in our 1030 gathered church in addition to weekly at 0830 on Sundays.
- Overflow will restart on the first Sunday of the month potentially at an earlier time.
- Three new life groups are being added to the range of our life of faith, including two daytime groups and so I'd ask you to prayerfully consider joining one if you're not already in one at present.
- Life groups can meet indoors at the group's discretion and agreement; the church buildings also able to be used for those who would wish a larger space than that offered in a home - please contact Sue at office@stph.org.uk about this.

**I trust this is helpful, as we grow back together!
As we listen to God, love & serve Him in this His world.**

Your prayerful part in our church life is so precious...

Sincerest thanks for you...

Johnny

PSALM 48:4