

Next steps for the Parish of St Mary's – Public worship

We are delighted to now be in a position to share with you our plans for re-opening our churches for public worship.

I am sure you are aware that the guidance and regulations are constantly developing and we will monitor and review regularly what we are doing and let you know of significant changes.

In moving forward it is important to recognise and value what has worked well over the last few weeks and what we have learnt about ourselves and our ministry as the Body of Christ.

It is also important that any changes are introduced carefully and in a manageable way which also helps everyone to transition from our current way of life to the widely proclaimed 'new normal'.

In doing this we need to acknowledge and give thanks for all who have worked together to ensure our principles of **'prayer, worship and care'** have been sustained, nurtured and shared.

The Ministry Team has been richly supported by the other Parish staff, musicians and other volunteers. It is envisaged that this mutual and interdependent model will continue as we face forthcoming challenges, and shape the way we work into the future.

The most important thing is that we will do all we can to ensure that those who share in worship in the churches feel as safe as they can.

It is strongly recommended that everyone follows whatever the Government guidance is for them as individuals and what they should do in terms of meeting with others etc.

People of worship

The importance and the value of **'Christ in our Homes'** for many is recognised and the need to sustain this for those unable to be at Church or share in public worship, and to sustain it for those for whom it has become part of their life of prayer and worship.

We will continue **streamed services at these times:**

- **Sunday 10am from St Mary's Church and Wednesday at Noon**
- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from the Vicarage at Noon**
- **Saturdays will be replaced by Canon Bruce's weekly reflection.**

Go to portseaparish.co.uk to pick up the links to the streamed services and service sheets.

Worship in Church

On July 5th St Mary's will hold an 8am and 10am Eucharist (the latter being streamed). We are limited with how many can attend (approx 50).

- **To help us in planning please could you let me know asap if you are intending to be at a service so we can plan accordingly and not have to ask people to not enter** (which we wish to avoid).

Please be aware the reality is that the re-opening will not yet be a return to what we were before – there will be no opportunity to gather socially and chat, or to sing, use service books etc.

If attending please :

- **enter by the West Door**, (or if needed via ramp at side door)
- **sanitise your hands**, and go **straight to a seat**.
- **Please respect other people and their space**.

Children are welcome, but there is no Children's area, or Young Church, and they must remain with their parent/carers and under their supervision. We are sorry that they cannot wander round the building.

We appreciate this is not ideal, but hope you understand. Likewise, the **Toilets will not be accessible** except in emergency. At the end of the service you will be invited to leave and guidance will be given.

Outside the Church you are encouraged to follow Government guidance on gatherings etc and not meet in groups of more than 6 (socially distanced) or 2 Households.

Then on **July 12th** we will extend this to introduce **All Saints**.

Finally on **July 19th** we will also open **St Faith's and St Wilfrid's**.

The purpose for this staggered introduction is to enable us to prepare the various buildings (currently only St Mary's is ready) and to enable the Ministry Team to develop appropriate services and assess each week what has been learnt.

We will be in touch with timings for those services (may not be the familiar ones) and our development of midweek services and prayer group opportunities.

People of Prayer :

The daily encouragement to **pause and pray at 9 & 5** will continue and there will be reminders of this in any newsletters, notices and social media postings.

We will also seek to maintain a newsletter with resources for prayer for those not on social media or the internet.

Daily Reflections – these will continue but the pattern will change and evolve.

Canon Bruce, will hopefully continue to give a reflection on Saturday – this will be streamed at Noon from July 11th and replace the Christ in our Home celebration on that day and following Saturdays.

Fr Bob will continue to provide a Wednesday reflection.

Other colleagues will share reflections using either their reflections from Sunday worship or other material.

We hope to include others in sharing a reflection.

People of care :

One of the strengths of the last few weeks has been the deepening of our relationships with God and with each other.

The pastoral care expressed in many ways through phone calls, emails, posted newsletters, social media etc has been highly appreciated and valued by many.

The approx fortnightly mailing will continue and we will continue to support and resource the Social media for St Mary's Church.

Home visiting by the Ministry Team is still not encouraged – as there is a risk that they could become carriers from one household to another.

It is suggested that they will offer those who are bereaved the option of meeting in the Churchyard, Vicarage Garden or similar.

In exceptional circumstances, where colleagues on the Ministry Team have agreed there is a clear pastoral need, the same will be offered to individuals.

It needs to be clear this will not be the norm and there should be no expectation of it by others in the congregations.

If you have any questions or concerns then please do not hesitate to raise them with myself or colleagues in the Ministry Team



With best wishes

Father Bob

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