

Greetings from all at St Mary's - especially from the Ministry Team!



It does not seem possible that we have arrived at the beginning of August. In many ways Parish Panto, Ash Wednesday and Mothering Sunday seem far distant memories, and in other ways as if only yesterday.

Those events also feel part of a very different world and it can sometimes feel one we are a long way from re-entering.

It has been a busy few weeks since we last shared a mailing with you and so there is a lot to update you on.

Our plan moving forward is that we will send a newsletter such as this once a month.



As you may be aware, we have continued to respond to the advice and guidance we are being given by Government, National Church and the Diocese.

Our principle aim in all that we are doing is to seek to provide as safe a space as possible for everyone to be able to Be with God, be with others and be with the rest of creation.

It has been good to begin to see familiar faces at services and in the churchyard, but at the same time we are very conscious of the fact that for others such things are still not possible.

We are trying to ensure we support everyone, whatever they are able, or not able, to do. **If we can help or support you please do let us know**



The situation at present is that **St Mary's is open every day for private prayers from 9am – Noon.**

Please follow the guidance; enter by the West Door and use the hand sanitiser; find a seat; and leave by the North Aisle Door.

There are **Eucharists at St Mary's on Sunday at 8am** (Book of Common Prayer) **and 10am** and at **St Faiths at 9am** and **St Wilfrid's at 4pm.**

There is also a celebration at **Noon on Wednesdays at St Mary's.** It will help us to **plan and prepare for these services if you could let me know in advance if you intend to be at them.**

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St Mary's currently has sufficient capacity for 80 (so far 55 has been the maximum attendance), but the other churches can only admit 20.

We don't want to have to turn people away at the door because we did not know they were coming and there is no space. We also need to keep a record for 'Track and Trace' of those attending.

Last weekend we received advice on Face Coverings. The 'strong' advice' from Church of England and Diocese is that everyone should wear a face covering at public worship. This is to reassure those who wish to attend that this is a 'safe' space.

The ministers will wear a visor to preside and preach and then wear a face covering to administer communion.

However the Prime Ministers as recently announced that from **8th August it will be a legal requirement to wear a face covering in a place of worship.**

Please do listen for clarification of any other changes. In the original advice there were clear exemptions from wearing a face mask listed by the Government which included –

- young children under the age of 11
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress

It is likely (but in the fast changing world we are in not certain!) these will continue to be permitted exceptions – again **please ask for latest advice from us if you are not sure.**

Please do use your own judgement as to whether this applies to you. If you see someone without a face covering please be aware that there may well be a good reason why they are not doing so, and avoid being 'judgemental'.

This is a difficult area, but I hope we can continue to seek to work together and do all we can to support each other and overcome any challenges and issues that arise. If you are uncomfortable or uncertain then please chat to one of my colleagues.

It is also important to note that in all of this we still need to maintain a 2m social distance, both inside and outside church and follow all guidance on hand washing and hygiene.

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We continue to seek to encourage all of us, wherever we are, to be a 'people of prayer'.

Please do find a way that you can join with us each day as we **pause and pray at 9am and 5pm.**

Perhaps, at those times simply be still and either light a candle, or read a short passage of scripture and be aware of Christ's presence with you as light in the darkness, and be aware of the love and support of all those praying with you at that time.



Also each day at **Noon** we are still sharing a **celebration of the Eucharist : 'Christ in our Homes'** streamed to our webpage (www.portseaparish.co.uk) or Facebook page.

If you have access to the **YouTube Channel on your TV** then you can also share in the celebrations by searching for the '[Portsea Parish](#)' videos and watch at any time.

(From 3rd to 14th August these will only be live streamed to You Tube – with a link posted on Facebook) Likewise, on **Sundays we are streaming the 10am from St Mary's.** If you want details or help to access please contact us.

Over the last few months we have suspended a 'public' prayer list – all requests for prayer have been used by the ministry team at 9am and 5pm.

With public worship now being held we will begin to re-introduce **our intercessions list.**

Initially to add a person or situation you would like us to pray for please contact one of the ministry team, or hand a note in at Church and we will then add people to our prayer lists (first name only). We will share the 'current' list each month in this newsletter.



We are ending our own daily reflections on the phone, but you can still access 'Daily Hope' from the National Church - a free call line with music, prayers and reflections.

To access please call **0800 804 8044**

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As the guidance has changed so have also been able to meet people in the Churchyard or in gardens – home visits by the clergy are still ‘discouraged’ as a rule.

If you would like the chance to meet outdoors for a coffee and a chat, then you will be welcome to St Mary’s Churchyard (outside the Vestry Hall) on Tuesday or Friday at 10am (weather permitting).

There are tables for groups of six to sit around (at social distance).



Likewise, we have trialled a social distance picnic with the help of Fratton Big Local.

There are flowers painted on the grass which have a central space of 2m and petals around the edge to use to sit in – upto 2 households or 6 people can sit on each flower.

The flowers are then separated by 4m to ensure good social distancing.



We would like to invite you to help us mark our **Patronal Festival on Aug 16th** to either a **lunchtime Picnic** (starting around Noon) or **Afternoon Tea and chat at 4pm.**

Then on **Monday 17th at 6.30pm Monday men** will hold an outdoor gathering also in the Churchyard.

With all of these outdoor gatherings it again helps if you can let us know if you intend to be there.



The Organ Project continues to prepare for the removal of the Organ pipes and the commencement of the restoration work. This will be in mid-October. This will entail the closure of the North Aisle so

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scaffolding can be erected (the pipes will be removed from above the Lady Altar) and stored in the aisle prior to removal to Nicholsons.

This will take about a month. The pipes will then be reinstalled around July next year. A temporary Organ has been arranged. The Project recently carried out interviews for two other key roles.

We are delighted to announce that Catherine Brentnall will begin to work with us as Volunteer co-ordinator. Catherine also works for Portsmouth Music Hub.

Alongside her and Matt the Committee have appointed Phillip Collins White as Press Manager.

Pip is well known to us and is looking forward to this opportunity to support the Parish and Project.

On a financial front we reported at the PCC that we are facing a current deficit each month as a Parish of between £3,000 and £5,000. Thank you to those who have sent in donations etc.

Likewise if you would like to support us in continuing to do all we are doing (including help to cover the cost of paper mailings to over 60 vulnerable and isolating people, and regular telephone contact with many more) and would like to make a donation, either send a cheque payable to 'St Mary's PCC' to the address below or please contact us for details on how best to do this.

If you are worried, or uncertain about anything, then do contact us or leave a message – contact details are at the end of this letter.

As we move forward, we will continue to keep in touch with you by sending a monthly email.

As always, I end by thanking all who are helping us as the community of faith (including you for your prayers and support) – and to reassure you of your thoughts and prayers at this time