

ST EDMUND'S, ALLESTREE  
PLAN FOR RE-OPENING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP ON 3 AUGUST 2020

The church was thoroughly cleaned after the end of the building work, and the cleaning regime has continued – a huge thanks to everyone involved. The required notices will be put in place by Peter and Caroline this week and the risk assessment (produced by me after a meeting with Michèle Aspinall, Julie Hutchinson and Chris Jack) was approved by Archdeacon Christopher on 21 July. St Matthew's reopened for Public Worship with a Communion service at 10 am on Sunday 19 July, so we have had two services there before starting at St Edmund's on Sunday 2 August (Communion at 10, led by Peter) and there will also be a service of Morning Prayer at St Matthew's led by Clive. 9 and 23 August will be Communion, 16 and 30 August will be Morning Prayer (led by Deborah). We will not be starting any other Sunday services until September at the earliest.

For Sunday 2 August, a simple Order of Service has been produced, and will be placed in pews before the service. The Noticesheet with readings etc will only be available on line. An Order of Service, using much of the material from the Order used in church, will be available on line as usual, along with the text of the sermon. In church, I will prepare the altar and communion vessels myself to reduce the risk of infection.

Do not come to church if you show any of the signs of Covid

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

If you experience symptoms after attending church, you must phone the Vicarage as well as reporting your symptoms to NHS Track and trace.

People at extra risk (which includes those over 70) are advised that they should stay at home as much as possible and minimise contact with those from other households. People defined as “extremely clinically vulnerable” should certainly not be attending public worship. Under no circumstances should people be sharing cars with those outside their household. (They can, if they wish, hire a taxi to and from church – we cannot offer lifts home).

Children are welcome with their families, but toys, colouring sheets and stamp cards are not provided. The Church Hall is not available, and no one else can be supervising the children or running children's groups in church.

The toilet will be open, and is clean and fresh.

Sunday 2 August should be food bank Sunday – I haven't yet worked out if we can cope with the black bags in church, or if we need to think about where we put them.

Chris & Elizabeth Jack will be the welcomers for the first Sunday. One will write down names and contact details of all those attending. This list will be locked in the safe after the service, and will only be used in the event of needing details for track and trace. A month after the service the names and numbers will be destroyed. We only have the right to request this information, if someone refuses to give it, they must still be allowed in – but I hope no-one would do this. We need to find couples for the rest of the month.

Face masks are strongly advised. I will be wearing one while near people before and after the

service, and when moving among people while distributing the sacrament. I do not plan to use one while leading worship as I think I am far enough away – I might change my mind.

People will be directed to their seats. This means that we can fill the church in the most efficient way. I hope people will accept this. Households can sit together, but there should be about 2 metres between separate people. This is going to reduce the numbers considerably. We will start with every other pew. Then two of the choir stalls, then one row of seats in the Lady Chapel.

It is possible that we will be full before everyone is in church. In which case people will have to decide whether they will come back for a service at 11. At St Matthew's we had 23 for the first Sunday and 30 for the second.

The organ will be played before the service. We will not be singing hymns, and the choir are not robing nor singing. I will start the service by lighting the Easter Candle, and we will have a quiet time which will include an act of remembrance for the many friends we have lost over the last few weeks. The service will be a pretty normal (!) communion service, I will ask someone to read the first lesson and lead the prayers, I will read the gospel and preach. We will not share the peace with physical contact.

A Collection will not be taken. The contactless machine is available, and plates will be placed by the door. A pile of gift aid envelopes will be provided, but pens can't be (bring your own!). Any cash taken will be placed in the safe for several days before it is counted and banked.

On the altar I will have a priest's wafer and a small amount of wine in a chalice. I will have enough wafers for the people in a ciborium with a lid on. I will use the prayer of consecration as normal – we believe the power of the Spirit is able to get through the lid and consecrate the wafers (but any germs I have will not reach the wafers). After making my own communion, I will sanitise my hands, put my mask on, remove the lid from the ciborium, and make my way around the church bringing communion to the people. I will place a wafer in your outstretched hand, doing my best not to touch you. If someone wants a blessing, I will make the sign of the cross over them. I may well stop and re-sanitise my hands as I move around church. David will be playing the organ while all this goes on, so I hope the silence will be prayerful rather than oppressive.

On returning to the altar, I will put some sacrament into the aumbry, and put the lid back on the ciborium so I can deal with any left-over wafers after the service. We will then end the service as normal.

If we have a congregation for a repeat service at 11, we will need the 10 am congregation to leave reasonably quickly. We will then need to tidy round and wipe pews etc before we start again. If (as expected) we are small in numbers we can be more relaxed and there will be time for conversation in church or outside at a social distance – but please make sure your conversations are not blocking the way out or causing problems for others.

We need to work out how we involve those unwilling or unable to get to church (and I am not criticising anyone) – one local church has said they are not re-opening their building until they have the technology available to livestream the service to everyone who cannot attend. Do we, at the very least, need to film worship and make it available later on a Sunday? Does

anyone have the skills to do this?

Your feedback is appreciated. If I disagree I will try not to snap back, but you know I'm not always a loveable human being when I am stressed (and I am stressed by all this). I appreciate your prayers.

The website and facebook are the best methods for getting information out – but if you (or anyone) is unsure, please phone Julie or myself on 01332 551404. Everything is fluid – it only takes me to start coughing on Saturday afternoon, and all this would become irrelevant.

The general Church of England guidance is

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Peter Barham  
26 July 2020