

ST MATTHEW'S, DARLEY ABBEY
PLAN FOR RE-OPENING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP ON 19 JULY 2020

The church was thoroughly cleaned before reopening for Private Prayer, and the cleaning regime has continued. The required notices are in place and the risk assessment (produced by myself, Peter Taylor and David Brierley (Wardens)) was approved by Archdeacon Christopher on 14 July. We plan to reopen for Public Worship with a Communion service at 10 am on Sunday 19 July. There will be another on Sunday 26 July. We hope that St Edmund's will re-open 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. August dates will be confirmed later. 30 August is a fifth Sunday, but there will not be a United Service. We will not be starting any other Sunday services until September at the earliest.

For Sunday 19 July, 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. If a family (or members of it) need to escape to the Fellowship Room, they are welcome to do so – but no one else can be supervising the children or running children's groups in church. (JACK, St Edmund's Junior Church, is meeting by zoom on Sunday 19 July, and others are (of course) most welcome to join – contact Peter for the password).

Toilets will be open, and are clean and fresh.

Entrance to church will be via the Fellowship Room doors (not the south door). A churchwarden (or deputy) 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.

Face masks are not mandatory. 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 on the south side, and one row on the north. Then one row on each side of the Chancel. Finally, if we have to, we could sit a few in the Fellowship Room where they can, at least, hear the service.

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. It might be that some of those already seated would be willing to leave, have a wander round the Park, and come back in an hour – we will have to see. I hope there will be charity in all this. If numbers are obviously a problem on the first Sunday, we will have to reconsider for following Sundays. Some churches are insisting on pre-booked tickets – my friend in Singapore tells me all church services are ticket-only.

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, Clive will 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 entry and exit. 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. Any St Edmund's envelopes left will be passed on in a week or two.

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. I will give you the wafer in silence – if I say “The body of Christ” and you reply “Amen” there is an infection risk to both of us. (A minimal risk, but still a risk). 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. John 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 via the south door (obviously those who cannot manage the steps will go through the west door). We will then need to tidy round and wipe pews etc before we start again. If 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.

I hope this works. We are one of the few churches in Derby that are physically worshipping in one of our church buildings this weekend. I hope it is the right decision. 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/sites/default/files/2020-07/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20conducting%20public%20worship%20v1.3.pdf>

Guidance on Communion is

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Coronavirus%20Advice%20on%20the%20Administration%20of%20Holy%20Communion%20v3.0.pdf>

Peter Barham
15 July 2020