

Corona Virus – Covid-19 Information

In view of the news that churches can open for some services, we are planning to reopen St. Bartholomew's on Sunday mornings from 12th July at 11:00am. The services we can offer are very different from what we have been used to. The following social distancing measures will apply for the protection of all. Please read and follow the guidelines below.

Church Services:

We will have a service at St. Bartholomew church each Sunday at 11:00am

There will be no midweek services, 8:00am services, baptism, wedding or funeral services across the team at the moment.

With the additional regulations covering school premises, we are unable to open St. George's or St. Thomas' churches for worship. This will be reviewed in September but whether services can resume at either or both of these churches then cannot be decided yet.

Please do not attend:

- If you have symptoms or a diagnosis of Covid-19 / Coronavirus
- If you are in a household where a member has symptoms or a diagnosis of Covid-19 / Coronavirus
- If you have been asked to isolate as part of a contact tracing programme

You may wish not to attend:

If you are in a high risk or vulnerable group

- If you are shielding and not leaving your house
- If you are in a clinically vulnerable group e.g. age 70+ with a history of chronic or long term breathing problems, diabetes, black or Asian background, on any immunosuppressive drugs
- If you are awaiting hospital treatment

Pattern of Services:

The services will not all be communion services but will also include Services of the Word.

Arriving at Church:

Please follow all the guidelines concerning social distancing and note that attendance will be limited.

- You may have to queue along the path from the lych gate to enter church at 2m / 6 feet intervals
- Entrance will be via the main door
- You will be asked to register so that we can have a contact tracing system in place. Attendance sheets are stored for 21 days and destroyed. This is NOT a school form attendance register.
- Alcohol gel will be available to clean your hands. Face coverings / masks are optional.
- You will be directed into church following the one way system
- **THERE WILL BE A CAP ON NUMBERS ATTENDING of about 50 people.** Once this is reached, we will have to turn people away and we may need to introduce a booking system to control attendance.

Within the Church:

Social distancing will be strictly observed.

- The layout of seats will look very different – do not try to move them.
- The Lady Chapel will not be available
- Doors will remain fixed open to avoid people touching door handles / door panels
- No books will be handed out
- There will be a table with service sheets. You will be invited to take one and you must take this home with you; please do not leave it behind.
- The offertory plate will also be on this table. There will be no offertory taken during the service.
- Please take a seat immediately – do not gather in groups to chat or block routes around the building
- Families may sit together but there must be a 2 seat gap between individuals / families.

Children / Young People's provision:

We are not able to offer this to comply with social distancing

- The toy box, children's books and soft play bags will not be available
- Families must sit together in church; gathering in the back room or narthex is NOT allowed.

The Service:

The form of the service will be very different to comply with Church of England guidelines.

As an example

- It is recommended that services are shorter
- Robes may not be worn
- There will be less movement during the services – no standing / sitting or processions
- Hymn singing is not allowed at any services; the choir will not be allowed to sing
- There may be only one or two readings
- A sermon may not be preached if printed on the pewsheets
- Sharing the peace is not allowed
- At communion services, only the bread will be administered; the altar rails will not be used and people will be advised to come forward in a distanced queue, receive and return to their seat following the one-way system in place

After the service:

We are not allowed to serve refreshments and you are asked to leave quickly.

- Please leave in a socially distanced manner following the one-way system and the designated exits
- Do not congregate to chat especially if this blocks exit routes and exit doors.
- You may gather in a socially distanced manner outside the building away from the doors for a chat

School Form Signing:

We are not able to complete registers for church attendance for school admissions at the moment

We are awaiting guidance from Church schools on this so that everyone is treated equally while churches are shut, services are restricted and attendance is limited.

Please contact us:

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 859251 carol.pharaoh@gmail.com

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 revawynne@gmail.com

Further Information:

Please see also the Parish website www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

Please see also the Church of England website

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

Or e-mail the Parish Office westhoughtonparish@outlook.com [NB not staffed 24 hours]
Please note that this is a rapidly changing situation which is being updated frequently. We will aim to provide the latest information available.

Edward McHale [Churchwarden] 10/07/2020 update