

St Mary the Virgin: Parish of East Preston with Kingston



from the Vicar:

Fr Andrew Perry

The Vicarage, 33 Vicarage Lane, East Preston Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 2SP

Wednesday, 1 July 2020

Dear All

No doubt you'll have heard in the news that places of worship are being allowed to re-open, with restrictions, from early July.

The government has issued detailed guidelines - which are here if you wish to consult them:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>

Here at St Mary's we are able to re-commence public worship from Monday 13 July 2020. Certain things will be different, and the re-opening will be structured carefully, and what follows are the details as we have them at this stage.

Starting on 13 July it is our intention to have a short, said Eucharist service every weekday, plus Sunday morning - this service we hope to livestream via Facebook.

Numbers in the building will be restricted. Given the small size of our church and the government's instruction of 2m social distancing we think we can accommodate a maximum of 15 households for each service. This might mean 15 individual people, or 15 couples, or households groups of more than 2 (any family group needs to fit into one pew) - or a combination of those possibilities: up to an absolute maximum of 30 people.

We think this will mean that everybody who normally takes communion in the parish will be able to take communion once a week - but not necessarily on a Sunday. The Sunday mass will be live streamed in order to reach and include as many people as possible.

We are planning to operate a "first come, first served" basis, and once the church is full no more people will be admitted for that service. With that in mind we ask people think about which day, or time might be most convenient - rather than all rush to St Mary's on Monday 13th!

To comply with the NHS Trace & Test service we will need to take the names and phone numbers of all those who attend worship in St Mary's, and we will need to keep these

details for 21 days and submit them to the Trace & Test service if required. This means there will be a “door keeper” to welcome you and take details as you come into church.

Pews have been roped off to ensure social distancing. Face coverings are not required: although you may wear one if you wish. Hand sanitiser will be available at the north door and must be used on the way in and out. We ask that people exercise common sense when coming in and out, greetings friends, taking their seats etc. and that social distancing is observed when queuing for communion.

Worship will not involve any singing. We will not physically share The Peace. Communion will be “in one kind” - ie just the bread (only the priest will consume the wine as well), which will be placed in the communicant’s hand. No words will be used at the point of communion. Holy water will not be available. There will be no collection: a plate will be available on the font for your offerings. Services will last approx half an hour. Votive prayer candles may still be lit before or after mass.

Services will be not dissimilar to our regular Thursday morning services. Sunday morning will be exactly the same - except that we will attempt to live-stream the service, so that as many people as possible can join in with the main act of worship in the parish. This is especially important for those whose shielding has been extended to August. There will be no Sunday Club on Sundays. Children will be the responsibility of the adults who bring them - there will be no “happy bags” or activities provided.

We are not encouraged to produce paper documents to share, so the green Ordinary Time Service books will be available as you come into church. Please take one WHICH NOW BECOMES YOURS. Write your name on it and *take it home with you: and bring it to use whenever you come to church*. At the end of the period of restrictions you can throw the booklet away and we will re-print books for all. An electronic version of the service will also be available if you would prefer to use that. The Notice Sheet will continue to be produced and distributed electronically each Sunday.

Proposed service times from 13 July:

Mondays 7pm
Tuesdays 10am
Wednesdays 7pm
Thursdays 10am
Fridays 10am
Sundays 10am

In addition we are hoping to be able to have the church building open during the mornings (9am to 12noon) for private prayer.

In the week starting 13 July Morning Prayer & Compline will still be live-streamed on Facebook as they are currently, but the following week these services will be scaled back.

Thank you for your patient understanding. We realise that these restrictions are inconvenient, but they are part of our necessary precaution to try and control the spread of the Coronavirus and protect one another.

On a positive note:

- The sacrament **will** now be available to us - after 3 months of practising Spiritual Communion, we can once again physically receive that grace of God. Hallelujah!
- If we see these restrictions in a positive light then they are a practical way of showing our love for one another.

I hope these notes make sense - please do get in touch if you have further questions, comments or queries.

It will be lovely to see you in person once again!

With all best wishes

F. Andrew Army.
