

9 January 2021

Dear Friends

We are indeed living in extraordinary times, and so sometimes this calls for extraordinary decisions... after much deliberation and seeking advice we've decided to

close St Mary's church with immediate effect.

This means there will be no services from now onwards (10 January services are cancelled), and the church will NOT be open for private prayer.

There is a worrying rise in cases in our area and an increasing number of our worshipping community are self isolating as the virus gets closer. I know this may come as a blow to some - and as a relief to others - but we think it is the right move to encourage the "stay at home" message and reduce the number of opportunities for the virus to spread.

The government are asking us to "behave as though we had the virus" (stay at home), and we think that closing St Mary's is a way of keeping people safer, so - bizarrely! - we are showing love for our community by staying away from each other!! These are the extraordinary times we are living in.

As in previous lockdowns we will go on line: Sunday mass will be live-streamed from the home of the clergy at 10am, and from Tuesday 12 January Morning Prayer will be live-streamed at 9am and Compline at 9pm.

We will re-instate the Virtual Coffee Morning on Zoom at 10am on Thursdays. The link will be available from one of the clergy.

We regret finding ourselves in this situation, but think that closing is the least bad option. We will keep the decision to lockdown under review as government advice changes.

And, of course, we will continue to pray for our community and all those affected in any way by Covid-19.

Stay safe.

Best wishes
Fr Andrew