

PCC News from the Meeting held on 7th June 2021

Thinking and Planning for Church beyond Covid restrictions

Thank you to everyone who responded to the email from the Rector which was hugely informative for our thinking and planning for Church beyond Covid restrictions. The PCC were faced with some very sobering facts and had to make some very difficult decisions.

The facts which influenced our decisions:-

- The regular 8am congregation is getting older and smaller (approx. nine people). This service is primarily only possible due to the loyalty, faithfulness and service of Malcolm Studholme (who is ably supported by a few of the congregation who act as sidespeople).
- The core congregation at 9.30am is also shrinking. There were only three people who indicated willingness to act as sidespeople, and without sidespeople we don't have chairs to sit on so it is not possible to have a service.

In addition, all other rotas were only just viable, despite the small core of very faithful people who have served over many years in these roles:-

- 8 people are willing to do readings – that's a monthly cycle, or bi-monthly if the same person reads both readings
 - 4 people are willing to do intercessions – again a monthly cycle
 - 7 people offered to do coffee – that's not quite a monthly cycle, unless only one person on duty each week
 - Junior Church – just about enough people to cover each week, but only for one age group, we need more if we are to cover a wide range of ages of children
- The regular 11.15am congregation is getting older and smaller (approx. 15 people) with all roles being performed by a small core of very faithful members:
 - 8 people willing to be sidespeople, but that includes people who are also leading services or acting as server during the service and you can't do both on the same day. So not quite enough to form a comfortable monthly rota.
 - 6 people who would do readings – so every third week, or six weeks if the same person reads both readings
 - 3 people willing to do intercessions (one of whom occasionally leads services) – so this would need boosting by clergy to ensure no more than a monthly requirement
 - Because of the overlap of people (11 in total, and we need 5 each week – 2 sides, 2 readings, 1 intercessions) we would need people to be willing to serve in one role or another every other week, and that would be too big a commitment for some.
 - The regular Wednesday 10.15am congregation is getting older and smaller (approx. 6-9 people). This service is primarily only possible because of the loyalty, faithfulness and service of Leslie Worrall and Roger Jackson.

The decisions made:-

Until September (or all social distancing requirements have been removed, if later than September)

We will continue with the pattern that has been established during pandemic

- 8am and 11.15am services will continue on alternate Sundays:-
 - 1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays – 8.00am BCP HC
 - 2nd Sunday – 11.15am MW, 4th Sunday – 11.15amHC
- 9.30am each week
 - 1st and 3rd Sundays – MW
 - 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays – HC
- Wed 10.15am HC each week

From September (or after all social distancing requirements have been removed, if later than September)

We will change the service pattern to try to rebuild, rejuvenate and strengthen the congregations. This will be reviewed after six months (around Easter 2022, or later if implemented later than September).

The new pattern will be:-

- 9.00am BCP HC at St Bartholomew's – every week
- 10.30am service every week:-
 - 1st Sunday – HC at St Barts
 - 2nd Sunday – All age at St Chads
 - 3rd Sunday – MW at St Barts
 - 4th Sunday – HC at St Chads
 - 5th Sunday – Baptism at St Barts – or HC if no baptism booked
- Wednesday 10.30am HC at St Chad's – every week

The PCC would encourage people to choose whatever services are going to work for them, so some people will choose to go to 10.30am whichever building it is in, others may choose to attend the earlier service or midweek service some weeks.

Having fewer services will mean that we have enough volunteers to make them possible. It will give us opportunities to get to know people from other congregations and increase fellowship. It should mean that there are more people present at each service which will be an encouragement for everyone.

The PCC have not taken these decisions lightly, and many options were explored. The pandemic has taken its toll and we need to move forward as positively as we can with our hearts set on working together to strengthen the community outreach which was so powerful during the first lockdown. Growing the kingdom of God is our primary aim, and we need to work together to do that.