

Christmas Message from Revd Mark Lucas - Rector St Botolph's & St Edmund's

Did Boris Johnson's announcement last week take you by surprise? Or were you organised, prepared, and ready to implement 'Plan B'? We now go back to compulsory wearing of masks in public places and working from home if we can. Some of us have never stopped wearing masks, others have delighted in exercising the freedom not to. And the prime minister is now facing a backbench rebellion from his libertarian colleagues. If our elected leaders cannot agree what hope do the rest of us have? As Christ's body here, I pray that we have a lot of hope in getting along. We have two laws to guide us:

1. The law of the land. We have ample instruction in the New Testament to obey our secular leaders. Look up Romans 13v1-2, Titus 3v1, 1 Peter 2v13-17, and you will see clear instruction. And remember, when these instructions were given the secular authorities were not democratically elected, benevolent leaders. So, we are under obligation to wear face coverings in church, unless we are exempt. There simply is no room for discussion on this.
2. We are called, as Christ's body, to care for each other. This can be hard at times, because there are many things over which we might disagree. Especially CoV restrictions. At one extreme, there are those who believe the whole thing is overblown, and those who wish to exercise their right to personal freedom (like Boris's backbenchers). At the other extreme there are those who are extremely anxious, and, of course, those who need to be especially careful because of existing health conditions. Most of us are somewhere in between. As God's people we need to respect one another's opinions and actions, unless God has specifically said otherwise. We must care for the weaker brothers and sisters (Romans 14), and we must also be mindful of one another (Philippians 2v1-3).

As a result, and after much discussion, we have decided that, in order for everyone to feel comfortable we will implement the following:

1. The old chancel 'safe' area will be retained for those who need to be careful. There will be more social distancing here than in the nave.
2. With the exception of those leading, face coverings must be worn by everyone in church unless, you have a valid exemption. They may not be removed for singing.
3. We encourage you all to take a *Lateral Flow* test before coming to a service.

Hopefully these measures will help us to be united. Please do respect them, whether you agree with them or not. The aim is to make St Botolph's a comfortable and safe place for everyone. I hope that these precautions enable you to enjoy a worry free and joyous Christmas. In a bleak world, Christmas brings real hope. After Christmas we will be running a short course (only three sessions) entitled 'Hope Explored' to consider what this hope really means. If you might be interested in joining in then send an email to hope@stbots.church and we'll let you know when it's starting.

God bless you this Christmas, and may you be filled with joy at the birth of the saviour.

Mark

St Botolph's Church Family News Christmas Day & The First & Second Sunday of Christmas 26th December 2021—2nd January 2022

Collect - Christmas Day

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Collect - The First Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Collect - The Second Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love that we may know the fullness of his joy; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Church Services 24th, 25th, 26th December & 2nd January

St Botolph's Church Barton Seagrave

- Christmas Eve 4.30pm Christingle Service
- Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight Praise & Celebration
- Christmas Day 10.00am Morning Service - Live Stream on YouTube
- 26th December 10.00am Sunday Morning Service - Live Stream on YouTube
- 2nd January 10.00am Sunday Morning Service - Live Stream on YouTube

St Edmund's Church Warkton

- Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight Praise & Celebration
- Christmas Day 9.00am Morning Service
- 2nd January 5.00pm Evening Prayer

(Please use the Village Hall Car park in Warkton village.)



Join us on Christmas Day
in Church at 10.00am



Church House



Thursday 6th January
10.00am - 12.30pm

What's happening next week?

- **Saturday 25th December**
9.00am Christmas Day Celebration at Warkton
10.00am Christmas Day Celebration in Church (Live-Streamed)
 - **Sunday 26th December**
10.00am Morning Service in Church Live-Streamed
 - **Monday 27th December**
 - **Tuesday 28th December**
 - **Wednesday 29th December**
 - **Thursday 30th December**
 - **Friday 31st December**
 - **Saturday 1st January**
- **Sunday 2nd January**
10.00am Morning Service in Church Live Streamed
5.00pm Evening Prayer Warkton
 - **Monday 3rd January**
 - **Tuesday 4th January**
 - **Wednesday 5th January**
 - **Thursday 6th January**
10.00am Coffee Shop
11.00am Morning Service
 - **Friday 7th January**
 - **Saturday 8th January**

NOTE Morning Prayer restarts on YouTube again Monday 10th January