

ST DENYS

STANFORD IN THE VALE



Friday Fellowship News No 15 10 July 2020

CHURCH RE-OPENING FOR WORSHIP 6 SEPTEMBER 2020!

AS shared by email earlier in the week, the PCC has unanimously agreed the following:

Church Re-Opening For Worship

That St Denys reopens on Sunday 6 September (not before) for a 1015am service. All Saints Goosey and St George's Hatford to remain closed until further notice due to social distancing of 2m in those small chapels being impossible to safely maintain.

Opening for Private Prayer

That St Denys Church be open for Private Prayer on Sunday, 19th July for stewarded sessions of 1 or 2 hours with safety measures in place. If successful, and meets a real need, further sessions may be arranged and publicised. Details regarding 19 July will be circulated next week.

Reasons for delaying church opening

The main reason for the delay in re-opening is to make the church safe, and to reassure people, we need at least a couple of weeks to get it ready, complete risk assessments and survey the congregation to work out numbers. The numbers who want to attend determine how we need to socially distance the seating.

But there were supplemental reasons, including:-

- July and August are holiday months, and with lockdown easing, people may be visiting relatives etc so wouldn't attend. The Vicar shall also be on holiday from the end of July for 2.5 weeks, and finding clergy cover, under 70 years of age, is difficult.
- Under the initial guidelines there will be limitations to some aspects of the service. Holy Communion may be of one kind (just bread) but administering that safely is an issue. Singing is not allowed, neither is sharing the Peace or gathering in groups to chat inside church.

These things should become clearer over the next few weeks and by September, we should have clarity.

- The children's area will be cordoned off and not in operation. From September we can run the children's group in the village hall (providing this opens) for a longer period so that children would not need to come into church.

- Vicar's ongoing recovery – I would not be able to stand and take full services at the moment as the lockdown stopped his physio sessions and has set-back my mobility. It is only a set-back and my expects me to be back to full pre-lockdown condition around the start of September. Not starting services until September will enable me to recover quicker.

As the PCC is not re-opening St Denys for Public Worship, it was felt important to re-open for private prayer. This requires us completing a number of actions that help towards the re-opening for services so would need to be done anyway.

Given the safety issues discussed above, St Denys will not be opened for Open House on Saturdays, or for Bell-ringing practice or on Sundays. A decision on both will be taken by the PCC nearer to September, and in full discussion with the leaders of both.

The recommendation of the Covid-19 task group, and the PCC decision was based on the full Government and CofE Guidance which can be accessed at:-

<https://mailchi.mp/oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-weekly-update-2-july>.

We believe this is the right decision at this time, and we shall be in touch shortly with further details regarding access to church for Private Prayer. If you have any questions, please feel free to be in touch with us.

UNITING CONGREGATIONS THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS – SEPTEMBER ONWARDS

FROM September 6, my Sunday Sermons in church will be recorded and put on YouTube and our Facebook Page. Steve Upton will then create questions, based on the sermon, for private and/or group use.

Existing Home groups will be able to decide whether to use the questions for their study, or do something else. The HG leaders will have full discretion.

However, in a keen attempt to unite our 9am, 1015am and Messy Church Congregations, from September we shall also offer two Discipleship Groups, online, via Zoom. If demand requires, one in an evening, the other during the day for around 1 hour. That means whether people are in church from September, self-isolating, or members of any of our congregations, the whole church will receive the same weekly teaching and, if they wish, engage with Steve's questions for personal use or join in a Zoom DG.

The DGs will only be for 4 or 5 weeks maximum, with a break between them for the next topic/preaching sessions. This, we hope, will not help our Deeper Into Fellowship value of bring our congregations closer together - via Zoom to start, but hopefully in due course, face to face. It will also help meet our Deeper into God value as we all seek to grow in faith through deeper reading and study of the scriptures together.

I know there are many who have shown interest, over lockdown, in starting some form of Bible study. I hope this new resource will help. There will be two sets of 4/5 weeks from September, then an Advent focus.

The first DG Zoom Resources will be FOUR sessions based on the four Sundays in September, and they are based on September:-

6th Romans 13: 8-end Clothe Yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. Ie, focusing and dwelling on Christ as Christians

13th Romans 14: 1-12 Loving and accepting other Christians – how we interact with other Christians

20th Philippians 1: 21-end Living our Lives for Christ, in an unashamed, confident manner

27th Philippians 2: 1-13 Modelling our witness and life on the humility of Christ

I want to state at the outset that Zoom Discipleship Groups are NOT in competition to Home Groups. They are supplementary to and complimentary to them – for the unity and missional purposes I have set out above.

ZOOM COFFEE MORNING – TUESDAY

DON'T forget, each week you can meet up with other members of St Denys, for 30-40 minutes over a Zoom Coffee Morning. Watch out for the link emailed every Monday, and then just click on it just before Tuesday 11am!

BIBLE READINGS FOR MORNING PRAYER

Fri 9:

Psalm 88
Judg 17
Luke 19:1-10

Sat 10:

Psalm 97
Judg 18
Luke 19: 11-27

Sun 11:

Psalm 65
Rom 8 1-11
Matt 13: 1-23

Mon 12:

Psalm 98
1 Sam 1: 1-20
Luke 19 28-40

Tue 13:

Psalm 106
1 Sam 2: 1 – 2.11
Luke 19 41-end

Wed 14:

Psalm 111
1 Sam 2: 12-26
Luke 20 1-8

Thur 15:

Psalm 115
1 Sam 2: 27-end
Luke 20: 9-19

VICAR'S HOLIDAYS

I will be off work, on my summer break from 25 July to 12 August inclusive. Any issues, please call the churchwardens. Stand-in clergy are available for any major pastoral issue and, of course, funerals – which are offered as Graveside Funerals or at the Crematorium only – with a memorial service offered in church once we can all gather safely without restrictions.

With my love and prayers
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