

Church Life Post July 19th

With the Government removing the final set of restrictions this coming week, we want to assure you that our first priority will always be to protect the safety of every soul in our parish. In the same way that we pray each day for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, we will do our utmost to safeguard the same.

As a community in Christ, we now need to move forward without set legal restrictions and as churches decide how best to manage the risk to ourselves and others. The Government has also deemed that Church leaders are best placed to know their own communities and environments, the situations where there will be many people together who do not normally meet and the places where they will come together; to listen to the voices of vulnerable in their communities and where their fears and concerns lie.

No two churches will be the same for a while to come yet, so please be mindful that careful assessments have taken place to ensure the best possible safety of everyone so that no one feels excluded from attending a service.

Any place where multiple people can gather is still going to be an area of risk. The virus isn't going away, and even those who have accessed both doses of the vaccine may still be at risk from contracting or spreading any variant of Covid-19. Those still waiting for a second dose, or who – for whatever reason – have not been vaccinated (and we are here to love not judge) are at greater risk. God calls us to love our neighbour as ourself, to protect the widow and the orphan, and to love one another as God loves us. No one would willingly put a loved-one at any kind of risk or in any danger.

The following cautious approach to what will, and will not, change will be regularly reviewed. We ask for your prayers for peace and wisdom as the country begins the slow process of attaining a degree of the normality lost over the past 18 months.

We will continue to ask that if you are feeling at all unwell, that you do not attend. Hand sanitisers will remain and we ask that you continue to use them as you enter and leave the building, and of course at other times you feel necessary.

To ensure a proper understanding of any trends in the rise of cases we will still ask you provide contact details or scan the QR code when you enter one of our buildings.

We recognise the law has changed regarding face coverings, so we will leave it to individual discretion whether to wear a mask in our buildings. Those welcoming and in key roles will continue to wear a face covering. We will also provide space for those who wish to continue to sit with more space around them.

Singing will return, but in a limited way and you may wear a face covering if you prefer. We will continue to offer our said Holy Communion service on a Wednesday at St Nicholas.

We will continue to offer communion in one kind until a proper assessment of how our congregations want to proceed, and we will still limit the number of people touching communal objects.

Throughout the pandemic the majority of people have been grateful for the precautions in place, as frustrating as we know many of you have felt. Now, as together we learn to live with the virus, and we begin to look forward to the summer, we ask that you continue to be sensitive to the needs of those around you.

We must be personally responsible and consider the obvious and hidden risks to both ourselves and others.

Philippians 2:3 reminds us, 'But in humility consider others as more important than yourselves'.

Revd Katie Cross, Rector