

I am delighted to be able to write to let you know that last night the PCC accepted my proposal that **we re-open for Sunday worship** following the Government's relaxation to allow places of worship to open from 4<sup>th</sup> July.

That is really good news.

In the last, long, 14 weeks, we have prayed for each other and our community at a distance and some of us have joined together virtually by Zoom at times, but we have missed the fellowship of the physical Body of Christ, the Church family. It will be good to be able to be together in our beautiful building once more: '... the house of God, the gate of heaven'.

That is the great news.

The more detailed news is that, quite clearly, there will be changes and we may not like all of them. However, if we wish to worship together in church then we must adhere to what will be the 'new normal' for some time. We are already seeing in one city the impact of increased infections of Covid 19 and the impact of further lock down. We really do want to avoid that here, and we should be praying of the people of Leicester as they go through this time.

For us at St. Luke's, then, **the details are as follows** (please do read this carefully):

This coming **Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July, we will have a public Service of the Word at 10 am**. We will take a little time to thank God that we are back and remember what has passed, and we will welcome Phyl Sopp to her new role as a Licensed Minister prior to ordination in the Autumn. Phyl will lead much of the service, which will be shorter than usual. The service will be broadcast live on Zoom for those who wish to join in (link in the Sunday sheet to come) and also recorded and available on the website a little later.

We will present a small gift to Phyl from the church, but sadly we will not be able to sign a shared card. There will be an opportunity later in the year to contribute financially to the gift.

This week we have a Word service so that we can get used to being in church, and Phyl can lead it. I hope that from 12<sup>th</sup> July we will offer a service of Holy Communion at 10 am on Sunday. Currently, there are no plans to reinstate the 8.00 am Sunday service, or midweek services in church. The Tuesday – Sunday Morning Prayer by Zoom will continue for the foreseeable future. All Sunday services will be Zoomed / recorded so that anyone who cannot physically be present can join in, assuming they have internet access.

These changes impact on our plans to open for private prayer; we need to allow 72 hours between uses or else have a much more thorough cleaning programme, and very few people have offered to clean! The times that the church will be open for **private prayer will** therefore change to:

Wednesdays: 2.00 – 3.30pm and Sundays: 11.00 – midday.

What follows will feel draconian, but allows us to worship together. Please do what you feel is right for you, without putting yourself or others at risk. Anyone is very welcome to ring me to talk about any worries you may have or any aspect of this slow return to church.

I very much look forward to seeing some of you on Sunday.

With every blessing

Sally

**What you need to know about Sunday services, and which we must all adhere to:**

- The church will open to the congregation twenty minutes before the service, and no earlier.
- If it is necessary to queue to enter then please observe the two metre social distancing.
- To that end, it would make sense to park cars on the road rather than in the church car park at this time.
- Social distancing will be kept – ideally two meters apart from those with whom you do not live, but at least one meter. This is at all times in the building and church grounds.
- On entry everyone MUST use hand gel – provided or your own. Please have already washed your hands before coming to church
- You will be asked to leave your name on a list that will be kept for 21 days to assist track and trace (we can write names down for you, no need to bring a pen).
- There is no milling around – when you arrive please go straight to a pew and remain there throughout the service. Welcomers will guide you through this. Please maintain social distancing in your pew, except for those you live with / bubble with.
- We are currently using alternate pews for the 10 am service and plastic chairs for private prayer.
- Please avoid touching any surfaces unnecessarily.
- The Admin lobby is TOTALLY off limits unless you are accessing the WCs.
- The chancel and chapel are also currently off limits.
- Sadly, we are unable at present to offer a baby and toddler area or toys / books. Feel free to sit with buggies in that area – obviously distanced from other families (please ask a welcomer for help) or in a pew with children.
- There can be no singing and we are asked to keep our voices quiet rather than speaking out loudly.
- The order of service will be available by email before the service (as now). If possible, please download it onto your own device (will need to have battery, no plug ins) or print a copy to bring with you. Please do not pass these to other people or share by touching. We will deliver copies as usual to those who do not have internet access. There will be a VERY FEW hard copies at church for those who do not have printers but you must take these away at the end of the service.
- There will be no offertory but we will leave a plate at the back for any cash offerings.
- At the end of the service you are asked to leave immediately (socially distanced) and not to congregate or chat in church.
- Sadly we cannot yet offer coffee.
- Face coverings are not obligatory, but may be worn if you wish.
  
- When we have Holy Communion, there will be a one way system to receive, it will be the host only and standing.

These regulations are all taken from the government / Church of England advice on the conduct of public worship.

Please note also, from the same source, that:

- The over 70s and 'vulnerable' are advised against attending but may do so by their own decision.
- 'Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend the place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household'.

And just a little reminder of **Zoom etiquette** for those who choose to join in that way:

- Please remain muted throughout, unless invited to unmute for congregational responses.
- If you need to move away from the Zoom, answer the phone etc please turn your camera off.
- Please observe silence at the end of the service, until the service leader thanks participants.