



Newbury, St George & St John

**The Church of St John the Evangelist**

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July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

**Dear friends,**

**This is an important letter about coming back to Church on Sunday 5 July. It requires a response so please read it straight away.**

It is great news that we can gather again on Sundays in church.

As you can imagine, however, there will be some differences from what we are used to. These changes are non-negotiable restrictions imposed by the Government to protect against the spread of Covid19.

If you are planning to attend this Sunday it is essential that you read carefully the 'What to expect' section below.

It is also very important to underline that anyone who does not feel ready to return to social gatherings must not feel under any pressure to rush back to church on Sunday. The Government's advice is that people over 70, and all with underlying health conditions, should be cautious about returning to gathered worship in church.

We will live-stream Sunday worship for those who would prefer to join in from home.

Because of the requirement for social distancing in the church we have to limit the numbers attending on Sunday to a maximum of 35 people at each service.

**We are offering one service this Sunday at St Johns. This will be accompanied by 2 services, same order, at St Georges (in order to fit all the congregation, 9am & 11am).**

**Our service will be at 9.30am**

**The 11am service at St Georges will also be live-streamed on YouTube as a Benefice Service - for people who cannot attend.**

**All services will be a said service of Holy Communion (bread only). See more details below.**

Children are of course welcome, but extra care will be needed from parents of younger ones to prevent hygiene risks.

We very much hope that those who are at home will join at 11am for live worship, what could possibly go wrong??!! (actually quite a lot, so please bear with us on this).

We are still planning to have Zoom Coffee and Chat, but now at 12 noon.

**Please could you let the Office and/or Gary know asap, ideally by email but a phone call is fine:**

- a) If you plan to attend, how many of you will come.  
or b) Whether you are staying at home on Sundays for the time being

Please email or phone Alex in the office before lunchtime this Friday if at all possible.  
Contact details are above, or email me.

### **What to expect on Sunday?**

- Ideally walk to church, but if driving please park in the car park and walk around to the main entrance, the vestry door has two parking spaces for those with mobility issues.
- To arrive at the church no more than 20 minutes before the start of the service, and to be aware that once we reach maximum capacity, we will not be able to let anyone in.
- To enter the church through the main doors, wheelchair access from Vestry & Parish Room.
- To be greeted by volunteers from St John's in face masks.
- To give your name and phone number (a requirement for 'Track and Trace').
- To gel your hands as you enter the church and again as you leave.
- To be directed to a pew where everyone (apart from couples/households) will be seated at least 2 metres apart.
- To enjoy a familiar service of Holy Communion but bread only, no hymn singing (but live organ music as we gather, depart and during the distribution of communion), no shaking hands in the peace etc, and overall a shorter service, though with all of the usual elements.
- To receive communion standing at the Chancel step from the presiding priest, or a deacon, in a facemask and, if you are able-bodied, to return to your seat by going around the side ambulatory walkways. (a hand sanitiser, placed at the front, will need to be used before receiving communion).
- To wear a jumper as all the doors will be left open!
- Virtual Coffee chat will take place on Zoom, as per usual but now at 12.00-12.30.

Please be aware that the limits on numbers will be strictly adhered to. There is no requirement to wear a face mask but please feel free to do so if you prefer. And of course, DO NOT come to church if you are feeling ill or have any symptoms associated with Coronavirus such as a cough or raised temperature.

Should you wish to make a donation to St John's there will be a collection plate for any offerings, but a collection will not be taken in the services.

If you have any queries or concerns contact me.

So, please come on Sunday if you can, but don't worry if you can't; we remain God's church whatever. As we journey on through this strange landscape, with all its sorrows and some surprising joys, we simply respond as best we can to each new twist and turn with graciousness and compassion.

Thank you for being the church.

With love and prayers as ever,

Gary

Revd Gary Collins, Vicar