



Lockdown

As you will know England is now under more lockdown rules. The headline message is '**Stay at Home**'. However there are a number of exemptions to that rule, including : '*You can attend places of worship for a service. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household support bubble. You should maintain strict social distancing at all times.*'

The background to this is well known. But these statistics make it clear that this is a serious business:

- One in 30 people in Greater London have the virus.
- Three in every 10 hospital beds are occupied by Covid patients - on average.
- The new variant of the virus is upto 70% more transmissible than the original version

St James's has tried to keep public worship Covid-safe by a variety of measures: including running the 'All Age Service' continuously online, streaming the 9.30, instigating booking for the 9.30. washing of hands, wearing of masks, social distancing, communion in one kind only, and no singing. We have run online coffee mornings and small groups.

It is remarkable that the Government has allowed public worship to continue, which at least in part is a tribute to how safe religious groups have been. However, that is a nationwide exemption which allows each church to make its own decision about closing and opening, depending on the local situation. Many of our neighbouring churches have closed for public worship before lockdown was announced.

Having consulted the PCC by email I believe that this is the best way forward:

- noting the high incidence of the virus in the borough, the continuing rise of infections and that vaccinations are not a solution in the short term.
- and recognising that there are particular risks associated with our 9.30 service - even with the measures we have taken
- **we will not open the church for public worship on 9.30 on Sunday until further notice**

However

- 8.00 and midweek communion pose less of a risk in a number of ways. **Therefore we will leave in place the Thursday Communion (9.30)**. After this week it may be necessary to book for this service. Initially we will not offer 8.00 on Sunday - I believe there is a great benefit of us being together on Sunday. One (but only one) of the ways risk is less at these services is fewer people come, we will have to see how the numbers go!
- We will stream a service at 9.30 on Facebook. There are a number of enhancements we intend to add to what we have been offering recently. If you have not tried being online for worship (or have dropped off) please try again.
- We will offer Coffee and Chat after the 9.30 service, and the Vicarage Coffee Morning on Thursdays (10.30). Please come along.
- We will run another Quiz Evening on Friday 15 Jan at 20.00. The last one was great fun, please join us this time. Details to follow.
- The Tuesday 'Screwtape Letters' book group, and the daily 'Time to Pray' continue.
- The visitors team will continue to offer pastoral support to everyone.

Details on all these will be in the weekend email.

This is where we are at present. But as usual arrangements may have to change with the circumstances. Let us continue to do what we can to care for and support one another, especially those who live alone, or fall ill.

Grace and Peace

Derek

Thursday 9.30 Holy Communion

Thursday 10.30 Vicarage Coffee Morning



Meeting ID: 897 2906 3197

Passcode: 090115

The Parish Office is closed

Nick Bagge is working at home on reduced hours.

Please ring Derek at the Vicarage (020 8241 5904) or email if you have any enquiries or for any pastoral matters.



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