

# A LONG BUT IMPORTANT LETTER ABOUT OPENING ST ALBAN'S FOR WORSHIP PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

Dear Friends

What a long time it is since we last met together in the church building. But we haven't stopped being church in all that time. We've been meeting and worshipping online, on CD, DVD through paper orders of service and down the phone line. I know that the Pastoral Leaders have been doing an amazing job of keeping in touch with everyone and that some of you have popped up to the listening bench for a chat too. Mike's Thought for the Day has been much appreciated as has Compline and Meditation with Jan. As for me, I've loved meeting with the book group on Thursday evenings and meeting up with many of you in such a different variety of ways.

The time has come, however, when we can take some gentle steps back in to the church building for worship. So we are throwing open the church doors for worship starting this coming Sunday 12th July. This is something that has been much anticipated and as a leadership team we've been planning for this and have prayerfully decided that we need to do this cautiously and carefully.

We know that returning to the church building will not be something everyone can/wants to do at this time. Some of you may be shielding or significantly limiting your social contacts, some of you may feel it's too soon for this step - and that's absolutely fine. We know that this isn't going to be for everyone right now. So - the first thing to say is that we're going to keep on going with the online worship, the CDs/DVDS/phone in and with everything else that's been happening away from the church building. Opening up St Alban's will be an additional thing that we are now able to do.

So please don't feel you have to come if it doesn't feel right for you. We want everyone to stay safe and feel safe. You should carefully consider your own risk of attending an indoor gathering. While we will be taking a number of steps to keep you safe, we cannot make this risk-free. You might want to look at the NHS guidance on whether you are at higher risk of coronavirus and be guided by their advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/.../whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Please do NOT to attend the service if you have:

- A new cough, A temperature, Lost your sense of smell or taste

If you do decide to come to church you will find that we've had to make some big changes to keep everyone safe. All of our decisions have been based on the guidance from church and government and a strong sense that we need to keep it very simple - at least to start with. As time goes on things will inevitably change but we will let you know what's happening every step of the way.

- There will be just one service a week in the building.
- The service will be a said Communion service at 10.15am on Sunday Mornings.
- Communion will be in one kind - ie bread only.
- There will be no singing but there will be organ music
- Seating will be spaced out so that there is 2m between individuals or household groups.
- Services will be much shorter than usual
- There will be no refreshments served after the service.
- All current guidelines on social distancing will need to be observed - this means that there is no scope for socialising before or after the service.

## **Here is an outline of what you can expect when you arrive at church.**

- As we will be observing 2m social distancing there is no requirement to wear a mask, but you should feel free to do so if you want.
- Please arrive in good time on a Sunday morning. It will take much longer than normal to get everybody seated.
- When you arrive you will be met in the church yard and asked to go straight to the hall to wash your hands. Logistically this may be a little tricky so we may offer hand sanitiser instead if there are too many people trying to get into the hall.
- We will need to take your contact details for track and trace purposes. If you develop CVI9 symptoms within a 3 week period of attending church you need to notify us. Attendance records will be kept for 3 weeks only and then shredded.
- You will then be directed into church. If there is a queue to get in please keep apart by 2 metres at all times
- You can pick up an order of service from the table at the back and will need to go straight to your seat. Please stay in that seat at all times during the service and if you have come with children please keep them with you for the whole service. There will be no creche or Sunday Club.
- There will be organ music to listen to before the service begins
- To keep the church well ventilated all the doors will be left open. It may, therefore, be a little cooler than usual.
- We ask that when you are saying the responses that you speak quietly and prayerfully to reduce risk of droplet spread.
- When we share the peace, we cannot move from our places – we will use the British Sign Language peace or simply wave to those in other households
- During distribution of communion, only bread will be distributed. The priest will wear a mask and sanitise her hands before distribution. You will be directed by one of the wardens or sidespeople to come and sanitise your hands before coming forward to receive communion and will be directed back to your seat by a different route.
- If you do not want to receive communion for any reason, that is absolutely fine – just hold your order of service in front of you and the priest will pray a blessing instead.
- At the end of the service after the priest has processed out, please stay in your seat until you are directed to leave. You may be directed out through any of the church doors.
- Please take any orders of service home with you.
- Please do not stop to chat while leaving the building and please do not block anyone else's exit by stopping outside the church doors.
- Remember at all times to stay 2 metres apart from other households.

I know this may sound a little daunting and I really am sorry for that. However, as a leadership team we think it's important that you know what it's going to be like so that you can make an informed decision about coming and if you do decide to worship in church on Sunday mornings that you know what to expect when you arrive.

If you have any concerns or questions about any of this please do get in touch either with me or another member of the leadership team or with your pastoral leader.

Please stay safe and know that you are in my prayers

With love

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JUNA' or similar, written in a cursive style.