

ST MARY'S SPEEN PEW NEWS 31/2021

1) SERVICES

Sunday 25th July 10.30 Service of the Word led by John Hughesdon

Readings: 2 Corinthians 4 vv 1-15. Matt 20 vv20-28.

We have an organist this week! Thank you to Oliver for kindly playing for us. This means we are allowed to sing indoors! But St M's is going to progress one small step at a time over "opening up". There is no need at all for us to rush. This week we be able to sing just one hymn with the organ, behind our masks. Seating arrangements in church will be altered a bit to make sure everyone feels comfortable and confident about this. Our sidesmen will help with this as usual. For the full explanation of where we are with our COVID arrangements, do please read Will and Joy's piece later in PN and let Service leaders know how you feel after the Service on Sunday. It's your church.

172 Fill your hearts with joy and gladness Please sing this one if you would like, but behind your mask please.

718 We love the place O God...

465 Name of all majesty

60 Beauty for brokenness

We will go outside to exchange the Peace and to sing:

221 God is working his purpose out

It might be raining so maybe bring an umbrella.

INFANT BAPTISM

We are delighted to announce that Sophie Rollings will be baptised at 12.30 this Sunday, 25th July. Please pray for Sophie, her parents and godparents, as she joins our church family. JMac.

HINT Please look out for cars coming down Church Lane if you leave church after 12 noon.

Next week: Sunday 1st August 10.30am Holy Communion led by Rev Janice Macdonald.

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2) WELCOMERS AND SERVING COFFEE AFTER MORNING SERVICES

Thanks to Liz Robbins and Ruth Tibbets for volunteering to join our dedicated team of welcomers.

Although the decision has been taken that we will not yet be serving teas and coffees after morning services, ("one small step at a time") the time **will** come when we would really like to do that.

Please encourage Jill by letting her know you would be happy to take a turn when the time comes.

4) "LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH"

If you read the APCM report you will be aware that the Church of England is asking all parishes/benefices to engage with the 'Living in Love and Faith' initiative. It has published a wide range of resources and a course guide to help us think about the sensitive topics of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. Will, Joy, Janice and Jo (Fageant) are planning how this will be addressed with those interested at St Mary's. More details will be available soon.

5) FOOD BANK

You may have seen in NWN that there is an increased need for Foodbank supplies over the summer holidays, as children who usually get free school meals may be going short of food. Healthy lunchbox snacks, tinned goods, Longlife fruit juices. and all the usual packets goods including toothpaste, deodorant, razors and toilet rolls. Our nearest collection point is near the entrance at Waitrose.

6) JIGSAWS

Some of us have enjoyed a jigsaw exchange during COVID restrictions. A box of them is in the Church foyer. Do please take one this week if you would like to, otherwise they will go to a charity shop, thanks.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN CHURCH THIS SUNDAY from Joy

"Dear St Mary's Church Family

In the light of the lifting of Covid restrictions on Monday and the guidance issued by the government and the Church of England, I want to update you on what this means for services at St Mary's from this Sunday.

We have spent some time as Clergy, Wardens and PCC working out what is the most responsible approach for our services in these initial weeks over the summer. We do not want anyone to feel unsafe at St Mary's or to consider that the lifting of restrictions means that they need to stay away.

Our initial guidelines are as follows, you will see that most of our protective measures remain in place:

- We will ask you to continue to wear your mask on arrival and during the service. The government is still expecting and recommending that they should continue to be worn in enclosed settings to protect ourselves, and take care of each other.
- We will continue to have hand sanitiser available.

- While there is no legal requirement to hold your details for track and trace purposes, we will continue to ask you for them. Again, this is something the government is still recommending.
- We will continue to use every other pew and you will be guided in as you are now - with those who are happy to, sharing a pew. This has slowly become more relaxed in recent weeks and can continue to be so.
- We will introduce singing with masks on, but initially this will be limited to one hymn at the beginning of the service, with another hymn outside at the end of the service (weather permitting). If you are happy to sing, please sit in the front half of the church.
- Communion will continue to be bread only and served in pews just to limit the movement around the building and sharing the peace will still be ‘virtual’!
- We have decided that it is a little too soon to introduce refreshments after the service.
- We will continue to use the one-way system to leave church to conclude the service outside, but there will be less stewarding around this – please leave, being mindful of distance between you and others.
- As it is the summer, we will keep the inner south doors open during the service to increase the ventilation.

I am aware that for some this might seem too cautious. There is a disappointment about it and we long for the day when masks are removed and we can sing more freely. We have been very mindful of the rising infection rates and our responsibility to care for each other at this time. We need St Mary’s to be a safe place for everyone to worship.

These have not been easy decisions this week and so it is important to say that these are initial guidelines for the next few weeks. We will review them, and so please do give us any feedback – do email or speak to clergy or other service leaders.”

Joy Mawdesley

Please pray for those who have to balance the Church of England advice with the particular needs of our St M’s church family, and make these decisions on our behalf.

Best Wishes, Mavis

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