

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Needham Market

9th July 2020

Dear Friends,

Finally, the day we have all been waiting for is here! I am delighted to announce that this Sunday, 12th July, we will once again be opening the doors of St John's for public worship.

We will hold Holy Communion (Common Worship) at 10am, where we can all receive the sacrament (wafer only).

We have been working very hard to ensure that everything is in line with Government and Church of England guidelines, so that we are all as safe as possible. Obviously, this means that there are some things to tell you all:

- Church of England guidelines state that social distancing within a church building must be kept to 2 metres. This is different from government guidelines for outside contact. Please do abide by this rule when you are in the building.
- Therefore, numbers will be limited. Exact numbers depend entirely on how many people come as a group. We have rearranged all the seating accordingly. Because we don't want to have to ticket our services, we are asking people to phone Diane (on 01449 720316 to let her know if you would like to come) – please don't just turn up at 5 minutes to 10! We need plenty of time to get everybody into the building and seated safely before the service starts.
- Whether you wear a facemask is entirely up to you. Your clergy team will each be wearing one, and it is currently considered good practice to wear a mask whenever you are in a public place, but it is your decision.
- We are sorry, but we will not be able to sing in church, but are delighted that we will have organ music throughout the service (as long as the organ hasn't decided it likes semi-retirement!).
- Please note that there will be no facilities for coffee and tea after the service. The toilet will be open, but you will be asked to use the antibacterial wipes provided on the seat, flush, taps and sink after each use.
- Government guidance is to try to avoid giving lifts to people in cars outside of our households or 'bubbles', but there are circumstances where it is considered appropriate. Please see the official government website for specific advice.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles>

We are currently unable to start again any other meetings or services we provide (this includes Tuesday Prayer group, Tots and Youth Group). However, legislation is changing all the time, so we will let you know as soon as we are able to do this. Thanks to ideas given last Sunday

during the service, and conversations we have been having throughout lockdown, we have some very exciting ideas for the future – watch this space!

If you have ANY queries in general, can I recommend that you look at either the government or Church of England websites for advice – both are excellent and very comprehensive. Of course, we will try to help as much as possible, but we only have the same information as you! These website addresses are:

UK Government:

www.gov.uk

Church of England:

www.churchofengland.org

We understand that the thought of doing usual activities has become something, which we all have to think through carefully now, and can be confusing and worrying. Please find below a step-by-step walk through of what you can expect when you come to a service now at St John's. Sarah has also recorded a video showing the church and the new configuration, which can be found on the website (www.needhammarketparishchurch.co.uk).

1. When you arrive, please wait outside the building, where you will be greeted. Doors will be kept open throughout the service to ensure appropriate ventilation.
2. You will then be asked to use hand sanitizer before entering the building.
3. A 'Welcomer' will then show you to your seats. This is to ensure that everybody is kept as safe as possible. So sit back and enjoy your silver service!
4. To get as many people in to worship as possible, we have taken out much of the seating, and moved other seats into the Chancel area. The service leaders will sit in the Sanctuary itself, facing the congregation.
5. You will find all the information you need for the service on your seat, together with the service liturgy. Please take this with you when you leave.
6. In the Chancel will be a small table with a laptop, camera and microphone on it. Please do not touch this – it is all the technology needed for us to be able to stream each service so that people who are unable to join us in person can still join us online. The video will only show the Sanctuary area.
7. When it comes to time for Communion, Diane will consecrate both bread and wine, but will consume the wine herself. She will then move through the church, distributing wafers to those who want to receive. She will, of course, be using hand sanitizer at every available opportunity, and will be wearing a facemask.
8. When the time comes to leave, please wait in your seats to be dismissed (probably row by row – just like at school!). This is to avoid a 'traffic jam' at the doors of the church.
9. Please use the hand sanitizer again on your way out.

I know this all seems terribly complicated, but it will become second nature the more often we do it. We are all aware that we have responsibility for not only our own safety, but that of our fellow brothers and sisters. Please do remember this, and abide by the rules at all times.

This will remain our service pattern for the time being, but we are discussing and planning a possible second service, to be held in The Ark, after Holy Communion every week. This second service would be much more informal. We'll keep you up to date with this as it progresses.

We will be continuing with all our online meetings for the foreseeable future, as well as live streaming our Sunday services on Youtube. This means our current weekly pattern is:

Sunday	10am	Holy Communion in St John's Service streamed live on youtube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyAW5bPsbNElczV-R75LeVg
Monday	TBD	
Tuesday	11am	Zoom Bible Study or Prayer Group on alternating weeks
Wednesday	7.30pm	Zoom Compline
Thursday	3pm	Zoom Afternoon Tea
Friday	Day Off for Diane and Sarah	
Saturday	9.30 – 11.30am	Church open for Private Prayer

Finally, Bishop Martin has told all clergy to have two days off a week during July and August, instead of our usual one day off. This means that as well as their usual Friday, Diane and Sarah will be alternating Mondays and Saturdays ever week – one of them will always be available though.

I'm, sorry for another long letter, full of information, but please, do take the time to read it thoroughly. If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact us. In the meantime – we'll look forward to seeing you on Sunday!

With every blessing

Diane
And the Team at St John's