

Reopening our Churches for Public Worship

I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'
Psalm 122:1

Following guidance from the Government and the Church of England, we are now able to reopen our church building for the limited resumption of public worship. This is the first stage in a gradual process, as we cautiously and responsibly move forward into the future, praying to God at all times for his grace and guidance. We will be following the latest regulations regarding public health, cleaning, hygiene, social-distancing and the Test and Trace system, all of which significantly impact what we can do at this time. As a result of this, there will be a number of changes to the form, conduct and shape of our worship in order to keep all those attending church safe, and for this we ask your patience and cooperation.

This leaflet should answer your questions about your return to church, but please do not feel you must attend if you are at all unsure or are still shielding.

When does public worship begin?

The first services will be on **July 26th** at the usual Sunday morning time for your church.

What do I need to do in order to attend?

It is helpful if you can **let us know** you are intending to come to worship. You can email Revd James Richards at rector@stmartin.org.uk, or leave a message on on 015394 43063.

Please **arrive in good time, observing social distancing** outside, and inside as you are go to your seat.

Although **face coverings are not mandatory at the time of writing, we are asking those** attending public worship to use a mask or face covering. This is one of the 'risk mitigating factors' that has been encouraged by the Government.

Who may attend?

All are welcome as we join together in the worship of God. However, the following should not attend public worship in order to safeguard others:

- Anyone who is showing symptoms associated with Coronavirus (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell).
- Anyone who is self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of Coronavirus in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test and Trace.

According to Government guidance, those over the age of 70 may be at an increased risk with regard to COVID-19, regardless of medical conditions. They are advised to stay home as much as possible and, if the decision is made to come out (for instance to church), they should exercise particular care (for their own well-being) but their decision to attend public worship is theirs to make freely. Those who fall within the "clinically extremely vulnerable" group are strongly advised to stay at home and not attend church, following the advice given by the Government, though if they wish to attend church, the final decision is theirs.

What happens when I arrive?

You may need to **wait before entering** the church, please be patient and observe social distancing of 2 m. The door will be open so you will not need to touch the handle. On entering the church please **make use of the hand sanitizer** and **pick up an order of service** from the table. Please note only those from the same household or bubble can sit within 2 m of one another. We will keep a **note of your attendance** for 21 days in order to comply with guidance from the Government and the Church of England in line with requirements established by the NHS Test and Trace system. If you give to the church using cash or the envelope scheme, you can **place your offering in the collection plate** at the back of church.

What happens if I the church has already reached its capacity?

This will be politely explained to you. Please be understanding, we are operating according to guidelines to keep

you and others safe.

What will be different about the service?

In response to Government and Church of England guidance we have made some alterations to the service:

- No singing is permitted but there will be music from the organ or recorded music
- The peace will not be shared physically.
- The collection plate will not be passed round
- Special hygiene and safety arrangements will be in place at the consecration and distribution of Holy Communion

Holy Communion will be offered in one kind (consecrated bread), into the hand, only the priest will receive the wine.

- The priest will bring communion to you, and will wear a mask. They will enter the pew in front of you.
- There should be more distance than usual between you and the priest, please stretch out your hands with palms flat and the bread will be placed carefully in your hand.
- Holy Communion will be received in silence.
- If you do not wish to receive communion please leave your hands down.
- As there will be no hymns the service will be shorter than usual.

What happens at the end of the service?

We are not permitted to serve refreshments, so please **leave the church**, carefully observing social distancing.

You can **leave your service sheet** on the table, from where you collected it, or take it with you. Please **make use of the hand sanitizer** as you leave. While we understand you may wish to spend time chatting with friends we are not encouraged to congregate at the back of church, in the porch or in the churchyard.

What have we done to make our church safe for worship?

Following government and Church of England guidance and regulations we have completed a risk assessment and introduced the following measures:

Hygiene - hand sanitiser station is available close to the entrance of the church. Please ensure that you use it as you enter and leave the building. The priest will use hand sanitizer before the consecration and the again before the distribution of communion. The bread will be covered during the consecration to avoid contamination.

Social Distancing - we have marked some pews so they will not be used to keep worshippers apart. Please try and maintain a 2 metre social distance at all times, including when arriving and leaving the church. The doors of the church building will remain open during the service to aid ventilation.

Face coverings - Although face coverings are not mandatory, the choice to wear one is yours. The priest will wear a mask during the distribution of communion.

Toilets - We ask that you only use the church toilet if you have no other option but to do so. If used the toilet will be cleaned in an appropriate way.

If you have any concerns or questions, please get in touch with Revd James Richards (015394 43063) or your churchwarden.