



St Helen's Church

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Notices for 31st May, 2020

Dear Friends

At last Sunday's service I asked you to pray for me as I led our Flagstaff Family PCCs through some initial reflections on what it might mean to reopen our buildings when we're allowed to do so. I'm writing this on Thursday, and it may even be later today that the Prime Minister makes an announcement on timescales. As we wait for this announcement and for the detailed guidance that will follow it, we're working hard thinking through what the probable issues are, and drawing up some provisional plans.

What already seems clear is that a two-phase opening will be allowed, for churches able to do this safely. The first will be opening for private prayer, the second for public worship.

I want to be as open and as straightforward as I can be with you about what each of these stages might look like and ask of us.

If we open for private prayer, it is almost certain that we will be required to manage the flow of people in and out of our building. That would mean having a volunteer on the door admitting one person as another person leaves. We would be required to make sure that those waiting outside queued two meters apart from one another, that everyone entering church sanitised their hands, and that every surface inside the church that they touch is cleaned before another person is admitted. With these requirements in mind, any opening for

private prayer would need to be staffed by a minimum of three people, all of them under 70 years of age. You will immediately understand that any opening for private prayer will therefore be very limited. Certainly, our normal opening hours won't be possible.

What *public* worship will look like is still being scoped out nationally. However, Bishop Sarah Mullaly, Bishop of London, who is leading the Church of England's Covid-19 response, has already said that we will be required to social distance from one another in the building and that singing and Holy Communion will not be permitted for some time to come. What would be possible - for those able to come back into church - would be very contemplative services. Perhaps one option might be to have a mixed economy of services; some only online, others in the building, but live-streamed to those who cannot be with us. With some worship leaders continuing to self-isolate, our *pattern* of worship across the Flagstaff Family will have to change, too.

St Helen's PCC have agreed that, when the detailed guidance comes through first for private prayer and then for public worship, we will apply this guidance to our setting, and carry out a careful risk assessment. We will then decide what we can do, bearing in mind our commitment to protect the most vulnerable and to be fully inclusive. Please pray for us as we carefully and prayerfully weigh up all

the options, and all the competing priorities, and please pray for me as I lead our sister churches through the same process.

I know that you might feel quite upset reading this and thinking this through. I know that what we might be able to do might well fall far short of what you would like to happen. I do understand and I am sorry for the distress you feel. It might help us all to remember, as I said in Prayer for the Day this morning, that we are the church whether or not we can gather in our buildings, and that God is present everywhere and is to be worshipped everywhere. You might like to use this beautiful prayer by the Revd Nadia Bolz Weber which places the worship of God at the heart of our homes and in the rhythm of our everyday living:

I do not know when we can gather together again in worship, Lord.
So, for now I just ask -
when I sing along in my kitchen to Stormzy or Adele
may it be counted as praise.
And when I read the news and my heart tightens in my chest,
may it be counted as a Kyrie - 'Lord, have mercy.'
And when my eyes brighten in a smile behind my mask
as I thank the cashier
may it be counted as passing the peace.
And when I water my plants and wash my dishes and take a shower
may it be counted as remembering my baptism.
And when the tears come and my shoulders shake
and my breathing falters,
may it be counted as prayer.
And when I scroll down my news-feed and stumble upon someone

speaking of their faith and hope and love of you
may it be counted as hearing a homily.
And when I sit at that table in my apartment,
and eat one more homemade meal, slowly, joyfully,
with nothing else demanding my time or attention,
may it be counted as communion.
Amen.

Please do get in touch if you'd like to talk over any of this with me. I pray for you every day, and I miss you.

With love

Mary

Services:

All-Age Communion

On Sunday 31st Stewart will lead us in an all-age Communion service for the Flagstaff churches at 10.30am. It will be live-streamed on Facebook, as usual, and then available on the website on the 'On-line Services and Readings' tab under Church Life.

Care and Share

On Sunday 7th June, the service will be an all-age service, as it would have been under our more usual service pattern. It will include the 'Care and Share' slot where we share news, pray for each other, and celebrate birthdays. It will be live-streamed to Facebook via Zoom, so if you have a birthday in June, or we missed your birthday in May, let Jill know, so we can send you the Zoom link. You'll be able to join the service live. Singing our special version of 'Happy Birthday to You' should be straightforward. How we get your virtual chocolate to you might be harder to arrange.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The bereaved:

Please pray for the family and friends of Jane Wise, and anyone known to you who is bereaved.

Please pray for all families for whom the funerals of their loved ones have taken place during this difficult time, including:

- ◆ Sheelagh Judge
- ◆ Roy Hodges
- ◆ Mykola Kuzyszyn
- ◆ Hazel Farmer
- ◆ David Robert Smith
- ◆ Dorothy Wragg
- ◆ Marie Bowman
- ◆ Bill Woodward
- ◆ Olive Pointon
- ◆ Sheila Wood
- ◆ Henry Tagg
- ◆ June Stapleton
- ◆ Judith Graves
- ◆ Ann Wheatley
- ◆ Albert Meakin
- ◆ Christopher McVickers
- ◆ Dennis Grainger
- ◆ Graham Howells

And for the families awaiting the funerals of loved ones, including:

- ◆ Jane Wise on 4th June 2020

The sick, disabled or housebound:

Pray for ...

- ◆ Tia Rose Brownlow
 - ◆ Val Dawson
 - ◆ Margaret Stalker
 - ◆ Carole Youles
- ...& others known to you

◆ St Helen's Prayer Chain requests:

Judith Lewis on 01530 564204
or email jchjcl@gmail.com

◆ Notice Sheet Prayer requests:

To Jill Chapman at the virtual parish office
on 07725 519453
sthelensashby@gmail.com

In love, we remember those whose anniversary of death falls at this time, and pray for their families and friends:

- ◆ Kenneth Toovey
- ◆ Ellen Elizabeth Curtis
- ◆ Mary Plant
- ◆ Joyce Mary Grimley
- ◆ Kathleen Mary Bower
- ◆ John Aston Randall

Contact Details

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- ◆ Flagstaff Team website:
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- ◆ Facebook:
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- ◆ Twitter:
[@sthelensashby](https://twitter.com/sthelensashby)

NOTICES

Ashby Churches' Pentecost prayer meeting – via Zoom

All Ashby churches are meeting via Zoom on 31st May at 3pm for Pentecost Prayer

To join the Zoom meeting please click on the link below at 3pm on 31st.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81669376712?pwd=bEtWV0xFY0hPRGdFUE95b0RnWmgxQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 6937 6712

Password: 023452

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is an international and ecumenical call to prayer that takes place between Ascension Day and Pentecost each year. - See Judith speaking about Thy Kingdom Come during her Prayer for the Day [here](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=31200174513492>

Revd Mary mentioned it in her [sermon](#) last Sunday

<https://www.sthelensashby.net/PublicHer/File.aspx?ID=254426>

And this film is a must-see for anyone intrigued by her reference in the sermon to [Stormzy at Glastonbury](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxsjQ967kV8&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0mHbJgWrFVK2Pd5bJ2UJ00mVpM0hcSmE_DFsCzmpaUvdCM-y7Izd_2Fk8

Heritage Centre Activity

This week's project is a sundial. Here is the link to the instructions sheet -

https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327493/Archaeology_and_Heritage.aspx

The templates are

http://pagingsupermom.com/?attachment_id=9407 and

https://skyandtelescope.org/wp-content/uploads/sundial_n-1.pdf