



St Helen's Church

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Notices for 28th June 2020

Revd Mary writes -

My dear Friends,

Another week, another announcement from the Prime Minister, this time outlining the easing of lockdown restrictions.

This easing will open up life for some of us, whilst others amongst us will continue to shield - and for an extended period. I know we'll continue to be sensitive towards those who haven't experienced the announcement as good news.

For us, as a church community, there were two significant strands. The first, that we can once again host weddings - albeit with restricted numbers and with a stripped-back service. The second, that we can once again worship together in our buildings. Both of these will be possible from 4th July.

On the face of it, this permission to gather in our buildings for worship simply sounds like great news. We love to worship together - and soon we can again.

Look just beneath the surface, though, and the complexity quickly emerges.

What will our fellowship with one another feel like if we are socially distanced from one another in church, as we must be?

How would we feel about being in church when so many of our church family would be absent because it is not safe for them to be there, or they don't feel confident to do so?

What about our brothers and sisters who have formed part of our online worshipping community? How can we stay connected to them?

How will we experience our worship when we cannot sing together, and may not be able to have communion together?

What about our village churches? Will we continue to worship as a team even when we worship in a building?

And would it even be possible to 'staff' our old service pattern, given that some of our ministers won't be available to lead worship?

Each of these questions - and many others - will need careful consideration, judicious weighing up, and prayerful reflection. This will all take time, not least because we are still awaiting detailed guidance from the Government, the Church of England and the diocese. This may well not be available until sometime next week.

Because this will need to be a 'slow-cooked' decision, and because the information we will need is not available yet, I am still going to take my planned leave which starts this Sunday morning (28th June) and continues until Friday 3rd July. You can imagine that this is much-needed - and will hopefully give me a clearer head on my return when we will start thinking through these sensitive and important issues in earnest.

In the meantime you can help us by completing a simply survey by clicking on the link here

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3C53PVJ>

(Note: where the boxes next to each option are square, you can check as many as you like. Where the boxes are circular, you can only check one.)

The survey will only take about five minutes to complete, and is our way of listening to you about your thoughts and feelings on the potential of returning to church for public worship. It would be really helpful if you would fill this in (the answers will come to me anonymised) AND if you would help anyone not on the internet to add their voice to the discussion by talking them through the questions and completing the survey on their behalf, too.

So - pleased be assured that when we have received the guidance, and when I am back from leave, we will begin exploring this most important issue carefully.

In the meantime, please be assured, as ever, of my love and prayers.

And now - to the tent (in my back garden!) for my holiday from home. (Freya is confused!)

Much love - Revd Mary

Night Prayer

As I explained in last week's letter, our pattern of Night Prayer is changing this weekend. We will continue to share Night Prayer online on Monday-Friday evenings at 9pm. Join us live on our Facebook page, or catch up later on our website, sthelensashby.net.

On Saturday and Sunday evenings, the new invitation is for each of us to pray Compline at home, using one of the orders of service we have prayed with during lockdown. You might like to say Compline at 9pm, mindful of others who are doing the same.

The readings for this weekend are:

Saturday: Psalm 66, Job 25-26, Romans 11.13-24

Sunday: Psalm 50; 1 Samuel 28.3-19, Luke 17.20-end

You might like to choose just one of these and spend your time reading and re-reading it to let its words sink in.

You might find it helpful to light a candle to create a 'sacred space' in your living room or at your kitchen table. Music helps some people to focus, to breathe deeply, to form a point of transition from what has been preoccupying them to a time when they are more conscious of God's presence.

I really encourage you to have a go at praying Compline by yourself - and I would love to hear how you get on! What an opportunity this is to develop sustaining patterns of personal prayer for the long-term.

God bless you in your praying - your speaking and your listening.

Revd Mary

Opening church for funerals

The PCC are meeting this evening (Thursday evening) to consider a risk assessment for hosting funerals in church. We will update you once a final decision has been made. In the meantime, our worship leaders continue to serve our community by offering funerals at the graveside or at the crematorium. We value your prayers for this ministry.

Contact Details

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- ◆ St Helen's website:
<https://www.sthelensashby.net/>
- ◆ Flagstaff Team website:
www.flagstaff.org.uk

◆ 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

Giving online

If you would like a straightforward, cash-free way to give to the mission and ministry of St Helen's during lockdown, you can now do so via our website. Simply visit sthelensashby.net and click on 'Church Life' and then 'Giving'.

Many thanks.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The bereaved:

Please pray for 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
- ◆ Jane Wise
- ◆ Florence Hannah James
- ◆ David Garrett
- ◆ Lindsay Pointon

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

The sick, disabled or housebound:

Pray for ...

- ◆ Tia Rose Brownlow
- ◆ Zoë Chidlow
- ◆ Val Dawson
- ◆ Margaret Stalker
- ◆ Carole Youles

...& others known to you

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

- ◆ Doris Croxton
- ◆ Winifred 'Win' Whiting
- ◆ John Roderick Tuckey
- ◆ Sidney Frederick Kendall

Opening church for solitary prayer

Church is now open each Saturday from 10am to 12 noon for solitary prayer; that is, prayer alone or with members of your household. These opening times will be curated by four volunteers and a chaplain - either Revd Mary or Revd Stewart - we are so grateful to them for offering to serve our community in this way.

If you would like to see what visiting church for solitary prayer will look like, please look at the short film Mary and Stewart have made. It's on our Facebook Page and on the website (under 'What's On' and 'What's coming up'). Just click on this link to see it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaHP2e1o140&feature=youtu.be>

We would welcome your prayers for these opening times - that people would feel safe as they come to pray, and comforted by what they experience. Thank you.

Note from the editor

Jill and Andrew have been having a richly deserved week off this week and so I have produced the notice sheet this week. Any mistakes are entirely mine!

Revd Mary

NOTICES

Free Dial-in Worship Phone Line

Just a reminder that there is a free national phone line, called Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. Simply ring it on **0800 804 8044**.

Please spread the news about this worship option, particularly to those you know who are not on-line.

Giving

We have added a function to the St Helen's Church website whereby monetary giving is now possible.

To do this go to the website <https://www.sthelensashby.net/> where you'll find 'Giving' is one of the options on the drop down menu on the 'Church Life' tab. John Backman has written about our church's approach to giving, and you can click on '[donation here](#)'