



St Helen's Church

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Notices for 12th July, 2020

Dear Friends

I hope you are well and that some of you, at least, are celebrating jaunty new haircuts. By Compline this evening I should be sporting my own and then - what rejoicing there will be!

Our PCC met on Monday to consider the risk assessments we had developed for conducting weddings and funerals in church once again. After careful discussion, and following some helpful additions to the risk assessments, we have agreed that St Helen's is in a position to offer both weddings and funerals to our community again. I think this is good; an important step forward; a proper resumption of our parochial ministry - with every possible precaution in place in compliance with Government and Church of England guidance.

These precautions mean that weddings and funerals will look very different from BC- 'before Covid'. At a wedding, a bride will not be able to be walked down the aisle by her father (unless she routinely lives with him), everyone - apart from the bride and groom - will remain 2m apart at all times and, afterwards, the twenty-six guests that can be present will not be allowed to throw confetti. It may well be that some couples decide this is too impoverished a version of a wedding and will rebook for next year. Many have already done so. We fully understand and

remember them all in our prayers. It has been a very stressful time for them.

Funerals, too, are limited to thirty people and there will be stringent procedures for guiding mourners in and out of the church safely. At neither weddings nor funerals will we be able to sing.

So - weddings and funerals are back on our map, but not as we have known them. Even so Stewart, Andy and I will work very hard to make these occasions as special as we possibly can. There is, we have found, some real beauty in stripped-back services.

Now, we turn our minds in earnest to questions of public worship in the Flagstaff Family of Churches: what that might look like; when that might resume; how often that might take place. We are thankful for all those who have taken time to fill in our questionnaire to help inform our thinking.

On Tuesday evening I am Zoom-meeting with our clergy and licensed lay workers (Andrew Chapman having given his apologies but fed helpfully into the discussion via email) to ask these and other questions. We will then work up a proposed way forward which we will set before PCCs in the following days: on Wednesday, Coleorton; on Thursday Breedon and

Isley Walton and, the following Monday, St Helen's.

As the questionnaire has demonstrated, this is very much a consultative exercise, a listening exercise. Believe me when I write that I am trying very hard to take everyone's needs and concerns into account. However, any decision that we make will be driven by our risk assessment - and that might mean that not everyone's *desires* can be met; it might well mean that we are unable to resume worship in every church in our Flagstaff Family immediately, or even for some time. This is going to be very painful for some. (For those of you who are interested in the legalities, Bishop Martyn has given dispensation to incumbents to suspend the canons requiring Sunday worship in our benefices where our risk assessments indicate that it is not safe to do so.)

This is a very complex task, not least because I have responsibility, not just for St Helen's but for the whole Flagstaff Family, and especially for Staunton Harold, Breedon, Isley Walton and Coleorton. Now, more than ever, we need to 'think team', to ask these questions for the whole patch, to encourage worship together just as we have been worshiping together online. We *cannot* go back to our old service pattern in the medium term (because we cannot 'staff' the old service pattern given that over 50% of our worship leaders are over 70 or shielding because of underlying health conditions). More than this we *shouldn't* go back unthinkingly. This would be to miss what God might have taught us during lock-down: the lessons of closer community; of worshiping beyond boundaries.

To guide us in our deliberations, I have drafted some principles for resuming worship. These are that our worship must be:

1. ...safe

We must order our worship in such a way that the risk of Covid-19 transmitting through our services is minimised. We must follow the Government and Church of England guidance paying especial attention to socially-distanced capacity.

2. ...inclusive

During lock-down, our worship has been open to everyone everywhere. (Those without internet have been included via the telephone thanks to other members of the congregation.) Worshipers from across the Flagstaff Family have joined us, as have others from much further afield. Having included them in lock-down worship, we must continue to include them as restrictions are eased.

3. ...sustainable

We need to ensure that any pattern of worship in our buildings is sustainable for a few months at least as we are likely to be worshiping with restrictions until next Spring at the earliest.

4. ...open

We are not a private club – we are a group of parish churches, there to welcome any who come along. The church building is, itself, a 'sacrament' – a visible sign of God's presence in the world.

5.worshipful

When we gather we do so to learn from God, to worship him, to pray to him. Whatever we offer in our buildings must embrace each of these elements.

6.simple

Worship is not a performance. Any technology that we use must be reliable and unobtrusive. We must not

over-complicate it. It is to serve us rather than we to serve it.

7. ...practical

Worship needs to be possible. Now that we have permission for public worship, we need to find the most readily workable solutions without over-complicating the issue.

You can see that we have a lot of thinking ahead of us. Please would you pray for us that God will give us his wisdom and insight and that, once he has shown us what to do, we will have the courage to do it?

Many thanks.

With love in Christ

Mary

Readings for Weekend Compline on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th July:

- Saturday: Job 42 OR Romans 16.17-end
- Sunday: 2 Samuel 7.18-end OR Luke 19.41-20.8

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The sick, disabled or housebound:

Pray for ...

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

...& others known to you

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, and for the families awaiting the funerals of loved ones.

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

- ◆ Jean Drury
- ◆ Ian Roger Clews
- ◆ George William Wright
- ◆ Harry Heward Williscoft
- ◆ Anne Mary Tatton

Please pray for those who have had to re-think 2020 wedding plans:

Loving God,

Surround them with your presence;

Be with them in their disappointments and in their joys,

Help them to be wise as they re-think their wedding plans.

Sustain them in their love for one another,
And hold all whom they love in your great love.

Amen.

NOTICES

Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology

11th to 19th July

St Helen's will be taking part in this digital event.

There will be lots of fascinating online events nationally, and lots of local history too, including from the University of Leicester Archaeological Services, and from us at St Helen's about the archaeology beneath our Church and Heritage Centre.

More information can be found on the St Helens Heritage Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/sthelensheritage/>, on the Heritage page on the St Helen's website

<https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327486/Heritage.aspx>

and on Instagram at [com/sthelensheritage](https://www.instagram.com/sthelensheritage)

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 service, 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](#)'

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- ◆ Flagstaff Team website:
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◆ St Helen's Prayer Chain requests:

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

◆ Notice Sheet Prayer requests:

To Jill Chapman on 07725
519453sthelensashby@gmail.com

July Magazines

On the St Helen's website you can find not only the St Helen's parish magazine for July, but also a link to St Mary's Coleorton's latest monthly newsletter.

https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/339405/Parish_Magazine.aspx