

Worship at St Mary's during Lockdown #3 *January 2021*

Whether you are regular at St Mary's or an occasional visitor, we are delighted that you have visited our website and are reading this information.

During Lockdown #3 public worship is still permitted, but church leaders have been asked to make decisions that seem appropriate for their own contexts, and have been given permission to close for gathered worship, if that seems best to them.

For the leadership of St Mary's it was by no means an easy decision to decide what to do. We want to make sure we are being sensible and safe, we also want to be missional and pastoral. We recognise that the church is essential and that gathering in person will be for some people enormously beneficial (even though we can't interact fully with one another when we do meet). But we also realise that many will want to stay at home and we don't want anyone to feel guilty for choosing to do so. **We are inviting everyone to prayerfully decide what is right for them.**

Coming to church in person during Lockdown #3

If you come to the 9am or 10.30am service you will notice that the chairs have been reduced in number, spaced out more, and placed singly, which means that even if you come with others from your household, we will all sit individually. Whilst in church, interaction between different households continues to not be allowed. **It is painful for me to say this, but these even tighter restrictions will, I expect, make it extremely difficult for those with children to attend in person.** However, Explore@4 will continue on Zoom each fortnight, and we would love to see all our families there.



Joining in from home via Zoom

All our services will be available for people to join in with remotely using Zoom. There will be some adjustments made in the coming weeks which will make it possible for those at home to play a full part in the service. We hope to improve our technology so that those at home could lead parts of the service, and be seen by those in church on the main screens. It's also been decided that at the 9am and 10.30am there won't be Communion during Lockdown #3 because it excludes those joining in at home. There will be a weekly opportunity to receive Communion in church at 9am on Wednesdays for those who would value it.

Whatever you decide, we hope to see you either in person or on Zoom at one of our services soon. If you need any additional support from the church at this time then please contact us, we would love to be able to help.

Revd Jema Ball
Vicar of St Mary's

What to expect when you come to a service at St Mary's

Before you come:

- You don't need to book to attend, but please don't come on the day if you are feeling unwell in any way.
- Remember to bring your facemask (unless you are exempt from wearing them).

When you arrive:

- There will be markers on the ground as you approach the main doors of church, please wait your turn before entering the building.
- You will need to use the Test and Trace app or complete one of our simple paper forms.
- You will be asked to sanitise your hands and put on your facemask before entering the building.
- We will encourage people to enter the church quietly and find a seat. Chairs are spaced out and set singly.

During the service:

- The expectation is that the congregation will remain in their places throughout the service. There will be times where we stand, but mainly you will be seated.
- We are unable to sing, but at most of our services there will be someone at the front leading the singing on our behalf. Humming behind our masks is permitted!
- Most of our services will not have printed service sheets but everything you need will be projected onto the screens in church.
- There will be a toilet available at the back of church if you need to use it during the service.

At the end of the service:

- We will ask people to leave respectfully and quietly, row by row. There will be a one-way system in place, with everyone leaving through the Church Hall doors (with the exception of those unable to manage the stairs).
- You will be asked to set a good example of maintaining social distancing once outside the church. We want to demonstrate to our neighbours on Mariners Drive that we are taking seriously the rules around households not mixing.