Steyning Parish Church
of St Andrew & St Cuthman

2 July 2020

Dear Friend

It has taken a while for the guidance to emerge about how churches and other places of worship will be asked to manage the resumption of worship from this coming weekend, given the need to ensure social distancing and proper hygiene. The necessary advice runs to many pages. Bishop Martin has been supportive and helpful and stresses that each parish church should be confident about doing what it can, and doing it well.

I met yesterday with other members of the Pastoral Response Group, appointed in consultation with the PCC, and we decided that we should resume worship at St Andrew's and St Cuthman's as soon as possible but that it would be better **to resume worship on Sunday, 12 July** rather than this coming Sunday. This is in order for us to make the necessary preparations and to ensure that we can manage numbers and seating.

As I have already indicated, the return to worship at a time when the coronavirus pandemic is prevalent albeit declining means that worship will feel somewhat different from usual. We will not be able to sing; indeed, even our spoken words must be delivered quietly. We will not be able to use all of the pews to ensure that individuals and families are not seated within two metres of each other. Please also be aware of the **twelve important stipulations overleaf**.

Whilst it is wonderful news that we are able to gather as a congregation again for the Eucharist, it will feel very different especially at first – and we will be aware of those who would like to join us but who need to stay at home. We will be continuing to provide online services for the foreseeable future as well as a fortnightly mailing for those without email.

Yours sincerely in Christ

(Fr) Mark Heather

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Steyning Parish Church is a registered charity number 1132913

Precautions for resuming worship at Steyning Parish Church

1. Our building will accommodate only around 60 people and there will be restrictions which pews we can use.
2. Members of the congregation should feel free to wear face coverings if they wish but there is not requirement for them to do so (unless this is deemed necessary for a volunteer role).
3. There is (of course) no age restriction on who can join us, although those who are over 70 or deemed to be 'clinically vulnerable' ought to be aware of government advice that they should consider staying at home as much as possible, and, if they do go out, should 'take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household'.
4. Whilst those advised to 'shield because they are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to Covid-19' may choose to gather in groups of up to six outdoors (or to form a support bubble with another household), they are advised not to attend indoor places of worship.
5. **Anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not gather anywhere, including church, given the risk they pose to others**.
6. We will be able to participate in the Eucharist although, as for our final service before the lockdown, the people will receive only the consecrated bread. Anyone who feels that they should not receive the host for health reasons is assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits that he conveys to us by them. The presiding priest will consume the consecrated wine on our behalf.
7. We must not exchange the sign of Peace.
8. There will be subtle differences to the way Holy Communion is distributed which will be explained before the service begins.
9. Orders of service and readings sheets will be available with arrangements in place to ensure that these are not a means of infection.
10. Sadly, we will not be able to greet our friends before or after the service. Instead we will need to depart fairly quickly and quietly – or perhaps we should say, prayerfully.
11. We have been asked to keep a simple register of names of everyone who comes to church, just as for other venues in case of any local Covid-19 outbreak and consequent contact tracing. This record can be destroyed after around 21 days.
12. Because of our risk assessments, we will not be providing toilet facilities in church in the short term (except for emergencies). Please plan accordingly.