

Nork with Burgh Heath Parish Update on Church services restarting at St Paul's and St Mary's - Tuesday 11 August 2020

Dear Church Family Members and Parish Friends,

Hoping very much you are all staying well - and managing to keep cool! - and that you have been able to enjoy some of this lovely sunshine this week.

This email contains some information about the church services we are planning on holding this Sunday and also links to the sign up process to enable you to do so.

If you have any questions about any of the content, please do email back or give me a ring: 07312113019.

Information on Church services at St. Paul's and St. Mary's, Sunday 16th August and beyond

As you are aware, there will be services at both St. Paul's and St. Mary's on Sunday and (as long as Government & Church of England advice allows/ providing there are no local lock downs) we will continue with services each Sunday from there.

To start with these will be at 9 am for St. Paul's and 11 am for St. Mary's. This is to enable a greater time between services as it is not possible to simply rush from one church to the other in the current circumstances.

Services will be limited to 40 people and there will be a booking system, on a first served basis, for each church - with St. Mary's (the bigger congregation) initially being over two weeks at a time to see what the uptake is. IE. people from St. Mary's will choose to attend either the 16th or the 23rd with the first set of signing up, but if we find there is a low uptake we will not need this going forward.

Services will be socially distanced in family / household groups and face masks will be worn by everyone except a) those with a medical reason not to, b) those who are under 11, c) those who are leading different parts of the service e.g. I will not wear a mask when I am leading parts of the service, but will when Alastair is preaching this week etc. Alastair will wear a mask for the service, but not when he is preaching and so on.

For those who do not wish to attend church in person at the current time or have medical reasons why this may be unwise, the email service with a pre-recorded sermon will still be sent out on Saturday evenings.

Other useful points:

- No singing is allowed in the services, so at St. Mary's songs will be sung to us by a maximum of 2 musicians (with one singer, following Church of England guidelines). At St. Paul's these will be played through the sound system and will be the same songs which are sung at St. Mary's and are being sent out for those continuing to worship at home

- The toilets will not be entirely out of use, but services will be shortened (at the advice of the Government) and - where possible - church family members are encouraged to go to the toilet at home, wherever possible, to minimise the chances of the spreading of the virus
- There will be no refreshments served
- For the services at both churches people will enter via the main doors and exit via an alternative door which will be labelled clearly (and explained in announcements) to minimise breathing on each other and reduce the chance of the doorways becoming blocked up
- Those who would have been on stewarding rotas/ welcoming rotas and the like are excused from rotas for the current time unless asked to complete a task by myself or the wardens. This is to minimise the number of people on set duties (again, following Church of England advice)
- Separate children's activities are not allowed at the moment and children's areas are to be 'out of use', however children's activities will still be prepared, which families can pick up on entering the building and children can complete whilst sitting with their families in their family groups
- We are asked to limit sharing of papers and bibles, so if church family members would like to be able to follow the bible reading for the sermons, they are invited to bring their own bibles to the services. News will continue to be shared via email for those online and letter, when appropriate, for those who are not
- Holy Communion will be distributed in one kind only (ie bread only and this will be wafers). People will be able to choose to opt in or out of this at the time. Only the priest officiating will distribute communion and we will go to people to give them communion, rather than having people moving around the church

The list is rather longer than this, but this gives you a flavour of the kinds of provision which is needing to be put in place. The services will be very different to those we have been accustomed to, **but it is wonderful to be able to get back into the buildings for worship again in whatever form. I cannot wait to see those of you who will be there on Sunday! Praise God we have got to this point!**

Booking your place at the services:

To book to attend St. Paul's at 9 am on Sunday 16th August at 9 am, please follow the instructions on this link: <https://forms.gle/kdqUfyaaWALaJi1m9>

To book to attend St. Mary's at 11 am on either Sunday 16th August or Sunday 23rd August, please follow the instructions on this link: <https://forms.gle/CJ9gbPmeqC8X7co59>

With love and prayers
Alex

Rev Alex Stevens
Vicar, Parish of Nork with Burgh Heath
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