

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin Saffron Walden with St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

8th July 2020

From the Churchwardens

Re-opening St Mary's for Public Worship

Thank you for your support for our church during these difficult weeks of lockdown, and a big thank you to our ministry team, Paula, Tim, Alex, John and Caroline for all the online services which have enabled our worship to continue. **These services on Zoom and YouTube will continue for the time being.**

This will inevitably be a time of mixed emotions; joy at being able to worship together again in St Mary's; and uncertainty about what the future "new normal" may be and how we will cope with the requirements for physical distancing, hygiene and safety.

Having no rector or curate at this time imposes a significant constraint on the number of services that can be offered. With the support of the ministry team and the assistance of our retired clergy, we hope to have *one* service each Sunday at St Mary's.

The first service on 12th July will be Holy Communion 1662 at 8am; on 19th July there will be Holy Communion at 10am. The programme to the end of August will be published shortly. There will be no evening or weekday services.

Compliance to physical (social) distancing caps the number we can safely have at any one service in St Mary's at 50 (couples and families count as one). **To avoid having to turn people away at the church door prior booking will be necessary for all services (the procedure will be detailed in the weekly bulletin).** To assist in 'track and trace' we are required to record the names, contact numbers and postcodes of all worshippers. This information will be kept for 21 days and then destroyed. You will be asked to sanitise your hands on entering the church, before receiving communion and again on leaving church. We ask for your understanding and forbearance.

At present, communion will be administered in one kind only with no sharing of the common cup and hymn singing is not permitted. It will not be necessary to wear a face mask but you may wear one if you wish. Some of those on duty may be wearing masks. The toilet in church will be available. We are unable to provide coffee/tea after the service and will be encouraging you to leave the church promptly in your family groups rather than congregating at the back for a chat.

We will continue to open for private prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays from 12-4pm. The church will remain closed at other times as we are unable to meet the requirements for stewarding and cleaning.

Please continue to pray for the success of the process for appointing a new rector.

Our present service arrangements will, of course, evolve as and when new guidance is forthcoming. In the meantime, we thank you again for your understanding and send you all our best wishes and the blessings of the risen Christ.

Denis Tindley and Gill Caswell

Churchwardens