

9th JANUARY - OUR DECISION TO CLOSE THE CHURCH TO VISITORS

It is with real regret that we’ve decided that the church should be closed for the time being to visitors. Whilst we don’t believe that the availability of the building for private prayer presents a huge risk of passing on the virus (though, inevitably, there is some) we do believe that to keep it open contradicts the government’s recent clarity that we should all behave as if we have the virus ourselves. As the local incarnation of the national church we think it is important to take a lead in supporting the message that everyone should stay home and that, now, this outweighs the important social good that we can offer by keeping our doors open. We have wrestled hard to avoid this decision but believe that now it is the right time to do so.

31st DECEMBER - A CHANGE TO OUR PROVISION OF SERVICES

Following the Downing Street press conference yesterday afternoon and further clarity about the spread of the Coronavirus, the Wardens and I have taken the decision to move all our services to be ON LINE ONLY for the time being (at 9.30am on Sunday morning). Until further notice there will be NO 8am or 6pm services on Sundays or Wednesday 12 noon Holy Communion. We will keep this under continual review and will aim to return to in person worship as soon as we believe that it is right and safe to do so.

If it is helpful I will lay out our thinking here.

The numbers of infections are now equalling those of the March spike and are set to rise further. They have surpassed those of November when we were asked by Government to lock down and were prevented from holding communal worship.

The very clear Government advice is that people should stay at home unless absolutely necessary, and we have noted that, for the time being, even schools are not re-opening after the Christmas break.

That communal worship is, for the time being, still allowed seems to contradict this and we can only guess as to why. It may have been driven by a desire to enable Christmas worship to take place. It may be because churches and places of worship have not been major sources of infection outbreak. It may have been because of representations made to government earlier in the year arguing that churches should not have been closed in the previous lock downs. However, we can only guess as to what the reasoning is and it leaves us needing to make our own decision locally given the current situation and the wider advice.

Our feeling is that, with infections rising alarmingly and with both lives and livelihoods at real stake because of the affects of the disease on people’s health and the lock down restrictions that it leads to, it is right for us to play our part in following the broad government plea to reduce to an absolute minimum interactions between people so that infection rates can come down and everyone can get back to work as quickly as possible.

We know that not everyone will agree with this, which we respect, but we have thought about it carefully and believe it is the right decision for now.

So, we’ll keep it under careful review and will be keep in touch as the days pass.

We hope you all have as good a new year as you can under the circumstances and we wish us all better things for 2021.