

Dear Friends

I said in last week's letter that I would be back in touch with you concerning the ongoing arrangements for worship during Phase 4. I had hoped that we would resume some form of congregational worship from Sunday 7th June, however, as many of you will be aware, Andy and I have been 'shielding' throughout the lockdown due to underlying health issues. We consulted our GP late on Friday afternoon – as publicly recommended by Dr Brink for those deemed to be in a 'vulnerable' group, and, much to our surprise, our GP advised that we should adopt a highly cautious approach. This means that I will not be able to lead congregational worship during Phase 4. As a result, I have agreed with the Church wardens of St. Sampson and the Trustees of St. Mary's, and have advised the Dean, that during Phase 4, we will continue to worship at 10.30am on Sunday mornings using the Zoom platform. I realise that this will be disappointing for those of you who were looking forward to the resumption of a form of congregational worship in our churches.

In addition to the Zoom service, during this interim period, we are introducing a short time of led intercessory prayer at St. Sampson's Church which will take place on Sunday mornings from 9.45 to 10.00am. This gathering for prayer must be operated in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the States of Guernsey. Amongst other things, this means that no more than 30 people may attend, social distancing must be observed and appropriate hygiene precautions and cleaning measures must be put in place. Furthermore, the prayer leader will have to compile a list of those attending (we propose to operate on the basis of a 'Controlled environment') and this information will be held to assist with any contact tracing which may be required. The data will be held in a GDPR compliant way and would be made available to the States of Guernsey, if needed.

A consequence of introducing this period of led intercessory prayer on Sunday mornings is that we will no longer be able to open St. Sampson's Church for private prayer from Monday to Saturday. This is because we will be opening up all of the pews in the church for use on Sunday to facilitate the required social distancing. This will be achieved by removing the 'do not enter' cordon which had been put up to restrict access to only a small area of the church. In order to minimise any transmission risk, significant additional daily cleaning would be needed and, unfortunately, we do not have the resources to facilitate this.

I hope that this clarifies the arrangements for Phase 4 and the reasons why these decisions have been made. As I said on Sunday, I am aware that some negative comments were posted on social media at the weekend. As you will see from the above, the re-opening raises some logistical and practical issues which we are addressing.

I am profoundly sorry that my personal situation precludes me from leading congregational worship in the church buildings at this time.

In order to help us with planning for the time of led prayer in St. Sampson's Church on Sunday 7th, please would you advise Mark, Natalie and I if you plan to attend.

Thank-you for your understanding.

God bless
Gill
Revd Gill Nobes
Rector of St. Sampson

3 June 2020