



Holy Trinity, Hartshill

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PASTORAL LETTER 4

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St Peter's Galley Common.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

As you know we are, as a country, beginning to 'ease out' of lockdown. As has been both reported and personally experienced that the 'un-lock' is certainly more challenging and confusing than the initial lock down and the rules around church buildings re-opening is no exception to this.

First glances at news reports and generalised media bulletins make it sound so simple. And certainly the initial relief and expectations can easily drown out the complexities of the more practical workings out of how to do it. How we facilitate services again is certainly not as straight forward as the media sometimes portrays and so we, again, are asking you to be patient with us.

Opening up our church buildings for worship needs to address two main issues really. Firstly they are practical issues of making the buildings "Covid Secure" with working out how to make them as safe as possible for all who will be accessing the building for public worship and occasional offices (baptisms, weddings and funerals.) This also includes how we limit numbers attending services to keep within the safe and legal limit that our buildings allow and government guidelines enforce. This then asks the questions of who 'could' or 'should' attend the services depending on personal or family circumstances... although official C of E guidelines say that this is a decision that individuals will have to make for themselves. Secondly there is a management of expectations that needs to be addressed as 'worshipping together' will look very different for the foreseeable future. We may need to initially 'book' people in for any given service to ensure numbers do not exceed parameters. We will also definitely need to log who is there each time to comply with government 'track and trace' systems. Then there is the worship service itself with people sitting socially distanced away from each other, rules saying that singing is not allowed and for the moment, at least, no communion. Also rules state no 'sharing the peace' in any physical way, no refreshments, and no gathering together for simple conversations or fellowship within the service context. But we know we have to start somewhere...and please do look out for potential starting dates for services being started again in the next month or so – providing laws and rules don't change again in the interim time.

PLEASE be assured however that due to the restrictive numbers allowed and nature of the services that we will be doing once our buildings are open again – we will be continuing with the services being sent out by email or by post alongside this for the foreseeable future – as we don't want to 'lose' anyone along the way when we re-start gathering together physically again.

Moving forward

To help us plan effectively – it would be really helpful for us to know what your hopes and plans are for when the buildings are open again for public worship... ie, if you are hoping to join us in person or if you are happy to remain ‘virtually’ connected to us by email / post....as we may need to initiate some sort of ‘booking’ system if more people wish to attend than our buildings can safely allow under the present rules and regulations... so....

Please do drop me an email (if possible) or a quick call to let me know your hopes and plans for when we are re-opening the building for ‘in person’ services...and so let us know if you...

- a) Would want to come back into the building as soon as possible for a gathered service
- b) Not sure yet....maybe in a few weeks/months after the re-opening of the building
- c) Are planning to worship or stay connected on-line / by post for now

Other Resources



Daily Hope is a free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers launched by the Church of England. It has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. 0800 804 8044

Giving

Thank you to all who have been regularly giving by bank transfer or direct debit and for those who have given specifically for our ‘gift days’. For those who don’t give electronically but would like to consider doing so in the future – please let us know and we can pass on the relevant information. For those who want to give but still want to do ‘on the plate’ giving please set those gifts aside and wait until you are back with us in the building again to give your gifts then.

APCM

We are not legally, at the moment at least, allowed to do our annual meeting virtually which is why it is yet to go ahead. We have been given a legal extension to the deadline for this and we will let you know in due course when we get any further information about when and how this can take place.

Staying in touch.

Lastly....if you want to be in touch with others to either call someone or get a call from someone else regularly let us know and we will try to pair people up or put you in buddy groups if that would help. We have had very little response so far – perhaps because you are just still doing this already which is great...but we don’t want anyone to feel left out – so do let us know.

With the assurance of our continued thoughts and prayers for you - and with our thanks to you for your prayers for us. God bless <><

Heather & *Sharon*