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St Mary The Boltons

rooted in faith - open in thought - reaching out in service



Friends,

This week we are keeping the Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

The services this Sunday will be at 8am – Holy Communion (BCP), and 10.30am Holy Eucharist, with music and sermon.

If you come along to church, you'll find that we are doing our best to obey the Second

Great Command, to love our neighbour as ourselves: please help us to protect each other in church by

- sanitising your hands on entry
- placing your offering in the plate at the back of church or use the contactless point
- consider filling in the Test and Trace form with your name and phone number (the forms are kept for 21 days and then destroyed; your information is not used for any other purpose, and you won't be added to our database.
- wear your face covering while in church (removing it to take communion, of course) unless you are exempt for medical reasons or by virtue of age. Those who wear theirs will be protecting those who cannot. If you don't have a face covering, we will be glad to provide one.

As of today (Saturday 8 August), members of the public attending public worship will be required to wear face coverings. I have been struck by how many people do wear their face coverings already in church – very nearly 100%, with the exception of people who are exempt of course. I know that it's been a cause of consternation to see the clergy and readers also wearing them – thank you to those who have expressed your concerns about that.

It may help to know that currently (and this may change, of course) the Church of England's guidance is this: *There are valid exemptions for some individuals and groups not to wear a face covering [in church]. In particular, **those who are leading services** or events in a place of worship, and those who assist them (for instance by **reading, preaching, or leading prayer**) do not always need to wear a face covering, although one should be worn especially if physical distancing cannot be maintained (i.e. distributing consumables). This exemption does not apply to worshippers, who should wear face coverings consistent with the requirements for any other public space.*

I hope this means that distress caused in the past couple of weeks by seeing the vicar's face covered will be alleviated.

Of course we continue to wear our face coverings not just because we must by law, but because we are caring for one another, and particularly those who are most vulnerable.

There is room in church for lots of people, particularly if the regular members are generous enough to fill the pews from the front, rather than sitting in 'your' seat, so that newcomers or visitors (or latecomers) are able to find a place to sit. There are chairs in the transepts is well.

Children are very welcome to sit with their families, and also to bring along something quiet in case they need other occupation during the service – but NO electronic devices, please! We regret that the Children's room is not currently available. We are considering how we can resume Sunday School in September, while keeping to the regulations for

social distancing.

If you are staying home or are on holiday, you can still access the podcast as usual. This week's podcast can be heard [here](#) and the order of service, with words to the hymns and prayers can be downloaded [here](#) and a large print version [here](#). I hope that you'll listen on Sunday morning at 10.30am when the church service is going on, and rejoice that unlike those in church, you are able sing along with the hymns with gusto! Once again, we are grateful to John Ward who has been putting these together week by week. If you would like to help by recording a reading or intercessions for the podcast do please contact me for full instructions.

Weekdays in Church

Morning Prayer 8.30am in the Chancel beyond the altar

Evening Prayer at 5.30pm (Not Thursdays) in the Chancel beyond the altar.

Silent Prayer meets this Wednesday 12 August at 11am in Church.

Living through Coronavirus – collecting our stories

We have already had a few Coronavirus stories and reflections from members of our congregation and wider community. We will publish them in due course, in hope that what is shared might help us think about what sort of church we want to be. It would be good to hear your thoughts on these questions:

How have you spent the past 4 months of lockdown? Was it a time of endurance or discovery? Was it a time of frustration or liberation? Was it a time of happy solitude or longing for time alone? What about your spiritual experience during this time? Have you prayed differently? Lived differently? Has your faith been questioned? What has 'being Church' meant for you during this time? Has St Mary's meant something different, new to you? What might we do differently that would help you? And what would you like to do differently at St Mary's? Send them to the Office (office@stmarytheboltons.org.uk) or to me.

The Clarion summer issue for July and August is available here and also in hard copy from the church porch. The deadline for copy for the September issue is 24 August, and the theme is Reconciliation – the 7th and final sacrament.

Food banks and homelessness charities are going to be overwhelmed as the furlough and homelessness schemes come to an end. It's predicted that an added 3000 people in our part of the borough will become unemployed, and unable to pay rent or buy food for their families.

Eat out to help out If you are likely to benefit from the Chancellor's 'Eat out to help out' discount when eating out this month, why not consider giving the money you've saved to the local food banks or food distribution centres serving those who cannot afford to eat at all. We continue to support Dad's House, Glassdoor and the St Cuthbert's Centre. We will

be glad to receive your donations of food, toiletries etc for their clients.

Finance and giving

As with all of us, the financial situation at St Mary's is serious. Our church still needs to meet its costs of paying our Common Fund to the diocese and the salaries of our lay staff who are **F** continuing to work or be furloughed. Our Sunday collections and income from have stopped during the closure, as has the important income from hall lettings. Thank you to all those who have continued to support St Mary's through regular giving and one off donations. Can I please encourage you, if you are one of those would normally put your donation into the plate on Sundays, to consider giving by bank transfer, whether each week or by standing order? It is easy; we can still benefit from your GiftAid, and it will help us to maintain our ministry in this difficult period.

PCC of St Mary with St Peter and St Jude

Account Number: 80692190

Sort code: 20-80-14

Blessings,



**The Revd Jenny Welsh
Vicar**

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