

RETURNING TO CHURCH: WHAT TO EXPECT



We are opening for services in our church building from Sunday 12th July.

There are lots of different emotions, positive and negative, around the lifting of lockdown and the return to gathered worship. We share many of these! However, we're confident that we are ready to welcome those who would like to gather physically, and to do so safely and in line with government and Church of England guidance.

Here are some details, so you know what to expect...

THE SERVICE

Online

Our online resources for adults, youth and children will continue right through the summer. We anticipate that many, if not most, people will want to continue using these rather than returning to church at this early stage.

Onsite

When? We will hold two services at 10am and 6pm, both in church. They will be the same service, repeated. They won't feel like the 'old' 10am and 6pm beginning again!

What? We are going to follow the same service structure that we are using online in the 'All-in-one Service' and the Sunday Prayers sheet. This means that we will all be doing the same service, however we choose to gather.

How long? The service will be shorter (about 45 minutes), with readings, prayers and the sermon.

Music: There will be no singing, although there will be simple music played during the service by one of our pianists.

Sermon: The sermon will be the same as in the online service, although delivered by an actual person, not on the screen! Joy is preaching this Sunday.

Youth and Children: There will be no youth or children's provision. We would love to see church members of every age including our children and young people. But please be aware that there won't be space at the back of church for children to play if they get restless.

PRACTICALITES

Covid symptoms and shielding: Please do not come to church if you or anyone in your household has a temperature, a persistent cough, loss of taste or smell. Similarly, please do not come if you are shielding or have been given medical advice not to go into public spaces.

Numbers: The exact number we can hold safely in the building will depend on how many singles, couples and families arrive. We are not booking ahead, so arrive in good time and be aware that you may need to join a small queue to get in.

Entrance and stewarding: We will use the large West doors (not the usual South door). These are the doors at the bottom of the tower, facing the road. We will ask people to sanitise their hands as they enter the building. Stewards will guide you to your pew.

Social distancing: Please keep 2 metres away from people outside your household.

Registering: The stewards will keep a list of everyone who attends. This is following government and Church of England advice. We will keep this list for 21 days.

Face coverings: In accordance with the recent changes on wearing face coverings, please bring your own to be worn throughout the service.

Service sheets: We will hand out service sheets as you arrive. Please take these away with you at the end.

Toilets and Church Hall: The church hall will remain shut. However, toilets will be available for essential use – please speak to a Steward.

Refreshments: We won't be serving refreshments at the end of the service.

Exit: The stewards will guide people to leave, one pew at a time. Please do not congregate outside the church building to talk to people. (That was the hardest sentence in this email to write, I'm sure you understand!).

We have been keen to return to gathered worship as quickly and safely as possible. So, we are deliberately starting with simple and short services, repeating the content from the online resources. We're also aware that the summer holidays are not a good time to invent a completely new style of worship service! Of course, none of us have ever experienced socially distanced worship before – so please bear with us. We will need to develop and learn each week, just as we did when we first went online in March.

When we went into lockdown, we preached from Hebrews 10: **“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings”**. Please pray for us, as we all prepare to do that on Sunday, wherever and however we meet.

If you have any further questions, please contact the church office: office@st-nics.org