

To Residents attending the Orchard Room for Holy Communion

Dear Friends

5th September 2020

It is with regret that I write to you personally to advise that it is currently not going to be possible to provide you with our fortnightly church service of Holy Communion at the Orchard Common Room. Although I am aware that Platform are allowing the room to be used in a limited manner, the guidance I have received from Platform and the Church of England does not allow for its use for worship at the present time.

At present, the common room does not allow for the required social distancing for the size of our service, we are not permitted to have refreshments, hymn singing is not permitted and Communion will only be administered by bread alone (which in itself is not an issue). Face coverings are required. Also, gatherings of a number of people over the age of 70 potentially or additionally with health cares or concerns is not being encouraged to assist with reducing the risk of transmission of the virus. I do hope you understand these issues are largely out of my control and are the unintended consequences of the Covid pandemic. I cannot give you any timescale for reinstatement which I know is going to be disappointing. I have advised Neville, Paul and David of this situation.

The churches across the Old Hills Benefice, including St Peter's at Powick and St James' at Callow End are reopening for Sunday worship from Sunday 6th September. Each church will have a service once a fortnight and details are available in the Parish Magazine, if you subscribe, or via the church website: www.oldhillsmalvern.co.uk. There is a fortnightly pattern to their reopening which looks like this:

<p>Week 1 (from Sunday 6th September) Powick at 11am (Guarford at 9.30am) Week 2 (from Sunday 13th September) Callow End at 9.30am (Madresfield at 11am) <i>(I am showing all four churches for ease of reference). All churches will adhere to social distancing and face covering guidance, sanitizing stations have been created and a system to record attendance for NHS Test/Trace is in place. Each service will take no more than 45mins and include personal prayer.</i></p>

In addition, from Sunday 13th September, there will be an evening service on Zoom internet video conferencing for 30mins. A Night Prayer has been a success over the pandemic - that happens on Zoom each Thursday night at 8.30pm. For the Zoom services, you will need to be on the internet and be able to connect with Zoom. Please contact me with an email address so I can add you to our mailing list for the access codes if that is something that interests you.

At present, assuring all of our safety and care is of paramount importance, as has been the continued watching over of the flock. The congregation that has gathered at The Orchard will do so again at some point I am sure. I do hope that you feel able to attend our reopened church services or join us "on line" until we can gather locally again.

With all good wishes and blessings