

Preparing for Church Reopening

Your churches across Powick, Callow End, Guarlford and Madresfield will reopen for worship from Sunday 6th September 2020. Please see the service rota to see when your local church is going to be open.

Government and Church of England Advice and Guidance, and some regulation, will change the nature and extent of Church Worship for the foreseeable future. Although this article reflects current guidance, as at the 7th July 2020, things might or could change further. You are urged to watch/bookmark the parishes website (www.oldhillsmalvern.co.uk) or follow us on *Facebook* (search *Rev Gary Crellin* or news feeds on main community *Facebook* pages and *NextDoor* Powick). Alternatively call the vicarage for advice - 01905 830270 or contact your local churchwarden or verger.

Things to bear in mind for Sunday worship, attendance at Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals:

You will be asked to use Hand sanitiser as you enter and as you leave your church.

Consider bringing your facemask with you – limited supplies will be available if you forget but it would help the churches if you could bring your own if required or advised.

All those volunteers supporting the churches' reopening ambitions will strive to make the building as COVID Secure and Safe as we can. Please play your part by taking the instructions given about the use of the building with grace, help us to keep the cleaning burden to a minimum and only access the areas that are open to you. Thank you.

If you are part of a party wishing to come to church, please contact The Vicarage to discuss. Please do not just turn up without prior notice. The church capacity will also affect baptisms, funerals and weddings so please seek advice before you start inviting. Please see below for Church Capacity information.

Each church will have a defined maximum seating capacity reflecting the national guidance on physical and social distancing. We are not permitted to go beyond our capacity levels which are set at the 2m level unless we can safely ensure additional safety precautions for 1m plus (i.e. the use of face masks or other personal protective equipment, enhanced ventilation and cleaning, etc). Please respect our judgement.

If you are unwell with COVID Symptoms, what are you doing in Church? Be aware of the virus's symptoms - be alert to the virus in our midst. Join in with our services online rather than worshipping in public if you are isolating. Likewise, if you are in a high-risk group due to your age (70 yrs +) or underlying health conditions or concerns, think carefully about gathering with others. For your sake - and those serving you in church.

The Church nationally has been asked to cooperate with *NHS Track and Trace* in the hope that we can all work together to contain the spread and reach of the virus in our community. When you attend for worship, you will be asked to complete a contact card which you will leave with us in church for 21 days. If formally requested by the NHS or

Council Public Health officials, the Vicar will share these cards should the need to arise. After 21 days, unless you have consented for the information to be used for church communication, these cards will be shredded. Even if you are a regular worshipper, or visiting for a wedding, funeral or baptism, you will be asked to complete this card on every visit. Even the Vicar will complete one each time he visits!

Services will predominantly be a service of The Eucharist - Holy Communion. The Communion will take the form of administration of the bread as host alone. The Vicar/presiding priest will use sanitiser and where appropriate personal protective equipment.

The worship will be different - unfortunately, we are not able to sing out loud (hymns) and you will get tired of the Vicar's / Minister's voice as he/she will have to do the whole service themselves without readers or intercessors. There will not be a much floral decoration, choir, procession, The Peace - but there will be time to give thanks, to worship with reflective music, to learn and to pray together. If you give to the Collection, we would appreciate you moving towards cashless giving by standing order as the cash handling and bank visits are considered to be a viral transmission risk to our volunteers.

Unfortunately, we cannot offer refreshments or access to our toilet or kitchen facilities, where available, at the moment.

We are considering how we can commemorate Remembrance Sunday, All Souls, Advent Sunday and Christmas given the likelihood that COVID19 will still be with us. These services are really popular and respected across our villages but might have to be planned for differently this year. Our *Lord's Alive* service for Families and Children has successfully migrated on line to Facebook and is developing a considerable following. Perhaps there is a clue there.

Your Church in the community - how we can support our schools and care providers
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The churches have a valued role in our communities – supporting the frail and those needing care and through a vibrant ministry into our primary schools and early years providers. Church involvement with our friends at Severn Heights Care Home and the three primary schools and early years providers will be very much at their request and speed. It is highly likely that school assemblies in church and our Open the Book presentations will not happen for a while. Similarly, it is unlikely that the church will be in a position to offer Communion at the Orchard at Colletts Green. We will have to be creative and safe in how we attend to the needs of local residents who gain so much from our ministry and fellowship.

Welcome to worship and ministry in the new Normal. Take Care and every blessing

The Reverend Gary Crellin

Vicar of the Parish of Powick and the Parish of Guarlford and Madresfield with Newland

July 2020