

Dear Friends

Worship at St Barnabas after 19 July

As you will be aware, from the 19 July the majority of the legal restrictions in place to safeguard us from COVID-19 have been removed. In place of restrictions comes a responsibility on individuals with regard to our own safety, and that of those with whom we have contact.

The PCC, Clergy, and Wardens have discussed the way forward beyond this date. In doing so there has needed to be a balance between those who are enthusiastically yearning for a normal worship service, and also those who are feeling more apprehensive about returning to church. The approach is proportionate and recognises that we want to get back to normal as soon as possible, but are not yet out of the pandemic.

With this in mind the following changes to our worship are below:

10:30am

Church Layout

- In the main area of the church we will bring the chairs a bit closer together again and people can sit in larger groups if they so choose.
- With this in mind, it is worth recognising, with our current numbers attending we are not in a position of being a crowded venue. However, for those who may feel a bit more concerned about returning there will be the option to sit nearer the back of the church where we will maintain social-distancing at least over the summer.
- For those who are comfortable without social distancing please can you sit in the main seating area to allow others to sit in the back chairs.

Mask Wearing & Singing

- Though government restrictions are lifted in regard to mask wearing, we still think that it is for the best for us as a community if we continue to wear our masks. This will help those who may be more apprehensive about returning in particular, and is a good way to demonstrate our love for one another. This means that we will be encouraging anyone attending our 10:30am service to wear a mask throughout the service except where you are involved in the service, or if consuming refreshments at the end.
- However, it is delightful that we are now all able to sing again and many of us will be looking forward to worshipping God in this way. We will have our masks on, but we hope this will still encourage us to get back to singing out our praises to God.

Holy Communion

- In the short-term we will not go back to the shared cup as the risk of infection is greater with this, however, we will change from the bread being brought to your seat, to the congregation queuing to receive.
- For those with families we would encourage that children stay with their parents during this time.

Other Mitigations

- We will maintain our provision of hand sanitiser and would encourage all attending to use this on entry and other times as appropriate.
- Though people are not obliged to check-in to venues using the App, we would encourage people to use this on arrival.
- We will also continue to leave doors and windows open wherever possible.

All these measures will be reviewed at the end of August with the hope that gradually things will fully return to normal. We recognise that for some these may not go far enough and for those people we will continue to provide our streamed service which will alternate between St Paul's and St Barnabas.

I hope that this reassures you that we are doing all we can to return to normal whilst also being safe. However, if you do have any question or concerns then please do get in touch with either myself, or one of our Church Wardens.

Yours in Christ,