



Tiptree Rectory
Friday, 22nd July

Dear Brothers and Sisters

This week we have moved to a new phase in which our government is no longer telling us by law what we can and cannot do, but is asking us all to exercise personal responsibility in the choices we make about our actions. There are no longer any legal limits on numbers attending church services nor are there any social distancing requirements.

I am aware that there are many people who are longing for things to go back to how they were before this pandemic and who want church to “go back to normal”. I am equally aware of those who are feeling anxious and vulnerable and who are now feeling less safe going out than they were a week ago. There are a number of people who have not been back to church at all and will be less likely to come back if they do not feel church is safe.

As Christians, we have a particular calling to live not for ourselves, but for others, to put the needs of others first and to be mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. Over the past week, our PCCs have consulted together to put in place a plan to move ahead with caution and to make changes to our present arrangements slowly and gradually.

For this reason we are asking everyone to continue to wear a face covering when you come to church, unless you are exempt. You will not need to book a place in advance and you can sit where you choose, but it will always be possible for you to sit at a distance from others if you wish to. We will continue not to shake hands at the Peace and to receive Communion as we have been doing in recent weeks. We will gradually re-introduce hymns, starting with just one or two per service. We will ask everyone to keep their face coverings on to sing. Each church will make its own decision about when to re-introduce hymns.

We will keep all our arrangements under review and will make changes if the number of cases in the local area increases or decreases dramatically. We will review all our arrangements at the end of August.

I want everyone to feel safe coming to church and I am grateful for the huge amount of work our churchwardens and vergers are doing to put safety measures in place.

Thank you for working with us to help everyone in our worshipping communities feel safe.

Anne-Marie

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