

2020-06-25 Details regarding Opening for Private Prayer

Church will be open for private prayer on Sunday afternoons from the 28th June, between 3 and 4pm for the foreseeable future. However, the sessions will be carefully managed in light of the coronavirus pandemic, based on Church of England and Government guidelines.

So what does that mean in practise?

1. Please don't come if you have any symptoms of coronavirus, or if you are vulnerable or shielding (We ask that in love and care for you – we cannot completely eliminate risk, only reduce it as far as we can).
2. There will be lots of signs!
3. We will be keeping an informal register of people attending to aid with track and trace if it should be required; we ask that you notify us of any coronavirus symptoms which develop after your visit. Each register will be kept by the relevant duty steward and destroyed after 14 days.
4. When you arrive, please wait outside the main church door until you are allowed into the building by the steward(s) on duty. Doors will be propped open, windows too, to increase ventilation. Be prepared for a draught and traffic noise.
5. To conform to social distancing, we can't allow many people into church at one time – we've worked out that we have in total ten physical spaces (each can accommodate up to two people from a single household) in the pews, 6 in the first half hour and 4 in the second. You'll be directed to a free pew when you come in, and asked to leave after 25 minutes – it may be that some people need less time than that but the space will not be re-used.
6. You will need to bring your own Bible or prayer book, as we have had to remove all shared resources. The Church of England website has some useful [prayer resources here](#).
7. There will be NO access to the Chapter House – and therefore no access to toilets or handwashing facilities – so hand gel will be provided at the entrance to church.
8. We are setting up a one-way system along the woodland path, to allow for private prayer in the great outdoors. We'd like to encourage more able-bodied folk to use this option in times of high demand.
9. Please consider how frequently you plan to make use of the open church sessions for private prayer – if only ten people decided they wanted to come weekly, we would only be serving ten members of our congregation, and not the wider community who may wish to visit. Praying at home is definitely an option!

We have no idea of what demand there will be for private prayer; we could be overwhelmed (like Primark on the first day of shops opening!) or we may have only one or two people. We will be monitoring the situation and reviewing guidelines as they come through from the C of E and government, and making changes accordingly.

We are looking forward to being back in our building but at the same time, feel a weight of responsibility to do this right for as many people as we can. Please bear with us – and pray for us – as we move from a paper-based exercise to the real thing!

Katherine and Adele