



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

United Benefice of Heybridge with Langford.

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CM9 4BL

06.07.20

Dear Visitor,

I do hope that this letter finds you well and that the last 100 days or so of Lockdown have provided some moments of hope amidst the hardship.

I write with some good news: as of Friday 10th July, we are able to restart acts of public worship in our three church buildings. This letter is simply to explain what is happening, where and when, as well as providing you with some information as to how restrictions will impact the shape of worship.

For your diary, the dates and times are as follows:

St Giles, Langford will have a 5pm service of said Evening Prayer, from Friday 10th July.
St Andrew's, Heybridge will have an 11am service of said Morning Prayer, starting on Sunday 12th July. St George's, Heybridge Basin, will have a 9.30am service of said Morning Prayer, from Monday 13th July. This pattern of worship will continue throughout July and August and be reviewed ahead of September. Sadly, the current restrictions mean that St Lucy's, Multi-Sensory church is still unable to restart. Please be praying it may do so safely soon.

It is fair to say that navigating the restrictions, and following as closely as possible our existing patterns of worship, has involved much work and my thanks go especially to Gerald Matthews, Joy Norman, Irene Allen, Rosemary Taylor, Lynne Wood and Julia MacGregor for the detailed suggestions and amendments they provided. Moving safely from supervised private prayer on a Sunday would not have been possible without their contributions and I am sure you will join me in extending our gratitude to them - thank you.

The services will follow a similar pattern to each other and last about 25 minutes. Social distancing guidelines apply and you will be seated 2m from other worshippers, unless you share a household.

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I shall be at every service, even if I am not leading, so that I can catch up with you each in person. I hope to use some of my annual leave over the summer, but the dates are yet to be confirmed. I am grateful for all the offers of support we have received to make this possible.

Cleaning becomes very important for your safety and so churches will be unused in the 72 hours prior to a service to reduce the risk of cleaning. Toilets are also going to be closed for the services at all three church buildings, again because of the need to reduce cleaning and risk to our cleaners.

Hand gel will be provided at the entrance to and from each church building and a signposted one-way system applies in each church building. Adhering to this will take some getting used to, but it has worked well during the times of supervised private prayer. Face masks may be worn, but are not compulsory.

The liturgy we use will be a 'call and response' liturgy from Common Worship that requires no service sheet, except for the person leading the service.

However, **you will need to bring your own bible** to make that liturgy work safely. If you can please take the time to familiarise yourselves with where the Psalms are in your Bible and the first chapter of St Luke's Gospel – and place bookmarks in both places – it'll help us as we work through the liturgy safely together.

Following Government guidelines, there will sadly be no singing and the 2m social distancing guidelines make Communion in our context so impractical as to be impossible. We will review this ahead of September.

A retiring collection will be taken for the general fund after each service, but those counting it will be required to wear the gloves provided. Sadly, votive candles remain suspended.

A register of attendance will also be attempted at each service, in compliance with the request from the Government to aid any subsequent COVID – 19 track and trace enquiry.

No-one has ever done this before, therefore we are taking every precaution so as to worship as safely as possible, soonest. I thank you for your forbearance as we attempt to restart public worship in our church buildings.

Looking forward to seeing you soon and God bless,

Reverend Asa Humphreys