**Frequently asked questions**

Regarding the re-opening of St James’s for public worship

***When will public worship at St James’s restart?***

St James’s will resume public worship on **Sunday 16 August 2020**.

There will be two Sunday worship services for St James’s:

* ***9am:*** In person worship (said service) in the church building—much of this guidance regards this service
* ***10am:*** Interactive online worship service (sung service with Communion) on Zoom, and live-streamed from the Lady Chapel.

Note that these arrangements are not the ‘new normal’ but will be under monthly review.

***Will there be live-streaming?***

If you would prefer a live-streamed service, this would be the 10am service from the Lady Chapel without an in-person congregation, which can be found on St James’s facebook page: *www.facebook.com/StJamesEnfieldHwy*

***Do we have to limit the number of people in church at any one time?***

Yes.  This is due to keeping safe distance from worshippers who are not in the same household or ‘social bubble’. In the current seating arrangement, there is

* space on the outer aisles of the pews for individuals and pairs (accommodating 2 adults, and the equivalent of 22 adults total in these sections left and right)
* space on either side of the centre aisle reserved for households, families and those in the same social bubble (accommodating up to 4 adults in each row, and the equivalent of 44 adults in this section)
* three chairs in the left rear of the church for individuals with buggies or trollies
* three chairs near the font reserved for the stewards/sidespeople helping in the service

Total numbers depend on the people arriving to church and in what combination (individual, pair, household/family/social bubble).

These are the areas that are not available for seating:

* The upstairs gallery, as it is difficult to control numbers of people, their movements, and the risk of touching things while gaining access to upstairs
* The choir stalls, as they face at a 90° angle to those sitting in the front pews
* The rear- and side-facing pews by the baptismal font, as this prevents safe distance from the stewards/sidespeople sitting in chairs in that section
* The Lady Chapel, which will be reserved solely for livestreaming daily prayers and the 10am online service.

***At what time will the church be open?***

The doors will open at 8.45am, to minimise the amount of time people are waiting in the church building. If you arrive at church before then, we ask that you keep a 2-metre distance from those not in your household or ‘social bubble’. There is yellow tape on the church walk between the street pavement and the main doors of church to mark this.

We ask that you arrive before 9am, as we will not be able to guarantee a place to sit for the service after the service starts.

***What will happen when I enter church?***

Some churches have started a reservation service, but we’d like to see whether we can manage accommodating a congregation at the 9am service without having to reserve a spot beforehand.

Seats in the church will be on a ‘first come, first seated’ basis. Those arriving (whether as individuals, couples, or families/households) will be asked to apply hand gel at the back of church, and then they will be shown their seats in the pews by the stewards/sidespeople, starting from the front, and then work towards the back of church.

We would ask that you remain in your seats, as our church doesn’t allow a one-way system.

***Will a track and trace system be in operation at church?***

Yes. Before you are shown your seat, there is a box in which you place a piece of paper that has your name (and the names of those in your household), and a contact number. Slips of paper and single-use pens are available should you not bring a track-and-trace contact slip with you to church.

In line with official guidance, this information will be kept on hand for 21 days, and then discarded. These details will not be used for any other purpose.

***I came regularly to St James’s before the lockdown; will I able to sit in my usual place in church?***

Probably not, given that we will show people to allocated seats, filling from the front of the pews and working towards the rear of the church.

***Can we receive communion?***

Not at the 9am service; at the moment there are still serious concerns, that there is no legally sanctioned manner of distributing communion without breaching minimum safe distance.

The 10am Zoom/Facebook service will still be a communion service, and worshippers at home are invited to have bread and wine (or something similar to hand) so that we may commune with each other and with God.

***Will we be singing hymns in church?***

Not at the 9am service. Official guidance prohibits congregational singing, as this increases the risk of transmission. The 10am online service will have hymns and singing, though.

***Can we share the Peace with each other?***

No.  For the time being please we are to refrain from physically sharing the Peace during services.

***Will there be an offertory collection at 9am?***

No. The collection plates will not be passed around at the offertory, but you make your gift in two ways:

* There is a contactless donation terminal in the back of the church.
* Cheques, cash and envelopes in the collection dish next to the contactless terminal. You are encouraged to bring your own gift aid envelopes; we have packets of envelopes on hand that you can take home, if you would like to pay via cheque or cash in that way.
* There is provision for online donations via a link on the weekly electronic newsletter and on the parish website ([*www.stjameschurch.cc*](http://www.stjameschurch.cc))
* If you would like to be a regular giver to St James’s via standing order, please contact our Stewardship Secretary, Carol Harvey, at *stewardship@stjameschurch.cc*.

***What will the 9am service be like?***

It will be a said service with scripture readings, a sermon, and prayers. It should last between 40 and 45 minutes, and follows much of the structure and the flow of what you might have been used to at St James’s. The omission of hymns, the Peace, offertory and communion will make the service shorter, of course. If you would prefer these, you are welcome to join in with online worship at 10am.

***Do I have to wear a face mask in church?***

Yes. The wearing of face masks which cover the nose and mouth are now required by law in places of worship. Children under 11 are exempted from this, and there are also valid exemptions in law. This might apply to you, but before coming to church, please do consider the risk to yourself and others by not wearing a mask. While we won’t prevent you from attending worship, we would strongly urge you to think about the health and safety aspect to yourself and to others in the congregation, and encourage you to join us in online worship at 10am.

We will have a supply of face masks available at church, and if anyone over 10 years of age arrives at church without a mask, a steward/sidesperson will ask if you require or desire one. If you have a valid exemption, though, you are nonetheless welcome to worship with us in the church building, no questions asked.

All ministers and volunteers will be wearing masks during the service, to demonstrate that we are all in this together, so that we may worship safely.

***I find wearing masks uncomfortable—could I attend church wearing a transparent face visor instead?***

It has been found that visors are not a viable alternative to a face-mask made of cloth (woven material) that covers the nose and mouth. A steward/sidesperson will nonetheless ask if you would like a mask, as we will have a supply of them on hand in church. If, however, you have a valid exemption to the legal requirement to wearing a mask, and if wearing a visor might bring you peace of mind, no-one will prevent you. But be aware that visors on their own do not decrease risk significantly enough to be an alternative, but are meant to be worn i*n addition* to a face mask.

***Is the toilet closed?***

The toilet remains open, following official guidance, but it will be reserved for urgent use only. The toilet, basin, and all items that can be touched (including grips and handles) will be sanitised by a steward after every use.

We ask that the area outside the toilet in the vestibule be left clear, to maintain proper distance, and not to hinder access to those requiring it.

***Will we have access to books and pew sheets?***

No.  We have removed all of our books, leaflets and papers from the back of the church. Everything you will need will be projected on the screen.

***Can I light a candle while in church?***

No. We’ve removed the candle stand from the area next to the choir vestry, to prevent people from handling items.

***Will there be tea and coffee after the service?***

No.  Only churches that have cafés as part of their buildings can serve refreshments. You may bring a bottle of water with you, but please make sure that you take it with you when you leave, to reduce these items having to be handled by others.

***What provision is there for children?***

According to official guidance, we have removed all children’s books and toys, and the crèche is off-limits. At present Junior Church is not meeting. Children will need to sit with their families in their allocated pew for the full service. We recommend that you bring books and other suitably quiet items for children while they sit with their families in the pews.

***What happens at the end of the service?***

When the worship service has ended, the stewards/sidespeople will direct the people to depart from church, starting from the back, and ending with those in the front pews. You are asked not to congregate or socialise in the back of church, or even outside the church, but to go home. Socialising should be done from church, in sensible and prudent ways, for everyone’s safety. St James’s has many opportunities throughout the week for the congregation to interact informally and casually, all online.

If you wish to have a word with the clergy or the lay leaders, you can make sure that we have your contact details, but contact should be kept to the telephone and emails.

At the end of the service the minister will move to the Lady Chapel to ensure a prompt start of online and live-streamed worship at 10am. When the congregation has departed the church building, volunteers will be on hand cleaning the pews and seats in preparation for the Church of Pentecost’s worship service in the early afternoon.

***Is St James’s open at any other times?***

At present there is no other provision for having the church open during the week. That said, however, there is a steady diet of prayer services, Bible study groups, and fellowship, all taking part online. The mid-week communion service will remain online at present.

**Are these arrangements the ‘new normal’?**

No. These are the provisions as we begin to resume public worship at St James’s. These provisions will be reviewed monthly by the vicar and churchwardens.

*revd Ian Gallagher · vicar*