

Re-opening for Public Worship in the Seven Towers Benefice

We are delighted to inform you that after having very carefully considered the safe re-opening of any church within our Benefice for worship, a decision has been made.

For the short term (at least until the end of August), from Sunday 19th July and every Sunday thereafter (taking into account the current guidance re Covid 19, which could change!) St Lawrence's Church in Sandhurst will open for a said Holy Communion service at 8.30am and our Zoom services on line will continue at 10.00am.

Having consulted with the Benefice Steering Committee and Church Wardens this decision has not been made lightly. St Lawrence's Church has been chosen as it provides us with the space and technology to keep people safer. The church can hold more people safely distanced, has a car park for those attending and the projector and screen mean we don't have to use orders of service booklets.

Numbers at St Lawrence's will be limited and a booking system will be in place. Holy Communion, though familiar will be different! (*Details on the next page*).

May we take this opportunity to invite you back into church, but to add that for your own safety, as much as we have done our best to try to ensure this, if you are over seventy or have an underlying health condition, or have been shielding yourself or another person please do consider all of this very carefully. If you are unsure, there is NHS guidance on: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

We'd obviously love to welcome you back but understand completely if you choose not to at this time. We will still be holding our zoom online services at 10 am every Sunday (except the third, when it may be a Morning or Evening Prayer on zoom) and sending out audio CDs of those services to anyone who wishes to receive them.

We will be keeping everything under review as we move forward and we make changes if we are advised to by the Government and Church of England.

At present we are all going through uncertain times and things are different and have to be. But God's love for us never changes, his love for us is constant and has overcome the darkest of times. We see that in the life death and resurrection of Jesus, and it is this that we come together to celebrate, be that in a building or online.

Both Philippa and myself look forward to welcoming you back into church as the Sundays unfold.

With our love and prayers for you all,

Rev Suzanne and Rev Philippa

Attending Holy Communion during COVID 19

It is good that we can gather in the presence of God and one another, and that we can offer limited public worship. Things will and have to be different and making these changes allows us to worship and is our gift to one another.

Before you arrive:

In order to maintain social distancing, seating is limited. To accommodate for this, a booking system will be in place.

On the Monday of each week, (beginning Monday 13th July) if you wish to attend church the following Sunday you are invited to email office@seventowers.org.uk or ring 01452 731450 to make a booking. Bookings will close by the end of the Wednesday that week.

You will be asked for your contact details that we will keep for 21 days in case we need to contact you, after which this information will be destroyed. You will receive a response to your request either confirming your booking for that Sunday or not.

Please do not attend unless you have confirmation of a place. The following Monday's bookings and any subsequent bookings will give priority to those people who have not already attended.

On arrival at church:

You may be asked to wait outside for a few moments whilst others enter the church.

We ask you NOT to attend the service if you have:

- a new cough
- a temperature
- lost your sense of smell or taste

You may choose to wear a mask/face covering. They are not a replacement for good social distancing, hand hygiene, and self-isolating if you have symptoms. You may wish to bring your own hand sanitiser with you.

When you arrive:

The doors will be open 15 minutes before the service. If you need to wait, please maintain social distancing. You will be asked to sanitise your hands-on arrival, then go immediately to a seat in church as directed by the sides person.

We ask you to go straight to a seat and remain there for the duration of the service, except for Holy Communion.

Please respect the atmosphere of the building by maintaining its peace and refraining from all unnecessary speaking. The door will be kept open to allow some ventilation.

During the service:

The words you need for the service will be on the screen.

Due to risk of droplet spread, **there will be no singing** during the service. For the same reason, we ask that when you are saying the responses that you speak quietly and prayerfully.

When we share the peace, we cannot move from our places - **we will simply share a sign of peace with one another as directed by the person leading.**

During the distribution of Holy Communion, a sides person will direct you to come forward row by row. The priest will sanitise their own hands before distribution. Distribution will be from the chancel step. Without any words at this point, the priest will give you the consecrated bread. Please then return to your seat via the vestry and north aisle. The priest alone will consume the contents of the chalice, it will not be shared. The Church has always said that we make our Communion with Christ fully even when we only receive it 'in one kind', and by not sharing the chalice for now, we help to ensure the safety of others.

If you do not want to receive communion for any reason, that is absolutely fine - if you wish to receive a blessing instead ,please come forward and simply cross your arms over your chest and the priest will make the sign of the cross over you.

When you leave:

After the priest has processed out, **the sides person will ask people to leave one row at a time starting with those nearest the door.**

There will be a retiring collection plate.

Please do not stop to chat while leaving the building. Once out of the building and away from the main door you are welcome to talk in small groups but remember the social distancing measures.

Please do not block other people's exit from the building.

If you test positive for Coronavirus up to three weeks after the service, please let us know by emailing office@seventowers.org.uk or leave a message on 01452 731994.

*We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.
We are your people God, giving and loving,
wherever we are, whatever it costs, for as long as it takes,
wherever you call us.
Amen.*

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