

Opening our Churches for Private Prayer – an invitation

We know that the closure of our church buildings has been a hard experience for members of our congregations, and for the people of Chingford – everyone, no matter what their observance or faith, has a stake in the life and serving witness of our church community, as represented by our two buildings. It is important that the symbols of our presence, Ss Peter and Paul and All Saints, are open and accessible to people as soon as possible.

As of Tuesday, 9 June 2020 at noon, we are still waiting for detailed guidance from the House of Bishops' Recovery Group on the reopening of church buildings. As the Coronavirus page on the CofE website says:

The Recovery Group's statement on 6th June 2020 addresses the Government's announcement that places of worship can open up for supervised private individual prayer from 15th June. We are currently seeking clarification from the Government as to what the extent and nature of supervision for private individual prayer will be.

We would like the church buildings to be open at regular times during the week, at least to begin with, and in discussion, the leadership team thought that Monday – Friday 10am-12noon at SSP&P and Saturday – Sunday, 10am-2.00pm at All Saints would be realistic. In order to do this we would like to place welcomers in both churches until we see what demand there may be.

If you are able to offer yourself as a welcomer, please Email joycehilton4@aol.com as soon as possible, saying on which day or days you could be available. If you could be there only at the beginning or towards the end of each period, please say that as well.

The opening will only happen after the wardens and rector have conducted a risk assessment, to make sure that there will be as little risk to welcomers and visitors as possible. If you are able to offer your time, then we will make sure you are briefed on what is expected of you, and what to do in any situation that might arise. The current brief is below. It may be modified in the light of experience or further guidance. If you would like more information, please contact Fr Justin, Joyce or Richard.

Of course this may all change when we receive guidance from the central authorities, but it is surely right that we plan to work towards opening God's house for God's people.

Justin Lewis-Anthony
Joyce Hilton
Richard Vincent

10 June 2020

Opening our Churches for Private Prayer – Guidance for Welcomers

Thank you for volunteering to be a welcoming presence in our churches as we open up again after the Coronavirus lockdown. Here is some guidance from the wardens and rector about how we might minimise risk to you and our visitors.

1. There is one entrance and exit for our visitors. (SSP&P: ; OC:)
2. Sufficient hand sanitizer will be placed at the entrance. Please invite our visitors to use some entering and leaving.
3. Parts of the church will be taped off to ensure appropriate physical distancing. Members of the same household may sit together.
4. Prayer books, hymn books, orders of service and other printed materials will be removed, to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination.
5. A candle stand will be made available in SSP&P. People may light a candle from the large candle which should be lit at the beginning of each opening. Spill and tapers will be removed for cross-contamination reasons as well.
6. People may want to speak to you about their emotional or spiritual response to the lockdown and/or the church being opened again. You don't need to do very much other than to listen and sympathise. You may always invite the visitor to contact one of the clergy team if they want to continue the conversation more deeply. Please feel free to give the Rector's mobile number in this case.
7. Please make yourself aware of the alternative exits for you, if at any time you feel yourself to be unsafe.
8. Please put the warden and Rector's telephone numbers in your phone to contact them if you have any questions or concerns.

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