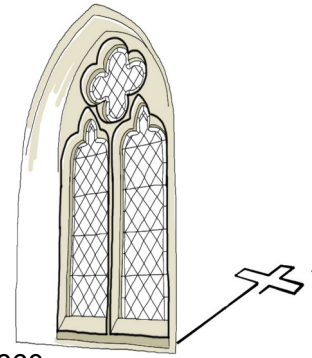


The Parish of St Mary-the-Virgin, Wivenhoe

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St Mary's PCC, Wivenhoe – Registered Charity No. 1165660

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Dear Tidings reader

I am delighted to present your monthly magazine *Tidings* with some news from your Parish church and the broader community. It is great that in this way we can keep in touch with each other. In this letter I'd like to give you an update on what the church can offer you in these unprecedented times.

I never thought that I had to use my modest maths skills to work out how many people we were allowed to welcome at church in order to keep it safe for those attending a service. The continuing risk of infection has forced us to reduce the numbers of people who are permitted to attend. We follow the Government's guidance of keeping a distance of 2 metres as mitigation such as face coverings are not compulsory in church, though strongly recommended. The Government's guidance is under constant review. So this is only a snapshot of the situation as it occurs today. Please check regularly for updates nationally, in the Diocese and in your Parish church.

So here is what we are offering for the month of August and possibly September as well.

Live stream communion at the rectory

We will continue to livestream services from the Rectory at 10.30am every Sunday in August and possibly September. The response to these services has been very positive. There is a real sense of community among those who watch online.

Holy Communion in church

In addition to the livestream service we will hold a short communion service (30 minutes) at the church at 9am from Sunday 16 August until further notice. I would like to emphasize that this option has been introduced in first instance for those who are unable to watch the live stream which follows at 10.30am. We will start on 16 August on a first come, first serve basis, but if we experience that numbers are higher than what we may safely allow a booking system may be introduced. We strongly advise to wear a face mask at the service.

How many may attend?

We created 10 seating areas – 6 for maximum 2 people and 3 for maximum 3 people and one individual seat near the font for the vergers, churchwarden or sidesperson. So 10 separate visitors can attend or maximum 22 persons if they all belong to a household of two or three. This number may increase if we decide to introduce mitigation.

Private prayer

There are two Saturday afternoons in August – 1st and 8th – for people to visit the church for private prayer between 2pm and 4pm followed by Evening Prayer at 4pm. From the weekend of 15-16 August we open the church only on Sunday morning for the 9am communion service. If it is safe we may also organize a weekday service from September. Please watch this space.

Hope in this crisis

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your words of encouragement. St Mary's had to adapt quickly to a completely new situation. This has been an emotional, spiritual and financial struggle for our church but with your generous support we will be able to get through this crisis. Above all we trust that in the

abundance of his love God will never stop accompanying us on our shared journey. We are people who look at the future, even in uncertain times, with much hope.

Peace to you, your family and friends.

Erwin