

## **St Laurence's discussion document on returning to church – Version 2, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

We do not yet know how or when we might be able to resume use of the church or meeting for Mass and other liturgies. However, at our Open Meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup> we began a Parish conversation about how this might work, collecting ideas and concerns from parishioners.

Some of the actions that we might take are outlined below. These will be updated as we gather more input and begin to make firm decisions. Please do share your thoughts and ideas with us – in future meetings or by emailing [openmeetings@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:openmeetings@saintlaurence.org.uk). We can add to and change this document together – making it a shared Parish effort. Items in red below have been modified since Version 1 of this document, following the Open Meeting discussions and other input.

***Nothing is yet decided; these are ideas to encourage discussion.***

### **Opening the church for private prayer**

- This is likely to be one of the first things we are permitted to do – we must have social distancing and measures to reduce risk of virus spread (see below) in place before doing this.
- **In this and all decisions to further open the church we must act in coordination with other churches in Cambridge.**

### **Changing our use of spaces**

- While social distancing measures are required, we are likely to need to restrict Masses to the church, rather than also using the school.
- If numbers for gatherings inside are restricted, we could consider having some services or social gatherings outside (garden or car park) with appropriate distancing. **At our May open meeting we also undertook to investigate possible future use of the school field.**

### **Dealing with restricted numbers at Mass**

- There is likely to be a restriction on the number of people we can accommodate in Church.
- We could (temporarily) add additional Masses (e.g., Sunday evening) to help.
- We may need to find ways to 'ration' attendance, e.g. by surname (A-H attend first week, I-M second week, N-Z the third week). **Points to be mindful of in implementing this include that people may attend in family or other groups with different surnames.**
- Other suggestions for 'rationing' attendance are welcome.
- We could have systems to 'sign up' for specific Masses – but would need to ensure these do not penalise people based on their access to technology/the Internet.
- Encourage ongoing use of Mass streaming service for those unable to attend each Sunday.
- Acknowledge that attending Sunday Mass is not obligatory under these circumstances – parishioners could also fulfil their obligation by attending a weekday Mass. **Look at extra Masses during the week outside working hours to facilitate this.**
- Have a 'steward' system to ensure we do not exceed max numbers allowed at any Mass.
- Restrict the maximum number attending from any one family and ask families to organise their own rotas for Mass-going.

### **Social distancing in and around church**

- Close off every other pew; implement a maximum number per pew.
- Remove the chairs in the side aisles.
- Operate a one-way system in church: e.g. walk down the central aisle and up the side aisles.

- Come in through the Porch – exit via the Narthex.
- Ask people to go straight to the next available pew on arrival, not “sit where you want”.
- Close off alternate ‘lanes’ in the car park to avoid risk of needing to touch other cars.
- No Children’s liturgy until it can be safely held – consider alternative support (e.g., directing to online resources that can be printed and brought along; incorporating a prayer or reading involving children into Masses; a Mass specifically for families with smaller children).
- No after Mass coffee/tea or use of the kitchen until this can be done safely.

#### **Reduce risk of spread via surfaces**

- Request parishioners to stay at home if they feel unwell.
- Paid cleaner to wipe down pews and door handles, in addition to normal duties, each weekday morning.
- Volunteer parishioners to wipe down pews, door handles etc before each weekend Mass.
- Hand sanitiser available on entering the church.
- No hymn sheets, Mass books, printed newsletters or distribution of any other materials in the porch/narthex.
- No holy water.
- Communion by host only, by hand only. Wearing of gloves is an option but felt not be necessary if handwashing immediately before distribution of communion is maintained.
- The suggestion that the communion host to be set out by priest in front of altar under a self-serve system was not supported at the Open Meeting – concerns that it changed the nature of receipt of communion and is unnecessary, as long as handwashing protocols are maintained.
- Consider the queuing system for communion – it may better enable social distancing to have those distributing communion move through the church
- No personal contact at sign of peace.
- Limit communal singing (risk of virus transmission when breathing in/out is heightened).
- Will need to reconsider (or disable) operation of parking system during the week – minimise use and ensure cleaning between use of keypads in church.