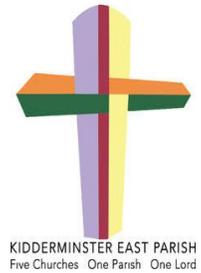


Letter from the Team Rector and Team Vicar 26th June 2020



Dear all

No doubt by now you will have heard the news from central government regarding the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions in the country as we continue to deal with the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. One of the institutions that the government will allow to reopen from July 4th are places of worship and inevitably this will have caused a fair amount of discussion, anticipation and concern amongst people both in this parish and in churches throughout the country.

Naturally we are looking forward to reopening our churches as soon as we possibly can and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their patience and understanding so far, however we cannot emphasise strongly enough that we must reopen each church safely and on its own individual merits. The safety of every single member of the Parish of Kidderminster East is our ultimate priority and the reopening of any of our churches must be within the context of this commitment to you as members of our parish family.

The reopening of churches is much more complex than just turning a key, switching on the lighting and welcoming people in through the doors. We need to have effective, well thought out risk assessments in place for each church and we all need to do our part in order to ensure that we keep ourselves and one other as safe as possible. We all had to face a very steep learning curve in March as we went into lockdown and the learning curve may be even steeper as we begin to come out of it. It is safe to assume that each church post lockdown will look very different to church pre lockdown and for some of us that will be a hard situation to come to terms with. For instance, the need for social distancing will continue along with surface cleaning after each use of the building, and there may well be no singing allowed: our services will feel different.

And so we are asking in humility and in love that you please bear with us and be patient as we work out the implications and mechanics of reopening. For some this process cannot happen quickly enough, for others there will be a sense of events moving along far too quickly. We also need to bear in mind that each of our five churches are different in so many ways from the others and this will

present both opportunities and challenges in the weeks and months ahead. We will also need to look at the implications of all of this for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Our initial plan is to run both online and in-church services. We'll begin with just one in-church service for the whole parish, whilst we work out what impact the advice and guidelines have on the other aspects of ministry we want to pick up. The pattern of services that we begin with will not be set in stone, but we will want to review frequently what is happening and how we might expand our options safely.

Further information will be available on the parish website (www.kidderminstereast.org.uk) and our weekly newsletter both of which will be updated just as soon as we have the appropriate information to share.

We may not all agree with what is said and done and the speed at which things happen, but let's seek to move forward together with integrity, respect and Christian love.

Finally, let us all pray;

Father, we seek your wisdom daily.

Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world.

We pray that they communicate clearly, truthfully, and calmly

with each other and with the public and that their messages are received and heeded.

May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

Amen.

God bless you all, David and Robert