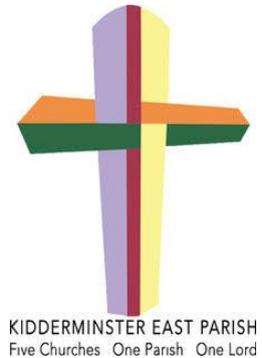


Coronavirus update - October 2021



Dear Friends,

A number of people have been asking when are things likely to change in our services with regard to the restrictions we have in place for Covid-19. Robert and I have had a think and a talk, and we are still trying to be balanced, cautious and fair!

There are two main points that we have taken into consideration. Firstly we said in the last update that before we changed anything we would want to see that the virus infection rate is generally agreed to be falling and is expected to continue falling.

Since our last letter there have been four periods when the infection rate has been rising and three when it has been falling; we are currently in a period of it rising. We also want to acknowledge that in our region of Wyre Forest the number of cases per 100,000 is 56% higher than that for the UK as a whole. We believe we still need to be cautious about the virus.

Secondly we considered how the country as a whole is beginning to 'learn to live with the virus' and that in many settings all restrictions have disappeared, or are only adhered to on a voluntary basis. We believe we should still be thoughtful for those who are around us.

Therefore our decision is to keep restrictions in place with the exception of the following two amendments:

- (a) we will sing four congregational items (this could be four hymns, or where appropriate, three hymns plus the sung eucharist setting)
- (b) we will ensure there is a way for people to sit at a social distance from others if they so wish to.

This means that the restrictions that remain in place are:

- (c) we will encourage people to use a mask when singing, but may remove it for other parts of the service
- (d) the wine at Holy Communion will be placed onto the bread/wafer using a pipette
- (e) the forward Holy Tables will be used at St Cassian's and St George's.

Hand sanitiser will still be available for those who wish to use it. It will be used by those who are involved in administering Holy Communion.

We will, of course, continue to review the situation, and will be pleased to hear of any concerns or frustrations that you have, whilst we still seek to help others return to, or join for a first time, our services of worship.

We are acutely aware that for many people these restrictions are both difficult and frustrating but the priority must be to keep everyone as safe as possible and with this in mind we would both like to sincerely thank you all for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate our way through the pandemic. Please continue to pray for us in the days and weeks ahead and in the decisions we make.

May God bless us as we aim to be as safe as we can.

David & Robert