



RADCLIFFE TEAM MINISTRY

Update 5

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Gathered and scattered
God is with us
Iona Community

Dear Friends Last Sunday Margaret and Debs (our wardens), Jean Robinson and I went to assess how we could make St. Mary's and St. Thomas and St. John safe for when we eventually open. We stood in our beloved buildings and all of us felt overcome with emotion; I know you will understand. Now, as you will also understand, the situation regarding opening is not clear-cut. Guidance from the Government and the Church/Diocese may change much of what I am about to describe but please read the following points carefully.

- 1) From June 15th churches can open for private prayer however, we do not think this is manageable for our Team as it would require supervision of visitors and cleaning afterwards.
- 2) From June 15th funeral services can be held in churches but this would have to be with strict social distancing and limited numbers. Vergers, organists etc should not be used. I feel that we should only hold a funeral service in church for those who have a strong connection to the church.
- 3) When we can hold services again it is likely that strict social distancing and hygiene practices will be needed: -
 - a) Attendance at St. Mary's will be limited to no more than 37
 - b) Attendance at St. Thomas & St. John will be limited to no more than 55.
 - c) People must sit in the marked seats only and everyone, including those from the same household, will sit at a distance from others
 - d) When you enter you must observe the 2-metre rule and clean your hands (it will be both helpful and safer if you bring your own sanitiser).
 - e) Seating will be filled from the front first e.g. if you arrive first you will go to the front seat, if you arrive last you will be at the back. You cannot sit in your "usual" seat.
 - f) When you leave people sat at the back will leave first.
 - g) There will be no access to kitchen or toilet facilities.
 - h) There will be no Sunday School or social activity post service
 - i) If the church building is empty for 72 hours after a service, there will be no need for additional cleaning but if it is used during that period thorough cleaning will be required.
- 4) At St. Philip's the safety of the pre-school must take precedence and it may be that worship will be delayed.
- 5) At this stage we do not know what our "normal" service will look like. Things that need to be considered include:
 - a) A weekly sheet to replace service and hymn books (sheet to be taken home for disposal)
 - b) Whether or not we can sing?
 - c) Whether the congregation must wear masks?
 - d) Communion????

TO MAKE OUR EVENTUAL RETURN TO CHURCH SAFE, JOYFUL AND FULFILLING EVERYONE'S HELP IS NEEDED - SO PLEASE CONTACT ELIZABETH, MARGARET OR DEBS WITH YOUR IDEAS, WORRIES AND QUESTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

If you can do this by email, please copy all 3 of us in.



The church that prays together, stays together

Our prayers are asked for:
Tom Hurst & Sue Harding

The family and friends of Philip
Bernie, Bill Plaskett & Flo Borsay

Sadly, we have heard that Mike Hayden is losing his fight with cancer. Please keep Mike and our dear friend Carol in your prayers and in your hearts.



The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. **Psalms 23**

ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER IN DISCOURAGING TIMES

Les and Kathleen have been working hard to update and co-ordinate congregational contact lists for St. Thomas & St. John with St. Philip based on our old friendship groups.

Les and Kathleen write:

"Gathered and scattered, God is with us." Until we can again meet in church and in our usual groups and services, we need to encourage each other. We may have specific needs that our Church friends can help with, whether for a friendly word, or just to know that someone is looking out for us, just as we can look out for others, or for information, or for prayer or emotional support. This happens naturally for many of us through our Church links and friendships.

We have taken a small step to try to ensure that everyone who wants to be is in this type of supportive relationship. We have thought of our congregation members and other linked people as being in encouragement groups. Some people from within the groups will do what in many cases they do any way to encourage the groups. You may come across this gentle support activity in the days and weeks to come.

If you want to know more or want to take an active part in this process, please ask Elizabeth or Kathleen and Les at 07759-595140. May God bless you and your families, whether close or separated for the time being, in the present lockdown and during any "unlockdown" that follows.

THE BENEFITS OF LOCKDOWN

Yes, there are some - in fact quite a lot...

Parents and children spending time together
Saying hello, good morning, lovely day etc

Chatting to strangers (and not being thought strange)!

Cleaner air

Seeing the wildflowers which normally get mown

Having time

Hearing children playing
Hearing the birds and not the traffic

The kindness of strangers

The unexpected phone call

Realising someone cares

Taking time to make a 'proper' meal

Really appreciating the people you love

Quality dog time



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