

2nd December 2020

Dear all

Wow! The ton-up! I almost can't believe it. 100 emails from me – not including the ones I had to resend when I forgot to add an attachment. So much has happened over that time, and today is the day when we emerge from Lockdown #2 to the only slightly less stringent Tier 3.

As I mentioned last letter, we are trying to get back to normal-ish for church services. The provisional plan for December, is as follows (as noted in December Magazine):

At time of writing, the COVID rules for this area with regard to churches is that we can revert to meeting as we did between the lockdowns. We can have services, presumably with Communion (we have no indication that anything has changed there), with limited singing by choir or music group, provided they are properly distanced. One significant difference in tier 3 is that there is to be no social interaction within the church building, other than responses in the liturgy. Outside, the rule of 6 applies, with appropriate distancing etc.. Another significant difference is that we will all be allowed to sing carols outside, again properly socially distanced etc.. Watch this space for how we might use this.

The plan for services in December is as follows – all services will be live streamed on Facebook.

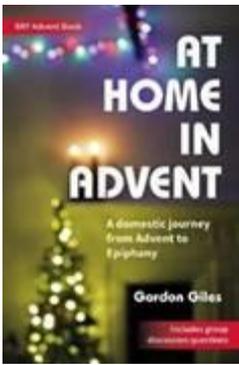
Sunday 6 th December	10.00am 6.00pm	All-Age Communion and Christingle service Evening Prayer (hopefully with some limited singing)
Sunday 13 th December	10.00am 6.00pm	Communion service Blue Christmas service (a reflective service, especially for those for whom Christmas will be difficult this year).
Sunday 20 th December	10.00am 6.00pm	Communion service Christmas carol service
Thursday 24 th December	4.00pm 11.30pm	Nativity Service Midnight Mass
Friday 25 th December	10.00am	Christmas Day Communion service
Sunday 27 th December	10.00am	Communion service

There will be a communion on Thursday mornings (including Christmas Eve) at 9.30am.

All of these are provisional, depending on current COVID guidelines. Any changes will be noted on Facebook, and in the noticeboard on Church Street.

Also, in the December magazine is an article looking at Jesus' Second Coming, and what it means. This is in response to a question I was asked, and a request to put in some theological thinking. If you are interested in exploring this complex doctrine, do look it up, and feel free to follow it up with Sonia or me. And do suggest any other topics you would like me to reflect on.

Tomorrow, Thursday 3rd December, will see 2 firsts. The first of our renewed Thursday morning communion services will start at 9.30am, which will take place in the main body of the church, not, as usual, in the Lady Chapel. This is to enable appropriate physical distancing.



The second is the beginning of our Advent Study Group, based on the book *At Home in Advent* by Gordon Giles. A few of you have signed up. It is not too late. We will be meeting on Zoom at 2.30pm. The details you will need to know are:

Mark Williams is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: DSJ Advent Study Group

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1Mnl0bjJZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

For those who are not used to zooming, you can either click on the https link, which will take you straight there. Alternatively, you can log into Zoom, and use the Meeting ID and Passcode.

Don't forget that you will need to ensure that you are unmuted (or else we can't hear you), and that you are video connected (or else we won't be able to see you!). On laptops/desktops, the icons to click are on the bottom left. On iPad/tablet they are somewhere else – details of which I don't know, as I've never used them. I believe they're at the top somewhere.

I have an important warning for you, with regard to scam emails. The deanery has recently been plagued by emails, purporting to be from one or two clergy members, asking for help to buy something on their behalf. It appears that contact details found on church websites etc. are a source of potential targets, as well as names of people to pretend to be sending the emails from. We would never ask for money in this way! If something looks suspicious, it almost certainly is! Always check who the email is actually from (check the email address), not just assuming the name at the top is the person who actually sent it. If in doubt, check by phone. And please do report any scam emails to Action Fraud UK, and their phishing site. Also, please let me know, as I too will report it.

I mentioned briefly in my last sermon that I love the story *A Christmas Carol*, and that I consider *The Muppets' Christmas Carol* as being possibly the best film ever made! (Seriously!!). Today I discovered that Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote a Masque loosely based on the book, called *On Christmas Night*. Here is a link to probably the best recording of the piece: [Vaughan Williams : On Christmas Night, Masque \(ballet\) adapted from A Christmas Carol \(1926\) - YouTube](#)

Finally, I would like to leave you with a couple of pieces from the latest email from the Arthur Rank Centre:

A blessing for Advent

May you hear the gentle voice of the One who speaks to you saying,
'well done, [your name!], good and faithful servant'.

May you feel the loving arms of the One who assures you that
'I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

May you see the light that shines in the darkness,
that the darkness cannot overcome.

In this time of uncertainty, confusion, pain and waiting,
may you experience the hope that comes from knowing that

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
Amen.

With love and prayers at Advent, Louise Davis, on behalf of the wider Arthur Rank Centre team

Response

When you next walk out, look, in this damp and frosty season, at the crops which are weak and the animals who head indoors as plants cease to grow and autumn rains turn soils to mud. See amidst the decline the journey towards the yield that will come, and give thanks. Trust, too, that the yield will come from the Word of God which we live and share, and which leads us to the eternal banquet.

Prayer

May the seed you sow in me, Lord, be nurtured by my life, my thoughts, my habits and words. May it lead me and others to the banquet of your kingdom. Amen.

Fr Rob Taylerson, priest in the Catholic Diocese of Birmingham and trustee of the Arthur Rank Centre



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark