

Dear all

Yesterday we received the following from our bishops (edited extract):

*You will have heard in the news today that the Prime Minister has made a number of announcements about upcoming changes to parts of the lockdown. From 4th July, within restrictions church buildings may be opened for limited public worship where it is safe to do so...*

*...We recognise that the latest announcement will present you with a further series of decisions to make in your parishes. Until such time as the government publishes its guidance, it is immensely difficult to plan: announcements made before the provision of detailed information are extremely stressful...*

*...We expect to receive the government and national church guidelines in the next few days, and as soon as we have done so, we will share them with you, together with any local advice that we might be able to add. As previously, advice will also be successively updated on the Church of England website to reflect the new guidance, as will the information with respect to weddings and advice for couples...*

*...This media release was made [yesterday] following the Prime Minister's announcement*

*Following the Government announcement that church buildings will be able to reopen for public worship from 4th July, providing physical distancing remains in place, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who leads the Church of England's Recovery Group, said:*

*"I welcome the Prime Minister's announcement today that we will soon be able to begin to meet and worship together in our church buildings again. The last three months have been an extraordinary time - the first period without public worship and the sacraments in England in more than 800 years. There will be real joy as we begin to come together again – if even at a physical distance – but I also know that many will be understandably cautious at this news.*

*"We will not be returning to normality overnight - this is the next step on a journey. We've been planning carefully, making detailed advice available for parishes to enable them to prepare to hold services when it is safe and practical to do so. It is important to say that the change in Government guidance is permissive, not prescriptive.*

*"I would particularly like to thank clergy and lay leaders for all they have done during the time our buildings have been closed. Not all church buildings will be ready to hold regular services from July 4th, but we are providing whatever support we can to enable them.*

*"There will still be restrictions and we must all still do everything we can to limit the spread of the virus to protect each other, especially the most vulnerable. The online services and dial-in worship offerings we have become used to will continue.*

*"This has been an incredibly difficult time for the whole country, especially for those who have been ill, who have suffered financial hardship, the loss of livelihoods and indeed, for many, those they love. We know that is not over and the Church has a task ahead to bring consolation and hope.*

*"Churches and cathedrals have risen to the recent challenges, finding new ways of meeting for worship, of serving our neighbours, and of reaching new people with the love of God. The challenge before us now is to take the next steps carefully and safely, without forgetting all that we've discovered about God and ourselves on the way."*

Bishop Sarah was my next door neighbour at Sutton for a few years, and, as the former Chief Nursing Officer, knows what she is talking about!

Our intention is to open as soon as it is safe to, and (obviously) under the safest possible conditions. This may or may not be on the 5<sup>th</sup> July – it being less than a fortnight, and no guidelines yet having been issued.

However, I would like to ask a couple of questions – please let me know if you have strong feelings about these:

- If we are not able to offer communion to all (even if only bread), would you still prefer a communion service with priest only receiving, or a non-Eucharistic service?
- If we are not able to have congregational singing, or choir singing, would you still like music – either solo/small group (as our live streamed services) or via recordings (it is permitted to use copyright recordings in a live service, but not streamed via the internet); or would you be happy for a totally spoken service?
- When we return to our services, would you still like services available on the internet? We may not be able to livestream a service from the church, as there is no wi-fi there, but we may be able to record it and stream it later.

Any other comments and/or queries are very welcome.

Philip Spratley has answered my query about the tune 'Nottingham' for 'Take my life...' He writes *The tune for Frances Havergal's hymn comes from the so called 12th Mass formerly attributed to Mozart. It was extremely popular during Victorian times and sung widely. Novellos were one of the first to issue a score. Gradually people began to doubt its authenticity; several names were put forward as to the real composer but the most likely culprit is Wenzel Muller who tinkered about with lots of Mozart's works and thus gained some notoriety.*

*You are right about the fact about the title Nottingham. There is a mystery as to who adapted the tune; possibly a Nottingham organist who bought a Novello's score?*

I also mentioned a spoof list of hymns. Here it is:

HYMNS, THE WAY WE'D SING THEM IF WE WERE HONEST:

Above Average Is Thy Faithfulness  
A Comfy Mattress Is Our God  
All Hail the Influence of Jesus' Name!  
Amazing Grace, How Interesting the Sound  
Blest Be the Tie that Doesn't Cramp My Style  
Blessed Hunch, Jesus is probably mine  
Fill My Spoon, Lord  
Go Tell It on the Speed Bump  
He's Quite a Bit to Me  
I get quite excited Lord  
I give you partial honour  
I Lay My Inappropriate Behaviours on Jesus  
I Love to Talk About Telling the Story  
I'm Fairly Certain that My Redeemer Lives  
I Surrender Some

It is My Secret What God Can Do  
Joyful, Joyful We Think Thee Pretty Good  
Just As I Pretend to Be  
Lord, Keep Us Loosely Connected to Your Word  
My Faith Looks Around for Thee  
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Much  
O, God, Our Enabler in Ages Past  
Oh, for a Couple of Tongues to Sing  
Oh, How I Like Jesus  
Onward, Christian Reserves  
Pillow of Ages, Fluffed for Me  
Praise God from whom All Affirmations Flow  
Self-esteem to the World! The Lord Is Come  
Sit Up, Sit Up for Jesus  
Special, Special, Special  
Spirit of the Living God, Fall Somewhere Near Me  
Take My Wife and Let Me Be  
There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings  
We Are Milling Around in the Light of God  
We Give Thee but Still Think We Own  
What an Acquaintance We Have in Jesus  
When Peace, Like a Trickle  
When the Saints Go Sneaking In  
Where he leads, I will consider following

Don't forget our Rose & Sweet Pea show website. You can log in and enter competitions (by photo!) or take part in the raffle – all of which raises invaluable funds for the church. The link is <https://rose-and-sweet-pea-show.wishpondpages.com/>

Also don't forget that the church is now open for private prayer Monday, Wednesday & Saturday 10.00am-3.00pm. Please follow guidelines clearly posted, and let me know if there are any issues. It may be possible to open up for individuals on another day if you have a particular reason e.g. to light a candle on an anniversary.



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark