

Dear Friends in Christ,

the Government has now lifted all legal coronavirus restrictions whilst emphasising personal responsibility and urging caution.

I am very conscious that personal responsibility includes our care for the most vulnerable and anxious among the congregation of St George's. I am also aware that the current local rate of infection is perilously high.

Therefore, having read the current guidance offered by the CofE, consulted with the churchwardens, and reckoning on what will help us all feel secure when we come to worship together, it is my judgement that "hands, face and space" remain important.

For the time being, this means that we expect people to continue to

- Sanitise their hands when coming into and leaving the church building
- To wear a face covering (unless previously exempt from doing so)
- To keep good social distance inside the church building
- Not to attend church if they feel unwell, have symptoms of covid or have been asked to self-isolate.

We will continue to be extra vigilant in preparing for worship, in not yet offering the Common Cup, in bringing the Sacrament to people in their pews. The churchwardens will continue to ensure that the church is clean and prepared for our worship and maintain a register of those attending, in case we need to contact you, and you will still be asked to sit in the pews marked with a tick. For the time being the congregation will be asked to be patient and to refrain from singing.

None of us should feel pressured into attending worship or into receiving the Sacrament. We will continue to livestream the 9.30 Parish Eucharist, which is later available as a recording, and post the sermon online. These are available here <https://stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk/sunday-worship/>

If you are feeling especially anxious in coming out of lockdown, the NHS has provided some tips which can be found here <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/>

Many of us will be glad that the previous restriction on the number of singers has been relaxed and therefore we will be able to have a fuller choir when members are available. And on an even happier note, having interviewed for the post of Director of Music, I hope in the coming weeks to be able to make a very positive announcement.

Although some of you may feel that we are being over-cautious, I think it right that we remain vigilant at this time while looking forward to more relaxed days when we can worship even more normally.

With my good wishes and blessings

Brian