

The Four Ways Mission Community

St James, Swimbridge | The Holy Name, Gunn | St Paul, Landkey | St Peter, West Buckland | St Michael, East Buckland

Revd Shaun O'Rourke, Priest-in-Charge. Tel. 01271 830950
18th July 2020 – for 19th July Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to our latest letter to the churches of our Mission Community. As you may be aware, the government have given permission for us to re-open our churches for public worship, and we look forward to welcoming you back soon. It has been a long and difficult journey that we have undertaken together.

We have met as your PCCs and have made plans for reopening. Our main priorities are to make our buildings as safe as we possibly can, and we are and will be Covid compliant: your safety is our paramount concern and will continue to be as long as this virus is present in our society.

These are the measures that we are adopting for church services:

1. Social distancing will be in place; we are keeping to 2 metres.
2. The churches will be marked with seating arrangements: you should maintain this distance. If you attend in a family "bubble", you may sit together.
3. Sanitiser will be provided for your use both entering and leaving. We ask you to avoid congregating in groups to limit contact.
4. At present, we are not permitted to use hymn books or service books. Instead, we will project the service on to screens.
5. Currently, singing is not allowed but music will be played by electronic method.
6. The peace will be shared by a gentle nod of the head.
7. Unfortunately, no refreshments will be available for the time being.
8. The church will be cleaned on a regular basis and closed for 72 hours between openings.
9. A one-way system will be in operation, with the exit door likely to be different from that in use at the entrance.
10. To begin with, services will be as Morning Prayer until we develop a system to safely have communion. When we do, it will be in "one kind only" - no wine, just bread. When the priest prepares the bread, they will be sanitising hands between handling and, when distributing, will be wearing a mask.
11. We will be recording names and contact details of all who come as part of the government's track and trace scheme so that, in the event of an incident, all can be made aware.
12. We will be adapting how we "do church" as the situation changes, and new guidance is put in place.
13. Most importantly, we will be putting you first in every decision we take. We want you to feel in control and that you are entering a building which provides everything to meet your needs, both physically and spiritually.

Your input is very important to us and, if you have any concerns or are worried, please let us know and we will do our best to adapt to your needs. We ask that those who are vulnerable think hard about what they need. I, too, am on the vulnerable list so it's important even for me to ensure that we maintain a Covid best-practice environment.

And at this point, I would like to bring before you the wardens of our churches who have worked tirelessly throughout the lockdown on your behalf to do all that was asked of them. The dedication and strength that they have put in is exceptional, and in saying that, a huge thank you to our PCCs who are working with me and the wardens to get an environment ready for us all to return to our buildings. Thank you also to all who continue to support us financially and physically to keep the churches going for our communities.

We are hoping and planning to open our churches for worship in the first week of August. This gives us preparation time, and I hope to see as many of you returning as feel able. However, for those who do not yet feel ready for church worship, please let us know how we can support you at home. We will continue to live-stream our services for those who can access the internet. Services can be watched on the Mission Prayer Programme on Facebook and YouTube and we are trying to find other outlets.

The link to Mission Prayer is <https://www.facebook.com/mission.prayerprogramme>

Always remember that you are in our prayers and thoughts. We are the body of Christ; we are the church of God - in or out of the building.

In anticipation of worshipping together again soon

Every blessing
Fr Shaun