



4 September 2020
St Nicholas, Sutton: open for Worship

"How amiable are thy dwellings thou Lord of Hosts" *Psalm 84*

We are thankful to be opening St Nicholas Church for worship on Sunday for the first time since lockdown began on 23 March. You are warmly invited to come to the service of Holy Communion at 10.30am. We will all have our own feelings about coming back to church, as with other restrictions being eased; you are most welcome as and when you feel ready.

It will, of course, be lovely to see each other again, but mainly this is our opportunity to return to worshipping God together and to pray for our world. Prayers of thanksgiving for those who have cared for others during the outbreak; prayers of lament for those who have died; prayers of intercession for those who are still suffering.

You will notice that we have had to make some changes, in line with the latest guidance, to keep safe. For the time being we will only hold two services a week, on Sundays at 10.30am and Thursdays at 10am (followed by private prayer until 12.30pm). The services will be shorter than usual. There will be no singing, no extended Peace and no socialising afterwards.

Still, our church community aspires 'to be a welcoming and safe place where people can know the warmth of the love of God and their neighbour' and it is wonderful how prayer and care have continued during lockdown. The church building itself provides a base for Street Pastors to minister to the wider community. Stewards at Thursday morning private prayer, including myself, are finding ways to be welcoming to new visitors to St Nicholas in this quiet space with limited conversation.

I am so pleased that we can open this sacred place for worship again and hope that, as we join our prayers with those at home, we will find healing and restoration. Life has changed in many ways and we can use this time to prayerfully consider what it means to be church in this new world.

I would like to thank those who have been working hard (conducting risk assessments, observing guidelines) to make sure that we can worship in church again safely, especially the Churchwardens and the PCC.

We ask for your prayers and understanding as we open St Nicholas for worship again.

God bless,

Revd Frances

What to expect

Important: please do not visit the church if you are feeling unwell or experiencing Covid-19 symptoms – stay at home and self-isolate.

When you arrive please:

- use the main entrance (west door) – we will open the door 20 minutes before the service starts (special arrangements will be made for any wheelchair users)
- maintain social distancing of 2m while you wait until the entrance is clear
- use the hand sanitiser provided
- give your name and telephone number if asked. This information will be kept for 21 days so you can be contacted as part of NHS track and trace if others test positive for Covid-19
- wait to be greeted by a sidesperson and shown to your seat (to conform with social distancing)
- note the designated routes around the church
- wear a face covering - this is a requirement, so please come prepared (worship leaders will not be wearing a face covering while leading worship)

During the service:

- service sheets will be available. Please do not share your service sheet with others.
- follow the instructions given by the priest. Directions will be given about receiving communion. Only bread will be distributed.
- do not physically share the peace or physically greet others.

At the end

- the exit will be through the south door
- please leave the building promptly when directed and take your service sheet and any papers and check you have all your property with you
- there will be no refreshments available
- maintain 2m social distancing if you wish to catch up with others outside
- let us know if you test positive for Covid-19 up to 21 days after the service

Please note:

There will be no JAM or Spectrum (provision for children) but they are encouraged to attend and will be most welcome.

There will be no toilet available.

Donations can be made using the box by the entrance. Please give by cheque and not cash.

Arrangements for opening the church are subject to change if either Government guidance or local circumstances change. There may be other safeguards we need to put in place. If you have any questions you can contact the Parish Office at administrator@suttonteamministry.org

We look forward to welcoming you.

St Nicholas, Sutton

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