



PARISH OF HAWLEY
Holy Trinity – All Saints
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Dear friends

Is the end of our exile at hand? We've now been able to go into church for private prayer for the last week (a reminder: Holy Trinity is currently open from 10 am to 12 noon, Monday to Saturday); but what about public worship?

The current situation is that churches are expected to be able to conduct public services from next weekend (i.e. 4/5 July). So many aspects of this, though, are still uncertain. What will the social distancing rules be? What will be the maximum number we can have in church at a time? What precautions will there be, and will they be advisory or obligatory? Will we be able to sing? And perhaps above all: will we be able to distribute Holy Communion?

So many matters are still to be resolved. In the current (as of Friday afternoon) document put out by the Diocese of Guildford, issue after issue evokes the same response: "We are still awaiting National Church guidance with regards to this question and will update you accordingly once the guidance is released." Be assured that when this guidance is forthcoming, it will be a priority to restore as much of our worship pattern as is feasible. (But the Diocese warns: "This is not going to be a return to normal, and will require churches to assess their own particular activities to ensure that they are covid-secure. It is likely to be that any public worship will have severely reduced numbers".)

In the mean time, our parish is not dormant, and it may come as a surprise to learn that many aspects of our life are continuing albeit under very different (and more challenging) conditions! In particular, the great majority of our regular financial outgoings continue regardless, but our income has been severely hit, not least in terms of hall hirings. I understand that most members of our congregations are members of planned giving schemes, either by standing order or through the envelope scheme; and a hearty thank-you is due to everyone involved for continuing to support the parish in this way. If you are not on planned giving, may I ask you to consider that the parish needs your financial support more than ever in these precarious times, and your contribution is important and much appreciated. And if you are a member of the envelope scheme, can I ask you to check that your envelopes are up to date? Thank you!

In our prayers this week, we should especially remember our sister church at S. Augustine's, Aldershot, as Father Keith retires and they enter upon the uncertainties of an interregnum. Please pray for those who will be exercising the responsibilities of leadership during the vacancy; pray for those in the Diocese who will be considering how best to meet the pastoral and sacramental needs of the parish; and pray for the congregation, that this may be a time when they find greater depth in their common life and in mutual support.

Every blessing,

William.