

From Edward:

Some years back we inherited several bags cutlery from my late grandparents' vicarage. Amongst the pudding forks, salad servers, soup-ladles and other paraphernalia were a couple of pairs of sugar tongs.

These days far fewer people take sugar in their tea than used to (we certainly don't), and those that do are usually comfortable spooning in loose granulated that requiring lumps. As such the sugar tongs have been left largely redundant.

Why am I telling you about our sugar tongs?

As services begin again in churches across the country we are needing to risk assess our acts of worship and often deploy a range of imaginative approaches to our acts of worship – particularly the administration of Holy Communion which, by its very nature carries a degree of risk: A wafer consecrated at the hands of a priest is *eaten* by its recipient. One such innovation, which other churches have deployed is the use of tongs to deliver the wafer to the communicant's hands.

Whilst we are yet to assess whether this would be an appropriate measure for St John's, it would at least give some use to my late grandparents' sugar tongs!

This Sunday we continue with our now established pattern of Mattins at 9am and Evening Prayer at 3pm and we hope to make a change next week, substituting Mattins with Holy Communion at 9am: This will largely be a one off to see how it works, and we'll revert to Mattins and Evening Prayer for two weeks after that in order to review and assess (these also happen to be two weeks when I am on leave).

Our *provisional* plan is to then to reinstate Holy Communion at 8am and 10am from Sunday 16th August, without Mattins but with Evening Prayer continuing at 3pm for the benefit of those who would not yet be comfortable attending Holy Communion and those who would prefer a sermon the can participate with 'in spirit' from home.

Please note that no one should feel compelled to attend any service should they not feel comfortable in doing so and social distancing measures should be in place... Should these involve sugar tongs remains to be seen!

Stay safe!

Edward

Church Open: St John's is open on Sundays from 9am-3.30pm, with services at 9am and 3pm. Our capacity is limited and social distancing measures are in place. Please read them carefully before you enter the building (a copy is attached to

this email), and note that you will be expected to bring a facemask. Please see the Bexley Team News for opening arrangements at our sister churches.

Mattins and Evening Prayer: Whilst we have endeavoured to produce orders of service that can be used as safely as possible, we would encourage those who can to download the Church of England's *Daily Prayer* app and change the settings to 'Traditional' in order to follow the services on Sunday. If you wish to join in prayer from home you can find the services in the Book of Common Prayer, via the Daily Prayer App, or through the [Church of England's Website](#).

Forthcoming Services:

19th July: Mattins 9am, Evening Prayer 3pm

26th July: Holy Communion 9am, Evening Prayer 3pm

2nd & 9th August: Mattins 9am, Evening Prayer 3pm

16th August onward (*provisional plan*): Holy Communion 8am & 10am, Evening Prayer 3pm.

Volunteers Needed: We are incredibly grateful to those who have stepped forward to assist with supervising the church during opening hours. If you would like to join this rota please email Edward (fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com). Please do not volunteer if you are currently shielding.

Needing support?: The current global situation is a cause of anxiety and worry for many of us. If you need someone to talk to, spiritual support, or if you are looking for assistance with shopping or collecting medication please contact Edward at fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com or call 01322521786.

Suspended Sermon: Edward's sermons are available [here](#). This week's sermon is entitled 'Heroes and Villains?'.

Giving: St John's continues to need your support financially throughout the current emergency. If you wish to give regularly please use the standing order form attached to this email or for a one off giving please use our [JustGiving Page](#). If you have a social media presence please also help us out by sharing this link.

EasyFundraising: If you're shopping online please remember you can give to St. John's by shopping via [our Easy Fundraising page](#). There is also a link from our website.

Social Media: Remember you can engage with us on Facebook ([/stjohnsbexley](#)) and Twitter ([@stjohnsbexley](#)).

Memory Cafe: For anyone in Bexley Borough living with dementia and those who care for them, to offer friendship and support, the *Christ Church Erith Memory Cafe* will take place over Zoom on Thursdays from 10.45am-11.45am. For access

details please contact Christchurch Erith Project Worker Jacki Clement at cceprojectworker@hotmail.com.

Rochester Cathedral: Rochester Cathedral celebrating Choral Evensong [via their website](#), using material produced prior to lockdown. Please also see the Cathedral website for details about the Cathedral's reopening plans.

Prayers for use during the Coronavirus Outbreak: The Church of England has produced a booklet of prayers to aid devotions at home during the current crisis. It is available [here](#), along with other prayer resources and advice (scroll down the webpage for the booklet).

Daily Hope: The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phonenumber with hymns, reflections and prayers to enable worship from home throughout the lockdown. Details are available [here](#) and you may wish to pass the information on to those you know who cannot access resources online.

Domestic Abuse: As you will have heard, the current situation has seen an unpleasant increase in incidences of Domestic Abuse. Bishop Simon has commended recent advice issued by the national church in response to this and details can be found [here](#)

Bexley Team News: The weekly newsletter connecting us with our sister churches across the Bexley Team is attached to this email.

Toddler Church Fun!: Children's activities continuing to explore the story of Jonah are attached to this email. This is the final set of activities before the Summer break, but previous resources will continue to be available on our website. We wish all our Toddler Church members a happy and safe Summer.

Devotional Pattern: Readings for the forthcoming week, with suggested hymns, prayer intentions and questions to consider are attached to this email.

This Week Please Pray For:

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

...all are who continuing to shield or self-isolate.

...the sick in need of our prayers, Gladys Verran, Amy Jones, Barbara, Mavis Johnson, Samantha Pout, Ray Mace, Marie Berry, Maggie Rankine, Ann Harlow, Joyce Forrest, Dorothy Samuel, John Beddison, David Watkins, Nicola Johns and any others known to you.

...the recently departed, Irene Taylor.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Ernest Cramp, Peter Wilson, Margery Priest, Nellie Barley.

...residents living in and around our parish.

Keep us, good Lord,
Under the shadow of Your mercy
In this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
And lift up all who are brought low;
That we may rejoice in Your comfort
Knowing that nothing can separate us
From Your love
In Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

Our Safeguarding Statement can be read at

<http://www.stjohnsbexley.org/safeguardingstatement.html>

If you or someone you are concerned about is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999

<https://bexleywomensaid.org.uk/>

<https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>