



**From Edward:**

*“How shall I sing the Lord’s Song in a strange land?”* asks the Psalmist, and as we expect to find some sense of ‘normality’ as we resume our services and as those of us who can return to the church building we still carry that sense that something is ‘Out of the ordinary’, the land may be slightly less strange than it was three months ago, but it is still far from what we were used to before.

Reflecting on my own responses to what is going on, and talking to quite a few of you I think the strangest things at St John’s is not that the roped off pews, the Communion in one kind, the hand-sanitising or even the masks: It’s that we still can’t sing...

We know how much we love to sing at St John’s and how blessed we are with such a talented choir but as absence makes the heart grow fonder we’ve come to realise *just how much we love to sing*. For many of us the silencing of our singing that has been a spiritual amputation through this season.

The guidance on singing in places of worship has been the subject of much controversy throughout the Church of England has Lockdown Restrictions have eased, and the rules on singing seemed to be changing on a slow drip-feed: At one point this week the official advice was literally changed by a single word as it was decreed that ‘non-professionals’ would be allowed to sing in a limited capacity.

And this is where we stand now (or at least at the time of me writing this email, it may have all changed by the time you read it!): Small, socially distanced, professional or non-professional groups (or soloists) may sing in places of worship *providing the congregation don’t join in!*

It’s a baby-step, but a step nonetheless.

Watch this space...

May we keep singing in our hearts for now,

Edward

**Sunday Services:** Holy Communion 8am & 10am, Evening Prayer 3pm.  
(Children’s activity bags will be available for use at the 10am service)

**Family Service:** We hope these will resume at 10am on the first Sunday of each month from 6<sup>th</sup> September subject to social distancing and hygiene restrictions. Please spread the word to anyone who may wish to attend but may not be receiving these emails, particularly any families known to you.

**Gents’ Lunch:** Has resumed and will next meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

**Midweek:** As we consider how best to reinstate our midweek Eucharist Services across the Team, a weekly Bible Study will be held at St Mary’s on Wednesday mornings throughout September. For more details see the Bexley Team News.

**Church Open:** St John’s is open on Sundays from 8am-3.30pm, with services at 8am, 10am 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.

**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 service when attending Evening Prayer. 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](#).

**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](mailto: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](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) or call 01322521786.

**Sermon:** Edward's sermons are available [here](#) from Sunday Morning. This week's sermon is entitled 'Built on Shale'.

**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](#)).

**Talkline:** If you're feeling lonely, isolated, stressed or anxious *Counselling Matters Bexley's* new *Talkline* offers free, non-judgemental counselling and support and can also give you information on other relevant services. Freephone: 08000472600 or email [mail@cmbtalk.org](mailto:mail@cmbtalk.org). The line is open from 5pm-9pm every week day and 9am-9pm on weekends and bank holidays.

**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](mailto: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 phoneline 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!:** Toddler Church Activities from the past four months are still available on our website. We wish all our Toddler Church members a happy and safe Summer.

**Devotional Pattern:** Readings for the remainder of August with suggested hymns, prayer intentions and questions to consider are attached to this email.

**Face coverings:** Please be aware that it is a requirement that face coverings must be worn in places of worship unless you have a legitimate exemption. Thank you for your cooperation.

**This Week Please Pray For:**

... Those who have received GCSE results this week, their families, friends, teachers and schools along with those who continue to await clarity on A Level and BTec results.

... Newborn baby Hazel Isabella Stowers and her family, giving thanks for Hazel's safe arrival into the world on Tuesday.

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

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

...the sick in need of our prayers, Margaret Quick, 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, David Potter.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Alan Wright, Maurice Tipler, Yasmin Clark, Joyce Fisher, Albert Colbert, Violet Small, Peggy Morton-Gore.

...residents living in and around our parish.

*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,*

*Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

*We hanged our harps upon the willows*

*In the midst thereof.*

*For there they that carried us away captive*

*Required of us a song:*

*And they that wasted us*

*Required of us mirth saying,*

*'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'*

*How shall we sing the Lord's song, in a strange land?*  
From Psalm 137

insert your prayer for the week here

**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>

You are receiving this email because you or someone you know has given us your email address. If you do not wish to receive further emails from St John the Evangelist, Bexley please let Julia Wickham ([julia.wickham1@ntlworld.com](mailto:julia.wickham1@ntlworld.com)) or Rev'd Edward Barlow ([fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com)) know.