



From Edward:

*"The Waiting Place...
...for people just waiting.
Waiting for a train to go
or a bus to come, or a plane to go*

*Or the mail to com, or the rain to go
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow
or waiting around for a Yes or No
or waiting for their hair to grow.
Everyone is just waiting."*

We move now from one period of waiting, waiting for the end of lockdown, to another period of waiting, waiting for the Coming of Christ as we mark the season of Advent.

... This Advent, perhaps more than any other, we wait: For the end of the pandemic; the availability of a vaccine; a lifting of restrictions; to be allowed to sing again; for safety; security; peace of mind; freedom; normality; human contact...

...And we wait...That's what we do in Advent: We wait...

Our patience is being tested; We will soon ease ourselves out of another lockdown as we did before – once again tentatively: Knowing that local cases in Bexley remain high. Knowing that we must be careful. Knowing the virus hasn't gone away and that perhaps our reprieve has only been granted because Christmas is coming.

Here's how we're restarting:

Sunday 6th December: The following services will take place:

- 8am: Rev'd Sue Twynam will preside at Holy Communion at St John's – we will be joined by the 8.30am congregation from St Mary's.
- 10am: Pauline Mace will lead Morning Prayer for Advent 2 at St John's, Rev'd Sue Twynam will lead Holy Communion at St Mary's and Rev'd Matt Hodder will lead a Team Zoom service.
- St John's will be open for individual prayer throughout the day.

Please consider which service you may wish to attend based on your personal sense of risk and comfort and remember there should be no stigma to staying in the safety of your own home. I will be on leave on the 6th.

Midweek Services: The 10am Midweek Communion resumes on the 2nd December at St John's. Please see the notice below for the Midweek schedule throughout December.

Christmas: It would not be practical or safe to hold our usual selection of seasonal services – Christingle, Nine Lessons & Carols, and the Christmas Eve Crib services will not take place at St John's this December. We will hold Midnight Mass and the 10am Christmas Day Eucharist but please be aware that there will be no singing at either service.

With the prospect of vaccines on the horizon we wait in hope that this complex and restricted period will come to an end before too long: But until then we wait:

*“Waiting for the fish to bite
or waiting for wind to fly a kite
or waiting around for Friday night
or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake
or a pot to boil, or a Better Break
Or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants
or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.
Everyone is just waiting.”*
(From Dr Seuss: *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*)

Stay Safe!
Edward

PS: If you're spending your waiting-time scrolling through social media, we now have a St John's Instagram feed, courtesy of Amber Callaghan! Follow us @stjohnsbexley. We're very grateful to Amber for taking this on as a project and look forward to seeing how our social media presence develops!

Services are suspended until 2nd December at the earliest, but St John's is open for individual prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Midweek Services: From 2nd December we will revert to our pattern of 10am Wednesday Eucharists: 2nd & 16th December at St John's, 9th & 23rd December at St Mary's. 30th to be confirmed. There will be an additional 10am Eucharist at St John's on Tuesday, 29th December to keep the Patronal Festival (translated from Sunday 27th).

Team Zoom Service: The Bexley Team Ministry will be holding services on Zoom at 10am on Sundays in Lockdown. The login was sent out through this mailing list earlier in the week. Should you need it resent, please contact a member of clergy.

Social Media: Remember you can engage with us on Facebook (/stjohnsbexley), Twitter (@stjohnsbexley) and Instagram (@stjohnsbexley)

Needing Support: Team pastoral support is being coordinated by Assistant Curate Rev'd Matt Hodder. If you, or someone you know, is requiring assistance with accessing food, medicine, essential shopping or other need (or simply wants a chat!) please contact Matt on 07889873125 or matthodder10@gmail.com.

Church Security: We have had a number of incidents in the church grounds after dark,



including the lighting of fires. If you are near the church after dark and encounter any suspicious or criminal activity please do not hesitate to contact 999.

Christmas Trail: Please see the attached flyer for details of the Bexley Team Ministry Christmas Trail which replaces the Crib Services across our churches this year and will run from 18th December to 3rd January. If you'd like to assist in preparing the church grounds for the trail please email either Edward on fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com or the Reverend Sue Twynam on susantwynam@btconnect.com.

Confirmations: The Bishops of Rochester and Tonbridge are setting dates for Confirmations in the Sidcup Deanery next year. If you, or anyone you know is interested in Confirmation, Adult Baptism, or Formal Reception into the Church of England, then please contact Edward on fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com.

Public Libraries Consultation: Public libraries provide a vital hub for resources and connection for all ages and cuts to library services can have a catastrophic impact on the whole community, not least the most vulnerable. Bexley borough has opened a consultation on the future of library services across the borough, please consider having your say [here](#).

The Real Advent Calendar: Many thanks to all those who bought Advent Calendars, thanks to your generosity we have donated 38 Advent Calendars to Bexley Foodbank this year. Many thanks to Julia for organising this.

Christmas Hampers: To support families in our communities who are most in need over the Christmas period, The Bexley Team are distributing food hampers to families in our local schools who receive free school meals or have specific needs. We are very grateful to all who have given donations or assistance so far. Please see the Team News for further details.

Suspended Sermon: Edward's sermons continue to be available [here](#) and become live from Sunday mornings onward. This week's reflection is entitled 'Kintsugi'.

The Children's Society: This year the Children's Society is devoting its Christmas Appeal to supporting victims and those at risk of County Lines exploitation with its [Hope](#) campaign. Please do have a look and consider submitting a supportive message for a child or donating financially. There is a very moving (and well produced) video giving an insight into the reality of County Lines gangs and the difference the Children's Society can make.

Lockdown Labyrinth: Attached to this email is the pattern, along with some prayer resources for a *Lockdown Labyrinth*. Suitable for any level of crochet-ability: This is can be a Lockdown Project and Devotional Resource to accompany the ongoing Month of Prayer.

Daily Psalm: Throughout this period, Team Curate Rev'd Matt Hodder will be sending out a Daily Psalm over email or WhatsApp to provide a sense of prayerful togetherness across the four parishes. To participate, please contact Matt on matthodder10@gmail.com or 07889873125.

Situations Vacant: We have a number of roles and activities which require volunteers to assist with the running and growth of our church. Please see the attached 'Situations Vacant' pack and contact Edward on fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com if you would like more information on any of the positions advertised.

Bexley Foodbank: Our Foodbank Donation Point remains open and you can bring your donations when the Church is open on Sundays and Wednesday. You can also give financially [here](#).

Parish Office: Tuesday office hours have been suspended due to Covid Tier-Two restrictions. We will reinstate our usual times when we return to Tier-One, in the meantime, for Baptism and Wedding enquiries, please email Edward.

Church Open: St John's is open during the day on Sundays and Wednesdays for Individual Prayer. Please collect a laminate card from the table by the door and leave it in your pew.

Track & Trace: In order to support the NHS in containing the spread of Covid-19, we are recording Track & Trace information for those who enter the building. There are three ways to give your data:

- 1: By scanning the QR code displayed in the building using the *NHS Covid-19* App.
- 2: By completing the slip provided and placing it in the Track & Trace box (please use your own pen).
- 3: By emailing Edward (fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) directly with your name and the date and time of your visit. Please mark the subject header: St John's Visitor Track & Trace.

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.

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. 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.

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! We are still considering how to safely hold our Toddler Church in line with social distancing and hygiene requirements. We are grateful for your patience and support during this time. Toddler Church activity packs from last term are still available on our website. If you would like us to produce further resources in a similar style then please email Edward.

Devotional Pattern: Readings for December with suggested prayer intentions are attached to this email.

'Not Another Cookbook': The Sidcup Ladies Luncheon Club has produced a charity cookbook (containing over 80 recipes!) with all proceeds going to *Cancer Research UK*. Copies are priced at £7.95 and can be ordered by emailing sandra.vamplew@btinternet.com. Local delivery is free.

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 wait.

... Dan & Sian as they prepare to be married.

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

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

...the sick in need of our prayers, Gill Rogers, Carol & Peter Amura, Margaret Quick, Gladys Verran, Mavis Johnson, Samantha Pout, Ray Mace, John Wright, George Berry, 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, Laura Harrex, Tommy Wetton, Suzanne Winnister.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Helen Edwards, Albert Stone, Muriel Feisel, Alice Hyatt, James Nunn, Pamela Miles.

*Come, Lord, and visit us in peace
That we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart. Amen*

(Advent Antiphon)

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>