



# **St Mary's Church, Thorpe**

## **Church Approach, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8TQ**

Vicar: The Revd. Damian Stewart Harrison-Miles, BTh  
Charity: 1176929. [www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk](http://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk)



Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

### **KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CHURCH**

Dear

I do hope this communication finds you and those whom you love well at what continues to be a troubling time for us all. I know that with a re-surgency of Covid-19 around the world and efforts to prevent a second wave here in the UK, many of us are taking extra sensible precautions. I wanted to write to tell you about our plans this Autumn, All Saints'/All Souls', and Remembrance and to assure you of our continued prayers and love.

#### **Our Covid-secure entry procedure for Worship**

This has been working well, operating a one-way walking system around the church and grounds, with entry in via the Rutherwyke Room kitchen (back) door. Once in people are required to wash their hands and wear a face mask/covering (which is now required by law, with exceptions on health grounds). People then sign-in providing their full name, time of entry and phone number (for NHS Test & Trace purposes). Donations are left here as we can't take the usual collection during services. Then people collect a service sheet (which has a coloured post-it note attached) before they walk up the Link passageway into St Mary's Church via the Chancel. (Those in wheelchairs enter via the main church door accompanied by a church warden). Inside our buildings we ask that everyone maintains social distancing, keeping 2 meters from another person or family group and remaining at least 2/3 chairs apart in all directions. People then place the sticky post-it note onto the chair where they have sat down, which helps us with cleaning after services. Communion is in one kind – bread only.

Only 40 people are allowed inside Church for worship (with lower numbers for Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals) and 10 people can be in the Rutherwyke Room, as an overflow space when necessary (and those people can also receive communion). Hand sanitisers are widely available in various locations including wall-mounted in the Link and Church Porch.

#### **News – Mother Jo has been Ordained Priest**

In a beautiful service held at St John's Church Egham on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October Mother Jo was ordained, followed at 7:30pm by her First Eucharist/Mass with a full church of 40 and over 60 families watching LIVE on our Facebook page from their own homes. Her children led beautiful prayers and Jo led the service like she had been ordained for years and 'glowed' with delight and we presented Jo with a red stole. Please keep Jo and all those ordained this autumn very much in your thoughts and prayers.

#### **Communions and home visits**

This continues to be a challenging time and once again the advice is that we should refrain from visiting people in their own homes as much as possible this Autumn/Winter. For those of you living in a place of care, we have in almost all cases been refused entry – and not for the want of us trying! It must be exceedingly difficult, to be separated from the Sacrament and the Church in this way and we all keep you very much in our thoughts and prayers.

**St Mary's Vicarage  
Church Approach,  
Thorpe Village, Egham  
TW20 8TQ.  
01932 565986**

My primary concern is your health and well-being. Therefore, I hope you understand that we will only try and visit when we are sure it is safe to do so and would not put you at risk. One important aspects of this communication every other month is to keep you updated on the busy life of your church family but also to offers spiritual resources. So please find enclosed with our love a variety of service sheets, newsletters, bible readings, sermon notes and the Memorial service booklet to inspire your prayers and worship from home.

If you would like names read out loud at our All Souls' Day Eucharist on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 7:30pm, please call and leave a message on the Vicarage answerphone: 01932 565986.

### **APCM – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

We held our annual meeting on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September and what a joy it was to elect Peter Gruncell to work alongside Barry Huxley as our second churchwarden (replacing Margaret Roberts who is now a Deputy Warden). Indeed, every post was filled, so we have a full complement of staff, including Jane Lowe who has returned, now a deputy churchwarden. We also thanked and made a presentation to Petra Hudson who has stood down as Vicar & Warden's Secretary. We hope to find and appoint a replacement soon into 2021.

### **News – an update from your Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

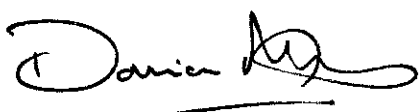
I am thankful for the many financial donations received and for those who have set-up a regular Standing Order to help support St Mary's. This has enabled your PCC to carefully budget and plan for Autumn and Christmas services, as well as book some essential maintenance works around the building, including the widening of the footpath from the boiler house around to the Rutherwyke Room kitchen door.

We have experienced a few services where numbers in church at 10am have reached 40, not least Harvest Festival at the start of October. Therefore, and with some regret, in order that we can maintain our Covid-secure status, we have introduced an online ticketing system for some services. These include Remembrance Sunday, when we are unable to hold our usual community service followed by gathering at Thorpe War Memorial. This year we will gather in Church at 10am with the mayor of Runnymede for the Sunday Eucharist and keep silence at 11am. As we adhere to government guidance, there can't be a procession or act of Witness this year. However, we will relay our service online via Facebook as is now customary and has a wide following. I can't wait for the day when we can all physically gather in St Mary's Church as one family of faith.

Looking ahead towards Christmas we will have to make the best of the situation, with limited numbers in Church and potentially more restrictions. I will write out again at the end of November to update you further as we pray together, *"Maranatha, come Lord Jesus."*

Friends in faith, your church continues to be remarkably busy and active. Once again thank you for your support as I am sure you give thanks to God with me. I have felt very much held in prayer this autumn and I hope you have felt the same. May God continue to keep you, and those whom you love safe. Do drop me a line or give me a call for a chat soon – I would love to hear your news and thoughts - my door is always open. With love and prayers from all the team here at St Mary's Church, Thorpe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Father Damian Harrison-Miles, Vicar of Thorpe.