



COVID-19 LOCKDOWN CONTINUITY PLAN - ST MARY'S CHURCH THORPE

This plan will be kept under review as circumstances change during this third period of Lockdown from 4 January 2021. Our aim is to ensure as far as possible the continued mission and ministry of St Mary's across Thorpe Parish and beyond where support is needed, along with the maintenance of the critical ongoing business of the parish. This plan is an update of our original lockdown plan been agreed by Thorpe PCC on Monday 16 March 2020 and revised in November 2020. St Mary's Church is following all Church of England Guidance. Information can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

The contents this plan will be updated in accordance with national government guidelines and protocols. It will be kept under constant review by the Church Leadership Team.

1. Contact Information

For the Church Leadership Team & St Mary's Parish Office email
stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com *This email is checked every day.*

Pastoral & worship/prayer enquiries the Incumbent is the first person to contact:

Father Damian Miles – Vicar of Thorpe. 01932 565986 – damomiles@btopenworld.com

His deputies for pastoral matters are:

Father Gerard Mee – Assistant Curate (1st deputy) - gerardmee@yahoo.com

Mother Jo Winn-Smith – Assistant Curate (2nd deputy) - jowinnsmith@hotmail.com

You may also need to contact the Churchwardens:

Mr Barry Huxley 01932 564168 – Mr Peter Gruncell 01784 436040

Hall bookings: contact the Parish office – stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com

Pre-recording of service content: Andrew Falconer. Music / Organist: David Howard.

2. Communication

Visit www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk for the most up to date information.

and our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchThorpe/>

We will keep our external church notice boards and weekly news sheet / mailer updated, along with the Church website and Facebook page to provide information on services and availability. The Mailer will continue to be issued on a Friday. The circulation of printed newsletters will be reviewed in line with guidance as it is updated.

To join the weekly mailer* which is prepared by Sarah Bolton, please email:

stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com

The Church leadership Team will endeavour to keep St Mary's Church available for regular worship throughout the latest lockdown and seek to maintain pastoral support and community engagement, within the bounds of guidance from the government and local authority. We will follow the policies set out by the Church of England.

3. General Hygiene

Until a vaccine has been rolled-out and shown to be successful, social distancing and good hygiene will be our primary protection against the spread of the Corona virus.

- Hand-sanitiser is available at the entrance to the church and Rutherwyke Room which everyone should use on entering the buildings. All are encouraged to wash their hands regularly and avoid physical contact with other people.
- Tissues and a bin have been provided at both entrances.
- Notices/posters have been displayed to remind people of the general hygiene advice.
- Surfaces in church will be wiped down after services.
- Paper towels are only to be used once for the drying of hands and disposed of immediately in the bins provided.

- The collection by baskets has been suspended. Instead, a 'static' collection plate will be located near the entrance door of the Church. However, the congregation are asked to set-up a standing order to support the church instead of giving by cash. Alternatively, donations can be made via the Facebook page or church website using PayPal.
- Should the guidance change, single use service sheets will be printed for Sunday worship to include all hymns/music and hymns books removed from the chair backs.
- Ministers of the Eucharist and servers will wash their hands immediately before and after distributing communion.
- Additional care will be taken with refreshments. All cups and utensils must be washed in the dishwasher on the long hot cycle. From now on only wrapped biscuits can be served. Should the guidance change, it is anticipated that catering/refreshments may be completely suspended leading up to and during the height of the outbreak.
- The use of holy water stoups has been suspended.
- No objects within the church, including crucifixes and images, should be kissed or unnecessarily touched.
- A review of clergy vesture will be required as ongoing guidance is received.
- The First Aid Kit in the Rutherwyke Room Kitchen and Incident Log Book have been checked and appropriately stocked and Fr Gerard is the point of contact – we ask all those with first aid training to let him know so an up to date list can be prepared.

4. Pastoral

St Mary's Church offers an important public reassurance through 'the sacrament of presence' and being seen to be "present" and available and the Church leadership Team will do all it can to keep worship, spiritual direction and pastoral support available to all. *This does not include physically visiting those diagnosed with COVID-19 or those who are self-isolating.*

Our local network is important here in Thorpe Parish including Runnymede Borough Council, Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum and TWRA, Thorpe Primary School, TASIS, Thorpe Pre-school Nursery, Churches Together in Egham, local health agencies, funeral directors and other service providers and we will keep them up to date with our policy and practise. The Parish office is willing to hold next of kin details for parishioners who live alone.* If this applies to you or you would like to know more, please email: stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com.

Clergy/Lay visiting

- **No pastoral visits can be undertaken with people who are self-isolating** until isolation ends. Instead, the ministry team will offer pastoral support by email and phone communication.
- When **visiting parishioners at home**, we will need to wash hands before and after giving the sacraments.
- **Visits to people in care homes or hospitals** should follow advice from the staff on infection control. It is likely that we can only maintain telephone contact.

Buddy-up care scheme for Thorpe

We continue to offer our buddy-up scheme to maintain the maximum possible pastoral care of our people, the wider church community and parish of Thorpe with a weekly telephone call to the sick, housebound and elderly and we hope as many people as possible will continue to help with this. (This plan adheres to national safeguarding policies and hygiene practices).

Funeral Ministry

St Mary's Church remains open for funeral services – 30 guests/mourners (staff are not included in this total – with a maximum 40 in Church according to our risk assessment). The Ministry Team at St Mary's are always willing to conduct funerals and that includes people who would not describe themselves as 'religious' or Church of England 'CofE'. We ask that funeral directors contact the parish office at the earliest opportunity: 01932 565986 – and ALSO send an email to: stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com and we will endeavour to return their call/email promptly. St Mary's Church will remain available for Funeral/Memorial/Requiem services, within national

guidance. We will continue to conduct services at agreed locations, such as graveside or crematorium, with or without a congregation present. The set Church of England fees (plus travel) still apply. It may be necessary for pre-funeral visits to be replaced by phone, zoom, messenger or other forms of communication.

5. Infrastructure

The aim of this plan is to ensure as far as possible the continued mission and ministry of St Mary's Church, Thorpe and the maintenance of the critical ongoing business of this community. The Incumbent, with the support of the Church Wardens and ministry team will now take the steps outlined in this continuity plan. It is very important that we prepare for key members of the Church team to be out of action for at least two weeks at a time. Where possible we need to cross-train people for essential tasks in the parish so that if a person needs to self-isolate or becomes ill, tasks can still be undertaken. We have identified essential tasks as:

- Pastoral Ministry
- Providing Eucharistic worship in Church, to the housebound and via on-line broadcast.
- Service support, H&S, welcome and church management
- Communication via the Mailer, website, Facebook page and weekly newsletter.

For this plan to work every member of the church community need to play their part, coordinated by the ministry team and churchwardens.

6. Activities, Services and Bookings – Covid-secure protocol remains in place

With regret, all church bookings, including hire of the Rutherwyke/Wallace Room, weddings and services of Holy Baptism in Church have been cancelled for the period of this lockdown from 04/01/2021. We hope these can be re-booked soon, but we will need to review as more information is made available. The Wallace Room will be used as a Foodbank collection point.

THE CHURCH REMAINS OPEN FOR COVID-SECURE WORSHIP

Sunday Worship and Festivals

Sunday 8am Said Eucharist & 10am Parish Eucharist (also LIVE on Facebook) and Wednesday 10am Said Eucharist (also LIVE on Facebook). The staff team for services includes: One clergy person (minimum – often 2), one churchwarden or deputy on duty, two welcome team, and one person as cantor/operate the iPod or an organist. The presiding or assisting minister or organist may cantor/sing. All Family Services will move online via Zoom. Compline and all daily services of Morning Prayer will also move online for the duration of the lockdown.

Numbers Permitted in Church

A maximum number of 40 people are allowed in Church for Communal Worship (No Baptisms or Weddings at this time, 30 for Funerals). Our Covid-secure maximum capacity in St Mary's Church for worship. No gatherings are permitted within our buildings at this time.

Rota and Cover

The existing service rota remains in place for Sunday 8am & 10am and Wednesday 10am services. A new rota will be produced by mid-January for services in February and will be replaced monthly until the lockdown is lifted. It is likely that some of the people who are on the rota to cover duties may need to withdraw due to illness. The usual practise remains that wherever possible, if you feel unwell and will be unable to attend please, at the earliest opportunity email round the team and include the parish office. Hopefully, someone else will be able to cover for you. If for whatever reason you feel unwell or feel it unsafe to come to church, then please stay at home. If you are due to be on duty, please advise the churchwardens at the earliest opportunity.

Remaining open for COVID-19-secure Communal Worship & new 'Rota Pool'

At the end of December 2020, Thorpe PCC voted unanimously that St Mary's should main open for COVID-19-secure Communal Worship, to provide a facility for Funerals and to continue as a Foodbank donation point. To achieve this, it is essential that we remain fully COVID-19 -secure

and that our protocols are fully followed. Therefore, Churchwarden Barry Huxley is creating a 'Rota Pool' of people willing, at short notice, to cover for service duties including funerals over the coming weeks. Please give prayerful consideration to joining this team.

7. Finance

A significant proportion of St Mary's income comes from cash collections at services, as well as the letting of our facilities to other groups and organisations. Clearly, if fewer people are coming to church, there will be a significant financial impact upon St Mary's Church. This is a situation we share with many charities who are reliant upon the generosity of people and we are thankful for the continued support of so many. Therefore, we are asking all members of our Church Electoral Roll and supporters, as well as all visitors to consider setting-up a regular monthly standing order to help the church through this challenging time. We recognise that many families and individuals will themselves have their own financial issues, and so we are asking those more able to carry a little more of the responsibility for this than usual, hopefully for a short period of time. To set-up a standing order with the Church please email stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com for the necessary details. Donations can also be made via our church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchThorpe/>

And via PayPal on our Parish website: <https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/>

If you can gift-aid your donations that it is much appreciated. Donations can also be made contactless with our new card reader. If you have already completed a gift-aid declaration we do not need to renew that. Cash is discouraged. Anyone handling cash must protect themselves from virus transmission by washing hands and regularly using hand gel.

8. Buildings and Grounds

Fr Damian will continue have overall responsibility for the building, but this time share it with Barry Huxley and Peter Gruncell. Only staff members are permitted to enter the building during lockdown outside of Communal Worship times. These people are:

Father Damian - Vicar, Fr Gerard – assistant Priest & first deputy for the Vicar and Mother Jo - Curate, Barry & Peter as Churchwardens. Any West as Treasurer and Sacristan to oversee finances, the church clock and set-up the church for Sunday worship each week. Andrew Falconer to oversee the technology and recording or live streaming of services as well as admin tasks in preparation for special services. Jill Collinson is also permitted to enter the Hall (Rutherwyke/Wallace Rooms) to allow the Foodbank to collect donations. Bev Germany – to complete the input of data. And members of the Flower Guild: Margaret Harnden, Jane Lowe, and Margaret Alderson. Claire Loveridge, our weekly cleaner will continue to come in at 9am-12noon every Wednesday morning for a 'deep clean' to help keep our building Covid-secure. Otherwise, our Church cannot be used for 'public' access and the Church buildings & Vicarage Car Park will be closed outside of Communal Worship and Funerals. The Churchyard will remain open throughout, but the Vicarage Driveway gates will be shut and locked outside of Communal Worship and Funeral times.

Depending on the rules, it is anticipated that we would continue to offer Communal Worship as already identified while also live-streaming worship via technology with live streaming and downloadable via our website as well as service sheets sent digitally with the weekly mailer every Friday (including bible readings and sermon notes for home study). We will also produce a weekly pack of activities (in place of Faith & Fun Group/Family Services) known as the Family Pack for parents to use with their children. Some printed materials will be delivered to those without internet, again depending upon the guidelines at such a time.

Additionally, there may be a need to liase with Runnymede Foodbank/Thorpe Primary and TASIS about the distribution of lunches for children/families in need, as schools are closed.

Fr Damian Harrison-Miles – Incumbent, Mr Barry Huxley & Mr Peter Gruncell - Church Wardens.

**Thorpe PCC takes your privacy seriously. We will not pass your contact details to anyone else. To see our privacy notice, visit www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/polices and click on the privacy notice box.*