



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Corona Virus – Covid-19 Information

Following the information available on the Church of England Website, here is some guidance about commonly asked questions.

Church Services:

These have all been cancelled until further notice.

We plan to have St. Bartholomew's church open on Sunday mornings at 11:00am for personal and private prayer and to allow people to light a candle.

- Anyone showing symptoms of the disease or living with someone showing symptoms and those self-isolating are asked **not** to attend.
- Those in high risk groups are urged to follow the expert medical advice.
- Anyone attending is asked to use the handwashing facilities available, not to shake hands or have other physical contact and keep about 6 feet from other people present in line with social distancing measures.

Baptisms:

We are currently cancelling baptisms at all our churches.

We are unable to rebook any cancelled baptisms or take firm bookings for future baptisms until we have further information on when church services can resume.

Weddings:

Weddings already booked will be allowed to take place.

Strict social distancing measures will be applied and any church service would need to be on a small scale. Couples with a wedding booked in the next few months should contact the Parish clergy immediately.

Wedding Banns:

We are awaiting guidance on the reading of Banns as there are no services at which to read them.

Couples where the Banns should be read in the next few months should contact the Parish clergy immediately.

Funeral Services:

Funeral Services will be allowed to proceed but changes to practice will have to be implemented.

We know that bereavement and mourning are stressful and upsetting times. In keeping our families, congregations and communities safe there will have to be some changes in funeral services

- Planning a service may have to be done by ways other than face-to-face meetings
- There will have to be limits placed on the number of people attending
- Strict social distancing measures will have to be in place at the service – physical contact such as handshakes or hugs will be avoided
- Those in high risk groups should be advised not to attend
- For those unable to attend, consider sending copies of the service or planning a memorial service at a later date.



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Confirmation Service:

There is currently no information on whether the Confirmation service planned for Sunday 24th May will take place or not.

If you wish to be confirmed or have a child who wishes to be confirmed, please contact the clergy to register and we will contact you to let you know if this will go ahead. We do have another service booked for Sunday 18th October if May's service has to be cancelled.

Church Meetings / Annual Parochial Church Meeting:

In view of the social distancing measures, churches are recommended not to hold meetings unless absolutely necessary.

We have suspended all meetings and our Annual Meeting planned for Monday 27th April will NOT take place unless circumstances change. We are awaiting further Diocesan advice on suspending and rescheduling the annual meeting.

School Form Signing:

We are not able to complete registers for church attendance for school admissions at the moment

We are awaiting guidance from Church schools on this so that everyone is treated equally whichever church they attend.

Keeping in Contact:

We plan to keep sending out the weekly pewsheets and monthly newsletters by e-mail to those who have registered in line with the Data Protection Laws.

Please encourage others to sign up at westhoughtonparish@outlook.com and we will have some paper copies available for people to collect and deliver to friends and neighbours.

Please contact us:

If you need to speak to a priest do not hesitate to contact us. Although access to our buildings is limited, the Church, as the family of God, are still here.

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 859251 carol.pharaoh@gmail.com

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 revawynne@gmail.com

Further Information:

Please see also the Parish website www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

Please see also the Church of England website

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Or e-mail the Parish Office westhoughtonparish@outlook.com [NB not staffed 24 hours]

Please note that this is a rapidly changing situation which is being updated daily. We will aim to provide the latest information available.

EJM
19/03/2020