

THE PLAN TO RE-OPEN ST. AIDAN'S

... as discussed and agreed with the Parish Council, the Trustees, the Choir Director and other medically qualified parishioners AND also blessed by our bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan, for distribution to the aforementioned persons and the parish generally.

1. The Church will reopen when vaccines are available for those key workers who choose to be vaccinated (clergy, readers, subdeacons, choir, servers).
2. Before the church is reopened, preparations will include the publishing of information about the government's hygiene rules that we must all follow. The full guidance and instructions may be found below.¹
3. When these preparations are complete, a date will be set for reopening and then advertised.
4. When the church reopens, EVERYONE will be welcome to return, vaccinated or not.
5. Those who have severe health issues and therefore cannot come to church because they are self-isolating at home until the pandemic ends OR those who are well, but who for medical reasons cannot be vaccinated, will still (for a limited time only) be given the Pre-Sanctified Gifts to commune at home. Sunday Liturgies will continue to be broadcasted this time from church so, these parishioners will be able to participate from home until the pandemic is defeated as an ongoing threat to life for the vulnerable. (The virus of course will not simply go away but it will eventually be made much less dangerous).
6. Services will be reintroduced in stages, as staffing permits, initially with guaranteed weekly Sunday Liturgies but moving up to full provision as quickly as possible.
7. Hygiene protocols, social distancing etc. will remain in place if these are required by the science and government. We may have to limit numbers attending until restrictions end.
8. Administration of Holy Communion will be with ONE spoon, but this will be cleaned and dried after each communicant has received. The priest will ensure that nothing of the Holy Gifts remains on the spoon before it is cleaned by dipping in a separate container held at the side by a server. The clergy will not take any risks with people's health. The Holy Gifts cannot make us ill, but saliva containing the virus, still on the spoon from people's mouths, can do so.
9. Toilets will remain closed except for emergencies. These will need to be cleaned after each use by a designated person. Parishioners will not be allowed to bring food or drink to church but bought-in prepacked fruit juice cartons, bottles of water and mini prepacked biscuits will be handed to those who need them to break the fast, but only as people leave, not to be eaten or drunk inside church.
10. Gradually, more and more people will come back to church. Eventually, the vaccination programme together with more effective treatments will make COVID-19 a safer disease and less dangerous to the vulnerable. When this happens, these safety protocols will be removed, and we shall then be able to worship and associate normally as before. All these safety protocols for reopening are for a strictly limited period only. Hopefully, everything should be back to normal by next Summer.

*Archpriest Gregory Hallam
Father Emmanuel Kahn*

Thursday 5th November 2020

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>