

Distant but United

St Martin's Parish Church



First Sunday after Trinity, 14th June

We will soon reach the beginning of a new chapter in this extraordinary volume of the history of our Church. We will soon be able to return to our church building for private prayer.

I know this will come as wonderful news and great relief to many of us. We have endured the pain of separation for longer than any of us could have imagined; but we have endured with great patience and amazing grace.

As our reading from Paul's letter to the Roman's reminds us, 'suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, character produces hope and hope never disappoints'. Whilst there is something of the 'boarding school headmaster' about this statement ("Chin up, Watson!") it has to be said that through this time of struggle and strangeness we have seen the true character of the church family emerge - loving, patient, gentle, kind, and focused on prayer and compassion. And that should give us all hope.

Re-opening the church will be gradual and cannot happen until we have arranged for a professional deep-clean and made the correct preparations. I **expect to be able to give you an exact date in next week's news update**. We will begin with private prayer for the first couple of weeks at least, and then reflect on whether we are ready to move to some form of Sunday Worship.



It will be wonderful to be able to welcome you back to St Martin's Parish Church for private prayer and contemplation. A chance for you to sit in holy silence, breathe the air of our Christian heritage, and even light a candle as a sign of devotion.

But, as we move into this next phase of the life of the church, we can bring with us those lessons (that *character*) that we have developed over the last few months: prayerfulness, gentleness, compassion and grace, *because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us at this time.*
Rev Jonny

To speak to Rev Jonny, please ring: 07797 939692 or email: smartinsrector@gmail.com

Guidelines for Private Prayer

Please note the following guidelines will be in place when the church reopens for private prayer:

- The Church will open daily from 9am to 4pm
- If you are in a vulnerable group, seek medical advice before coming to church
- Fill in an attendance card when entering
- Use hand sanitizer provided on entry
- Follow the signage to available spaces
- Remain 2 meters apart from others
- Candles may be lit, using disposable tapers
- Respect the stillness and quiet by taking conversations outside.



Church Stewards

Whilst private prayer will not be constantly supervised, there will be a steward assigned to each day of the week who will come into church and wipe down the door handles, pews and other areas. Please help them in their task by remaining in the allocated areas and please refrain from touching anything unnecessary.

We would welcome more volunteers to steward the church, so please let the Rector know if you are able and willing to help.

Worship from Home

It has been wonderful to hear from so many of you that have engaged with the written and recorded worship that has been sent out each week. By email and post we now reach over 100 people each week.

Even as the church slowly re-opens, this ministry will continue, so you will have the option to worship at home for some time to come.

When we deem gathered worship to be safe and appropriate to reintroduce we will still be limited on the numbers we can have in church and the format the services can take, so it would be wise to expect a significant level of disruption for a good while yet. And so the option to worship from home will remain.

