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**Briefing 20: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2020.**

Dear friends,

As you know we will be re-starting services in both our churches this weekend. The purpose of this letter is to explain what you can expect when you come along and what we need from you. It will be church, but not quite as we've known it.

We are restricting the capacity at St Nicholas to 70 and at St Mary's Graveley to 30, although the actual numbers will depend on the sizes of family groups.

Thank you for all of you who have completed the questionnaire letting us know you will be coming. Sadly, all responses given after Monday evening at 11pm are behind an expensive pay wall! So if you completed the survey from Tuesday morning onwards, or you haven't filled it in yet, please complete the questionnaire below. Again, it will take less than a minute to do so. <https://forms.gle/fYqtDaTLZHYcpZHSA>

Assuming that the number of people wanting to come doesn't grow exponentially in the next couple of days, our services this weekend will be at St Nicholas at 9:30am and St Mary's Graveley at 11:30am. If that changes, we will let you know.

For those of you who sadly won't be able to join us this week, there will still be an online service, recorded live at St Nicholas. We're hoping this will be live-streamed on Facebook, but we may have to record the service and upload it later in the morning. Please bear with us as we try and negotiate our way through this new technology! We will let you know on Friday or Saturday how this will be done.

For those of you who are coming along, please make sure you are aware of the requirements below and that you help us to help everybody stay safe by keeping these requirements. Parents, please make sure that your children understand what is expected of them.

**BEFORE**

- Most importantly, if you are showing any signs of covid-19 symptoms, you should not come. If you are ill, stay at home, and contact your GP or dial 111.
- Face masks are not required, but you may wear one if you would like to.
- As no refreshments will be served, you might like to bring some refreshments for outside afterwards.

**ON ARRIVAL**

- As you walk up the path, please stay at least 2m away from others not from your family/bubble. There will be some lines on the path to help you.
- A steward will greet you and remind you of the rules for public worship.
- You'll be asked to use hand sanitiser before you enter the building. We will have some available, but you might prefer to bring your own.
- Bibles will not be issued so please bring your own. Service sheets will be available for downloading to your personal devices or printing off at home, although there will be a few available in church. At St Nicholas the words will also be shown on a video screen.
- A steward will take you to your seats. These will be in household groups (whether 1, 2 3 or more), with 2m between your 'block' and those of another household.
- For the time being our children's groups will NOT be running – but there will be a puzzle sheet for children to use during the service. However, you will need to bring your own pens. The sheets will be available to download along with the service sheets.

- At St Nicholas, only the downstairs toilet will be available, as will the stable toilet at Graveley, but please only use them if absolutely necessary. The toilet at St Nicholas should be accessed via the parish room, rejoining the worship area through the porch. There will arrows to remind you.
- To help with track and trace, names and telephone numbers of those gathering will be written down and kept for 21 days as per government guidance.

#### **DURING THE SERVICES**

- Whilst we will have music, hymns and one singer, no singing is allowed, so we will stay seated during the songs. Please respect this and resist the temptation to sing. It will be hard but it's a great way to demonstrate our love for our neighbours.
- We will stand for the creed to give us all a chance to stretch our legs and backs.
- In shared responses, such as the collect or confession, please speak in your normal voice, not at full volume.
- We will not take up an offering, but gifts may be placed in a receptacle by the door.

#### **IF COMMUNION IS SHARED:**

- It will be in bread only, received standing rather than kneeling at the rail and social distancing will be observed as individuals or families receive.
- The words of administration ("The body of Christ was broken for you") will be said to everyone before distribution commences, and a general prayer of blessing will be said for those not receiving the bread, rather than individual prayers.
- Those coming forward to receive will be asked to hand-sanitise as they approach the minister and to receive with hands out-stretched. The minister will place/drop the wafer into their hands with arms outstretched.
- You'll be asked to go back to your seats by a different route and stewards will be around to assist and guide.

#### **AT THE END OF THE SERVICE**

- People will be asked to maintain social distancing as they exit, and to leave through their nearest door, taking any used orders of service with them.
- No refreshments will be served but you may like to bring you own drinks to share in clusters of up to 6 people outside after the service. Although this will be outside, please remember to stay distanced from one another whilst you chat.
- Once everyone has left, the church will be cleaned as required.

I know that all seems a lot, but most of the above is common sense, and the pattern is similar to that we've all got used to over the last few months in supermarkets and shops. If we all do our best to stick to the rules, then we will be able to keep meeting together without fear, and we'll help to keep the number of cases down and dropping further.

At times like this it is as important as ever to keep our eyes on Jesus, to keep reading his word, to keep trusting his promises and to keep walking the walk of faith with the help and strength of the Holy Spirit. And if you need a little reminder of that, let me recommend sitting down and listening to this beautiful song from Sovereign Grace Ministries. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2tKVqZZiI4>

There will be a further update on Friday, but until then, may the LORD bless you and keep you; may He make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the LORD lift up the light of his countenance upon you and fill you with His wonderful peace.

Yours in Christ,

*Dave*