



Castleford Team Parish

29 July 2021

The Rectory
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Dear Friends

Re: Pastoral Letter (6) from the Rector – Lockdown Lifting

What you do for the least of these you do also for me.

Firstly, I hope that this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying both the sunshine and the warmer weather.

My primary reason for writing to you today is to let you know what changes you can expect in our churches following the lifting of the lockdown measures that took place on 19th of this month, what things might still be outstanding and to offer you some assurance that we have your well-being utmost in our minds as we move forward. As you are aware the final stage was postponed, so I apologise for the delay in writing to you and the absence of a letter from me in each parish magazine, but that has been the reason.

And so the changes going forward are as follows:

From Sunday 1st August:

- Social distancing and mask wearing will be advisory only. All signage, physical restrictions and risk assessments will be amended accordingly. ***Please note that if you wish to continue to socially distance and wear a mask you are more than welcome to do so, and this option will be made clear by the priest at each service so that no one need feel uncomfortable making the choice that is right for them.*** Some signs and markings will remain in place just in case measures are reintroduced by the government.
- Singing will be allowed in St Michael's Church only.
- Coffee can be served after the service, subject to the availability of staff.

From 1st September:

- Singing will be allowed in All Saints' Castleford (this delay is to enable our organist to prepare and for a rota of hymns to be drawn up).

Other Measures:

- The scanning facility for the NHS App will remain in place.
- Hand gel will remain in use on a permanent basis.
- The peace will continue to be shared at a distance, to protect those still wishing to socially distance.
- The chalice will not be reinstated at this stage until a clearer picture of the effects of lockdown lifting becomes clear.
- Other groups meeting at our churches are responsible for their own measures and are working closely with the church so we can work jointly and effectively in keeping everyone safe.

All Saints' Hightown and St Paul's Glasshoughton:

- I will propose to the PCC at our next meeting that these churches remain closed until the bishop instructs that all churches must re-open, by which time the PCC and Standing Committee will have

considered what the service pattern will be and measures introduced to keep the building clean and safe. You will be kept informed as and when any decisions have been made.

I hope the above is clear and that you feel, as do we, that it provides a balanced and measured way forward that protects the health and freedoms of all our members and visitors. If, however, you have any questions or want to discuss matters please call me. Additionally, now things are returning to normal, if there are things that need reinstating (services, events etc), new things you think we should try, or you simply want to share a coffee and a chat, please get in contact with me so that we can get going meeting again and building up the future ministry of the church.

Finally,..... thank you! Thank you for caring for your community, for your patience, your support prayers and love during these challenging times. The above text, or perhaps the context Jesus was speaking into, may be different than the times we live in, but the words remind us of some great truths. Firstly, we are charged with caring for all members of society, the vulnerable as well as the confident; that we do so because the image of God is to be found in all creatures, not just those in our church; and that we are privileged to call ourselves God's children because with that privilege comes the great responsibility of sacrificing our own desires for the well-being of 'the other'. I have seen this in action in so many ways since coming to the benefice of Castleford and my pride in the fact that you have remained good news and a beacon of light in these challenging times is a source of great pride and reassurance to many, not least myself. So, thank you!

I look forward to seeing you whenever and wherever you feel it safe to do so. Be assured there is no rush so, if you feel you would rather receive home communion then call me. And in the time between now and then please stay safe and I look forward to us all being together soon, whenever, and wherever that may be!

God bless and all my love, your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr Keith Freeman, Team Rector.

Castleford Team Parish includes the churches of All Saints, Castleford; All Saints, Hightown; St Michael & All Angels, Smawthorne & St Paul the Apostle, Glasshoughton.

[Website: www.castlefordteamparish.org.uk]