

A Message from our Rector

When the third Lockdown details were announced the Government stated that churches may remain open for communal worship which came as quite a surprise, but the final decision whether to close or stay open was left to each church to decide. This was the view taken by both the Diocese and the National church.

After much thought and prayer I have decided that, because of the virulent nature of the variant of the virus, the high numbers of infection and the age profile of our congregation, that it would be better not to meet for public worship when we are all being told to stay at home and not go out unless it is absolutely necessary. In order to do this, the PCC were invited to pass the following resolution;

“The PCC of Stoke D’Abernon wish to implement Canon B14A to suspend live services on the grounds that the congregation are elderly and vulnerable which we will review when the National lockdown is lifted”.

Canon B14A, part of Canon Law, which are the rules and regulations which govern the Church of England, states;

1. The reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 or the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14 may be dispensed with as follows:

(a) on an occasional basis, as authorized by the minister who has the cure of souls and the parochial church council of each parish in the benefice acting jointly;

(b) on a regular basis, as authorized by the bishop on the request of the minister who has the cure of souls and the parochial church council of each parish in the benefice acting jointly.

The PCC, by a large majority, approved this resolution and the Bishop has given his consent.

A recent notice from Surrey CC stated that **20%** (1 in 5) of people having tests were positive. This also means that 4 in 5 people having tests were negative. The overall infection rate for Elmbridge is 770 per 100,000, which is **less than 1%**. This is higher than the average for England of 518 and is an **increase of about 20%** in the last week (source: BBC website). These figures are both stark and alarming and is reason enough not to allow our congregation to be exposed to possible infection.

I shall be continuing my daily message and there will be links, via the Leaflet and the website to the Cathedral and to St Mary's, Thorpe for live streamed services at 1000 on Sunday morning. I have not made this decision lightly and I hope that you understand why I have taken this action.

As one of my colleagues in a neighbouring parish put on Facebook;
"we are staying at home so that when we are back together, no one is missing".

I am delighted to tell you that St Mary's will be open for private prayer from 1000-1200 on Thursday and Sunday mornings. Please use the sanitiser and wipes on entry and departure.

Please continue to care for each other and to keep in regular contact. Please keep me informed of any concerns and be assured that I am always available to you.

With thoughts and prayers

Godfrey