



**St. Mary's Church, Willesden**  
*Parish Church and Shrine of Our Lady*

From The Vicar  
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Dear Friends,

**Reopening St Mary's for public worship**

It is with great joy that I can confirm that (barring any last-minute changes in the rules) the public celebration of Mass will resume on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July. The Parish Mass will take place at the usual time of 10:30am, and midweek Masses will revert to being celebrated in church rather than from the Vicarage.

All our worship will continue to be streamed on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/shrineofmary](http://www.facebook.com/shrineofmary)) for those who are unable to join in the celebration in person.

Please read this letter carefully as it explains a number of important points which you will need to bear in mind if you are planning to come to Mass.

**Before you arrive**

Although the final decision about attendance is yours to make, please consider whether this is the right time for you to come to church in person. If you are shielding or otherwise in a vulnerable category you must follow NHS and government advice and this may mean you decide to watch the live stream instead. You *must not* come to church if you have, or have had within the previous 14 days, any symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been exposed or think you may have been exposed within the last 14 days, you must also not come to church *even if you have no symptoms*. You may wish to bring a face mask and disposable gloves with you – these will not be provided. As those of you who have been to church for private prayer will know, the WC will not be available.

Due to social distancing requirements, we only have a very limited capacity. In order to help us gauge demand and to cooperate with NHS Test and Trace, it would be helpful if you could please email or telephone the vicarage to confirm your attendance by 5pm on Saturday.

**Arrival at church**

When you arrive at church, please enter via the south porch. A one-way system is in place and this door will only be used for entry. Please maintain social distancing at all times: this may mean you need to queue for entry to the church, so make sure you arrive

in good time! Hand sanitiser will be provided on entry to the church - please then go directly to your seat and remain there (unless doing a reading) until Communion time.

### **The Celebration of Mass**

If you require a service booklet, you will need to print off the electronic copy sent to you by email or bring it with you on your tablet or mobile phone. You must not share this with anyone outside your household. There will be no singing, although we will have the organ. The sign of peace will not be shared. Holy Communion will be distributed in one kind only. When you are directed, please form a socially distanced queue in the nave aisle and come up in turn. The practice of standing in a semicircle to receive has been discontinued.

### **After the service**

Sadly, we are unable to serve refreshments after Mass. Once the service has finished, please leave the building via the West Door as soon as you are asked to do so – stewards will direct you to leave row by row starting from the back. Once I have removed my vestments I look forward to greeting you outside, weather permitting, should you wish to remain to say hello.

I've missed you all very much indeed and am looking forward to the parish family beginning to come back together again. But equally, I will understand if you do not think that now is the time to return – in which case, please do tune in to the live stream or watch the recording at a time convenient to you. Sunday Mass will be a lot shorter than we have been used to, in order to minimise the amount of time we are in the building.

Please bear with us as we feel our way gradually towards a sustainable pattern of public worship. It is likely that these arrangements will change at very short notice, and that we will have to adapt to the situation as it develops. I ask you to be as understanding as possible and to forgive any mistakes or disappointments. And most importantly, please pass on your feedback either to me or to the wardens.

This time of crisis offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on how we might grow as disciples and how we might nurture those relationships that may have formed during the lockdown. How has your prayer life been these last three months? How can we ensure we embed what we've learned into the rhythm of life for the future? Most importantly, how can we, as a people fed by the sacraments, invite more people to meet with Jesus in the Eucharist?

I am so excited to be able to welcome you home from this weekend and am looking forward to seeing you when the time comes for you to join us.

With my love and prayers in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Fr. Christopher P Phillips SSC**  
**Vicar of St Mary's**