



# St Mary's Church

Growing · Giving · Serving

## Response to Coronavirus COVID-19

As a church, we seek to respond appropriately and sensitively to everyone's needs and wellbeing at this time, both physical and spiritual. We continue to follow the latest guidance and advice from the Church of England and Public Health. Following the most recent advice from the Archbishops and subsequent instruction from the Bishop of Manchester, we are making the following changes (until further notice). If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the Church wardens (01617662774)

- **Hand sanitizer** will be used before and during Mass  
It is also available for all to use at the back of church as you enter by the North Porch or Vestry.
- The **Baptismal Font** has been emptied; however, you may still like to make the sign of the cross as you enter church.
- We will not be passing round the plate to take a **collection**.  
Please leave your financial offering in the large collection plate on the table at the back of church as you enter.  
**Alternatively, you could set up a Standing order**
- Please do not make physical contact when sharing the **peace** with one another. Still say 'peace be with you' and make eye contact as you say it (you could also politely nod your head, or wave, or have a go at learning it in British Sign Language!)
- The bread and wine will not be brought forward at the **Offertory**, to reduce the number of people handling the vessels.
- At Mass, the **bread** should be received into your hands and not placed directly on your tongue.
- We will not be sharing **wine** at Mass | the President will still consecrate and consume a small amount of wine, to maintain the validity of the Mass). Please be assured that when we receive in one kind only (i.e. just the bread), we still receive the fullness of Christ's blessings in Holy Communion.
- **Blessings** will not involve any physical contact (i.e. the priest won't touch the head of the person receiving the blessing).
- We will not be **shaking hands** at the door, but Ministers will happily smile, wave and chat!
- **Refreshments** at or after church services and events are suspended.

- **Home Communion and Pastoral Visits** are currently unaffected, other than Communion being in one kind. High standards of hygiene will be maintained. If you know someone who is unwell, please let the ministry team know, as usual.
- Similarly, if you (or someone you know) are **self-isolating**, please let the Wardens know. Although a visit is not possible, pastoral care will be offered by telephone and other appropriate means.

Some important Christian principles to hold on to at this time are:

- We, as the church, the Body of Christ, have a responsibility to **care** for one another, especially those who are most vulnerable. This includes maintaining excellent standards of hygiene, handwashing, distancing if unwell and avoiding amplifying panic, as well as ensuring pastoral care and worship for all, within the guidance given.
- We should **pray**, for others and ourselves. You might like to use the prayer published by the Church of England.
- Have **hope** in God's promise that nothing (not even coronavirus) can separate us from the love of God in Jesus.

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those  
who care for the sick,  
and lift up all  
who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can  
separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.

12<sup>th</sup> March 2020