

ST JOSEPH'S UPTON: PARISH UPDATE & QUESTIONNAIRE NOVEMBER 2020

1. Covid-19 Safety Measures

We are able to accommodate a maximum of 50 people in Church and so far, we have never needed to turn anyone away.

Everyone applies hand sanitiser before entering, wears a face covering throughout and a one-way system and restricted seating helps maintain safe social distancing (1m+). There is no singing, but recorded music is used. Names and contact numbers are taken for Track and Trace, kept in the safe and are shredded after the statutory 3-week period. Disposable masks are available if you forget.

Stewards play an essential role keeping us safe at Mass. They clean the benches and contact surfaces after every Mass and replace the pens and contact cards on every bench. We have a team of 10, most of whom attend twice each week. It would be great to have more and spread the load more evenly as several Stewards are also volunteers helping with other tasks (e.g. Office & Finance, Safeguarding etc).

Typical attendance is approximately 15-20 at daily Masses, and 30-40 at Sunday Masses.

2. Liturgical Program, Prayer & Worship

We have returned to our regular schedule of daily and Sunday Masses, and plan to restart Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament before Mass on Saturdays. Baptism preparations are due to start too, although numbers attending are tightly restricted.

In addition, we hope to be able to begin live-stream of Mass from our Church before Christmas, so that those unable to attend in person, can join with friends and family in the familiar setting of St Joseph's. We would also like to begin prayer and worship services (e.g. Rosary) and restart the Liturgy group using virtual meeting technology (Zoom etc).

Since Mass attendance is usually much higher over Christmas we need to prepare carefully.

We propose the following program. It is in line with previous years, but we may change it to accommodate the numbers expecting to attend. We will confirm the final timetable by the start of December.

Thursday Dec 24th: Children's Mass at 5:30pm

Vigil Mass at 8:30pm

(The Church will be thoroughly cleaned after both Masses)

Friday Dec 25th: Christmas Mass at 10am

3. Parish Communications

During the pandemic and due to problems with our phone and internet provider, we have had to change both the office phone number and email address.

0151 678 7696 & stjosephs.upton@gmail.com

Please make sure you have these new details and delete the old ones.

We have continued to publish a weekly Newsletter that is available to collect at Church, view on-line via the parish website or receive by email. We have posted copies out every few weeks or so, but it is becoming hard to know who needs to receive a copy through their letterbox. With Eucharistic Ministers and other household visiting to the sick and housebound suspended, it is hard to be confident it is reaching everyone that would like to receive it in a timely manner.

Visits to the Parish website have increased sharply during the restrictions, and we have extended the information available via links with the Diocesan and National websites.

We would like to better understand how you want to receive news and information about the Parish. Please answer and return the question sheet attached to this document.

4. Parish Outreach

At the very start of the lockdown a handful of volunteers offered to assist those isolated at home: collecting and dropping off their groceries / medicines and keeping in touch by phone or visits to their doorstep. Using the parish database, we identified those who might need help and called on them. Most people were supported by local family and friends – often other parishioners themselves. However, contact was maintained with those most isolated and approximately 24 individuals received a small gift at Easter and during the summer, to help remind them the Parish loves and cares for them.

There is a risk that we are missing out people who need some help, or who would appreciate a regular call to keep in touch. There is also a risk that people who have been offering support to their family and neighbours have/or will become unable to help if they themselves get sick or their circumstances change.

We want to renew our information and understand who needs help and what they would most appreciate. Please answer and return the question sheet attached to this document.

5. Finance & Fundraising

Like other churches across the country St Joseph's income via the weekly Offertory Collections has fallen sharply this year. Many of you have continued to give generously, but with the Church closure from March-June and Sunday Mass attendance almost half of what it was before the pandemic, to date there has been a 40% reduction in income. Although some costs were reduced during the lockdown, many continued and the shortfall is significant. It also takes into account those individuals who kindly switched from Offertory Envelopes for their regular giving, to Standing Orders.

Our parish contributes to the Diocese Central Fund and has benefitted from those funds for the new roof, and the extensive brickwork repairs that are necessary to stop water leaking into the building before we can redecorate the interior.

We have restarted the 500 Club to raise money for Parish and School, but sadly have to cancel the annual Christmas Fundraiser this year. We are planning for a replacement event(s) in Spring 2021.

Many, we know, are facing financial hardship at the moment due to the pandemic, and therefore we hesitate to ask for money. But if you have stopped contributing to the church upkeep could you please reconsider resuming your contributions if you are able to do so. To help, please give on-line via the website link www.stjosephsupton, or by Standing Order (via Kevin Powell, 07770 611 488). Thank you

6. Volunteering & Parish Pastoral Council

For many years we have relied on a stalwart group of volunteers to keep our church running smoothly and maintaining the appearance both inside of the building and the gardens. We are grateful for their dedication and effort. Although some have continued to do so, the risks of infection for themselves and the people they live with have made it inappropriate for many others. As with the stewards, new roles have emerged like the opportunities to help with Outreach work.

Please consider if you are able to help, everyone can participate in some way and it is much better for everyone if we all help to share the load. Please indicate if you can help as a volunteer even if it is for a specific period (e.g. January-March) or at specific times (e.g. during term-time or school holidays).

Gathering Your Views

Please answer the following questions and use the box for any comments you wish to add. Then please return when you next come to church, or by post or email a scanned completed copy to the Parish Office.

Thank you.

Your name

Attending Mass

1. I have been attending Mass in person YES / NO
2. I plan to attend Mass in person at St Joseph's Upton in the near future YES / NO

I would like to attend the following Christmas Masses in person:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5:30pm Christmas Eve | YES with other people / NO |
| 8:30pm Christmas Eve | YES with other people / NO |
| 10am Christmas Day | YES with other people* / NO |

(*other members of your household/support bubble, mixing between households is not allowed)

This forms part of the registration process we will use to avoid having to turn anyone away. So, please keep a note in your diary and if your plans change before 23rd Dec please let us know.

3. I would like to be able to join Mass at St Joseph's by livestream YES / NO
 - a. I can access livestream Masses YES / NO

Comments:

Communications

1. I access the Newsletter on-line YES / NO
2. I want to receive the Newsletter
IN PERSON from church YES / NO
BY EMAIL YES / NO
THROUGH MY LETTERBOX YES / NO
3. I already access the Parish Website YES / NO
4. I cannot access the Parish Website YES / NO

Comments:

Outreach

- 1. I often rely on other people to help collecting groceries/medicines YES / NO
 - a. I do (or I might) need help from parish volunteers with these things YES / NO
- 2. I would appreciate a call now and then to keep in touch with the parish YES / NO
- 3. I would like help or support from the Clergy or volunteers from the Parish in other ways:

Details:

Finance – please see the details in the main section

Volunteering

- 1. I already volunteer in the Parish YES / NO

Details:

- 2. I would like to volunteer in 2021 and help with the following:
 - a. As a STEWARD or as a CLEANER or with FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS in church
 - b. As a GARDENER or help with MAINTENANCE in the church/presbytery and Hall
 - c. Doing Outreach work as a SHOPPER or as A FRIEND to someone on the phone
 - d. In another way:

Details: