

Dear St Swithun's family

Happy St Swithun's day for this Sunday and the following Sunday – we are celebrating both Sundays as July 15th is in the middle of the week: this Sunday with an all age, slightly football themed Eucharist and next week with the Hither Green Community Choir singing for us. Please come and support both Sundays and celebrate our church home and our church family.

We are very excited that restrictions are hopefully soon to be removed and we are being encouraged to feel safe to be more normal as we go about life. We hope that church will return to its former glory with singing and refreshments and all our lovely folk who will come back to worship in our beautiful building together – yet in our new learning of being more creative in our worship. Children's groups and servers will begin in September – do let us know if you would like to help with these.

We realise that for some people this is a very anxious time – but in faith, we are hopeful that as a country we can live with coronavirus now we have had our vaccines and we are better placed to treat any who become ill. Prayers are obviously important for this transition for the fearful and clinically vulnerable alongside the many who are desperately in need of restrictions being lifted for their total health.

Please be aware that as changes come into force we want to be an inclusive church respectful of different people's positions on such things as masks and social distancing – the church is big enough (in stature and in kindness) to embrace all positions. We will likely need to rethink many things under C of E guidance in regards to sharing the chalice and the peace – but it is important for you all to know that you can make your choices about your personal space - and we will respect this. The generic use of crossed arms over the chest for a polite decline of something is a good, polite way for us to tell each other that we wish to be less tactile or we would prefer not to be too physically close.

We will stop the booklet deliveries following this Sunday and reinstate home communion for those who are housebound.

We are hopeful that as changes come to fruition we will see many of you back in church. We have missed many of you! As a church we have held ourselves together with such faith and strength – and we should be very proud of who and where we are. Let us pray that we will continue to grow and develop as we emerge fully to share faith, hope and love together in Hither Green.

Every blessing to you all and much love

Juliet

x