

- - TEAM NOTES - -

Arrangements in the four churches post-19th July lifting of legal restrictions:

Details of the guidelines for each of our churches have been discussed by the PCCs and church committees during the course of the past week. The arrangements are slightly different for each church according to its size and the format of the service. However, generally speaking, all churches will experience a return to congregational singing from Sunday 25th July. Care about how this introduction is to be managed will be made clear in each place. Receiving Holy Communion will continue to be in one kind only (just the bread) in St Nicholas', St Mark's and All Saints', but the chalice will be administered in St Mary's *to those who wish to receive it*.

There will be some variation as to advice around social distancing and the wearing of face coverings. We would ask congregations to adhere to these local church requests in order that we may tread the careful path that we are attempting, between trying to help and encourage the anxious to be and feel safe, and allowing the more adventurous to return to something close to a pre-pandemic condition.

A review of our guidelines is to take place across the team of churches in early September, so for the next six or seven Sundays, having assessed the risks, we shall work within the framework that has been discussed by the PCCs and committees.

The mid-week Eucharist at St Mary's at 11.00am on Wednesdays continues in the chapel. Daily Morning Prayer has also returned in the chapel.

At the same time:

A simple Sunday service will continue to be prepared for the team website every week, for those unable to get to Church physically, including hymns and a short homily - www.swanageteam.com.

On Line Services are as follows:

All Saints' 10.30am Sunday service is live-streamed. Simply go to the All Saints website at www.allsaints-swanage.org and follow the links.

St Nicholas' Studland has ceased its Zoom service at 10.00am but that at 6.30pm will continue - though not every Sunday. To join the zoom services please email Tony to request the link and check when the next one is to be: revtonyhiggins@btinternet.com.

We hope that this range of options for worship each Sunday provides something for everyone.

SWANAGE & STUDLAND TEAM MINISTRY

**St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'
5th September 2021 – Trinity 14**

Isaiah 35: 4-7a; James 2:1-10, 14-17; Mark 7: 24-end

The reading from Isaiah appointed for today is from a part of the prophecy which describes a restored and glorious future for the time beyond the suffering of exile and captivity. These verses use metaphors of transformation, that what is sightless and deaf and parched will become full of light and singing and fresh running water. These signs of a renewed people are what James takes up as being the outcome of action derived from a faithful response to Christ; faith by itself is dead; works declare the royal law of love as rooted in the action of one transformed by that very law.

So it is that Mark tells two healing miracle stories by Jesus in today's Gospel. Both stories are characterised by release: the little girl from a disturbing, tormenting spirit; the man from the frustration of being able to neither hear nor speak. Jesus seems to be challenging the faith of the mother in the case of her daughter, and is suppressing the ecstatic spreading of the news following the release of the man to whom he said "Ephphatha," that is "Be opened."

As we take these readings together we can see where hope lay for everyone concerned in these writings. Hope lay in the fulfilment of the promise of faith, either leading to it, or expressed from it. From Isaiah we think of this as we might imagine what a dry and dusty desert would look like after rain, and it really happens like this. When it rains in the hills around Jerusalem the gullies fill and run together and a great torrent can drive through the wadis right down to the Dead Sea many miles away. From James we turn his words of warning against the partiality and ill-advised assessment of others on the basis of their wealth, to consider the true honouring of human life and hope in the fulfilment of love. From Mark it is the example of Christ himself bringing hope where human endeavour has failed, expressed both as an outcome of faith and an encourager of it.

Visually from Isaiah; morally from James; miraculously from Jesus, the message of hope to a world in need is carefully borne by all our principal readings for today. May they continue to inspire us to work for that better place where the weak and the poor and the suffering may be lifted, that they may be given the chance to live transformed lives and find freedom.

John Mann