



The Epiphany, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear friends,

I am sure most of us will still be reflecting on the news about this latest lockdown, the new strain of coronavirus and the distressing levels of infection and hospitalisations. It certainly seems at odds with the church's season of Epiphany, which begins today, and the themes of this season of the knowledge of the light and love given to us in Jesus.

This current lockdown does not mean the return to closed churches, for the moment we are permitted to continue to meet for worship where it is safe to do so. All of what we do however needs to be held in our deeper call to keep each other safe. Sadly, little is understood so far about how or why transmissibility has increased with this new strain of the virus.

The Staff team met yesterday evening and in the short term we are proposing to continue to live stream worship from the church for this evening's service for Epiphany and for this Sunday's 10am service celebrating the Baptism of Christ. We will be greatly reducing the number able to attend church in person and no one should feel any sense of obligation to attend worship even if you are currently on a rota to welcome, read or pray. The small singing group will also not continue. Those in charge of the rotas will be in touch soon.

We have a scheduled meeting of the PCC Standing Committee tomorrow evening and will be monitoring the Government and national Church of England advice as more becomes known about this new virus strain. We will communicate any changes through the regular Friday mailing and email. As ever, do get in touch with the Staff Team or Wardens directly, or via Dot and Carol on the office email or the church telephone voicemail, if you have any questions or concerns.

We would like to encourage all who can to engage with our worship online and to pray daily for one another, for our community and our nation at this terrible time, particularly those in our frontline health and essential services – there are resources for prayer on our website and at [churchofengland.org](http://churchofengland.org).

The rolling out of the vaccine is a sign of great hope in our fight against this virus and as more people receive it, we can also pray for a reduction in infection and illness and a deeper understanding of the light of Christ, shining in the darkness.

With all best wishes

St Mary's Staff Team