

Covid 19 Update

To members of All Saints Vendee. Pentecost 2020.

I hope that you are all in good health, and that the lockdown has not been too onerous. It has been a very necessary restriction, as is shown by the staggering death rate in Sweden. Throughout the last few weeks, the members of ASV council and I have been meeting via a Skype call once a week. We have kept in touch with the many members of our congregations through phone calls and emails. Now that France is beginning to ease the confinement, our thoughts have turned to resuming worship.

Our situation is unique, as you know, because we don't own the buildings we worship in. We are told that the Catholic services at La Chapelle Palluau will resume after the 2nd of June. We know that the Catholics of Puy de Serre will not be using that church as it is deemed too small for the social distancing measures required.

Our own diocese has issued some very stringent guidelines.

These concern not only social distancing, but also the way in which services must be managed, for example: everyone must wear a mask, singing is discouraged, apparently to reduce the risk of transfer of respiratory droplets, the building must be completely cleaned before and after each service, etc. etc. Sanitizing the toilets between users, would also present a nightmare.

Bring and Share lunches would not be permitted.

The council and I had a full discussion yesterday about the way forward, and we unanimously agreed to err on the side of caution. Perhaps the majority of members of our congregations are in what is classed as the "vulnerable category", and we all felt that were we to immediately resume our services, we would be putting people at great risk. We also have agreed to keep the situation under close review and will continue to monitor events at least on a weekly basis.

I know that many of you have expressed a longing to be able to worship together once again, but I truly feel that we must not risk anyone's health by premature action, and firmly believe that under the restrictions, it would not be a restoration of worship as we know it.

I continue to hold you all in my prayers and ask for yours for Martin and I.

With every blessing,

Hazel