

From: Lou Oakes

Sent: Friday, September 17, 2021 9:40 AM

To: Parish email list

Subject: Pew sheet, resource for the children and lockdown lifted

Hi everybody

Hooray! Lockdown lifted! I'm sure we're all relieved that with no positive cases in the Bega Valley, lockdown can be lifted, although, before we begin to party, I'd like to share an update with you about recorded services and the resumption of church services in person.

The lifting of restrictions is great but we're not totally out of the woods yet and although church services are allowed, we're back to 4sqm per person for our maximum capacity, still wearing masks indoors and no singing allowed. And I believe that it is wisest not to try and rush the reopening of our churches for services in person for this coming Sunday (19 September), instead to enjoy worshipping, reflecting on God's word and praying together through the means of a recorded service.

There are a few things that have brought me to this way of thinking:

- there are going to be people who still feel nervous about circulating in the community
- it takes a while for those who aren't on the parish email mailing list to get to hear the latest news
- we have already started the recording for this Sunday's service
- we'll need time to ensure everyone's back into the habit of booking in for services and to make sure that we have the technology and arrangements in place for overflow into the hall at St Johns Eden

I am also anticipating that we'll keep to a recorded service for my final service as Rector on 26 September. Apart from the reasons listed above this is also about equity. Before lockdown we had planned a combined church service as well as a celebratory meal and that meant that we could have a combined celebration with people from all the centres in a large space at one of the clubs that had room for everyone. With the 4sq m maximum capacities for our churches, none of them would be big enough to have a single combined service and be able to welcome everyone who'd like to come along. And if we were to keep instead to our most recent roster, I wouldn't be able to be present at all three services without a change of times, and again, getting word out to people

of a change in time with such short notice is, as we know, not always successful.

We will of course be able to have a celebration at some point in the future when things are hopefully easier to plan and when we've reached that magic 80% vaccination rate. In the meantime, the final recorded service for 26 September will be a service of thanksgiving for all we have achieved together as a parish through the grace of God. And its not too late to send me any photos you have of parish events and I'd love to have a photo of you to add to the slide show that will be part of the service.

As you'll be aware Reverend Canon Brian Roberts will be commencing in the role of locum Rector as from 1 October and once Rev Canon Brian and I have had our handover conversation and he has spoken to the wardens I'll be able to fill you in with details of when services are resuming in person. Diane and Andrew will also be able to put those details in the pew sheet and on the website.

I'll be sending out the link for the recorded service for Sunday 19 September later today or early tomorrow – don't forget to check your emails! And in the meantime, enjoy this beautiful day, and thank you Diane as always for your work and keeping us connected, informed and amused!

Keeping safe, staying calm, trusting God.

Yours in Christ

Lou Oakes

Rector, Sapphire Coast Anglican Parish

Leading our communities into relationship with Christ