



ST MATTHEW'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NORTHWOOD

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF NORTHWOOD AND NORTHWOOD HILLS

'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations...' [Matt 28:19]

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (B) JANUARY 10TH - JANUARY 17TH

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN UPDATE

Dear parishioners,

At present, churches and places of worship have not been included in the restrictions associated with the new lockdown announced last week. This means that St Matthew's is permitted to remain open for public worship, but with the strict proviso that we do so safely, and in accord with our COVID-safe responsibilities.

Naturally, this is a relief. Churches have not been demonstrated to be sites of transmission so far in the course of this pandemic, due in no small part to the extra-ordinary efforts of so many to keep us all safe. Churches also provide a place of peace, reassurance and comfort to so many who rely on us.

The exemption, however, places on us a huge responsibility to remain a safe place and not to encourage any behavior that might be considered irresponsible or not in the spirit of the national effort that is being asked of everyone. This is especially true in the face of the new variant of the virus that is spreading rapidly and the reality that our local health systems are under huge pressure to which we must not contribute further.

Recognising the difficult balance of these two priorities, our bishops have provided guidance that each parish community is best placed to see what is needed and what is practical in their area. No two parish communities or churches are the same. To this end, I met briefly with members of the Parish Council and others in the parish by ZOOM on Friday night to discuss the best way forward for St Matthew's.

It was agreed that we need to protect our community members and visitors to our church, as well as to ensure that the essential Sacramental and spiritual life of our parish can continue. In addition, the necessity of creative ways to reach out and participate in the non-liturgical aspects community life were also emphasized. Whilst striving to meet these goals, the need to limit our activities in the church for the duration of this lockdown was clear.

Therefore, commencing this week, the changes noted overleaf will be made to our parish life, and will be reviewed and updated as necessary. It is always possible that Government rules may change, and we will comply with these as and when we are told to.

These are uncertain times, and many people are nervous, afraid, or just down right fed-up! There is hope of better times ahead, and we must remain as cheerful and hope-filled as we can. Our faith reminds us that in all things, our loving God is in control, and that he is there for us. We must do what we can to be there for others, in our turn.

With every blessing in these challenging days,

Fr Brian

CONTACT US

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Fr Brian O'Mahony

Parish Priest:

Email:

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Parish Office:

Contact Cheryl Myring or Siobhan Hogg

9:00 — 2:30pm Monday - Friday

Sunday School & Catechetics:

RE Co-ordinator: Eileen O'Sullivan

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Hall Bookings: [currently n/a]

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SAFEGUARDING

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LOCKDOWN CHANGES AT ST MATTHEWS - JAN 11TH

Daily Mass: [Livestreamed where possible]

Monday: 10:30am

Tuesday: 10:30am

Wednesday - Church Closed

Thursday: 7:00pm

Friday: 10:30am

Saturday 10:30am

- ◆ We are encouraged to keep our public worship relatively short in these times. To assist this, there will not be a sermon at every daily Mass.
- ◆ On days where Requiem Masses are celebrated, there will be no other Mass in the parish that day to avoid our reliance on stewards to clean and re-clean the church between Masses.

Sunday Mass:

Saturday 6:00pm [Vigil]

Sunday: 9am [livestreamed where possible]

Sunday: 11:15

Sunday: 6:00pm [May be suspended in future if there is little demand]

- ◆ We will return to 2m social distancing, therefore numbers at all Sunday Masses will now be reduced. Attendance must be booked using the online booking system or by calling the parish office

Confessions:

- ◆ Regular scheduled Confession times are suspended, however Fr Brian will be available where possible on request or by a prior appointment.

Church opening for prayer:

- ◆ During this time, the street door to the church will remain open after Mass in the daylight hours so that people can visit the church for prayer. The internal glass doors to the porch will remain locked, and cleaning and sanitizing materials will be provided for all visitors to wipe the surfaces that they have used before they depart.
- ◆ We will endeavor to have periods of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during each day with the Lord exposed on the Altar behind the glass doors.

Mass intention and requests:

- ◆ It may be that there has to be a change in the schedule that results in a particular Mass intention that is requested is not being offered on the date or time requested. Where possible, we will endeavor to contact the donor in these circumstances. These Masses will be said, but may be given to Priests in non-parish ministry or who have retired and have the availability to assist us. The offering given is also forwarded to them as part of their income. If you desire that the Mass you have requested is celebrated in St Matthew's please contact us so that we can re-schedule the Mass for a different time.
- ◆ The list of these 'Binated' Masses will be published periodically on the church noticeboards.

General access restrictions:

- ◆ We must now insist that access to areas of the church that are not within the seating area of the nave is curtailed. This means that the Sacristy, choir-loft, repository shop and other areas of the church are now out of bounds, unless directed by Fr Brian. This is to prevent too many surfaces being touched and requiring cleaning.
- ◆ The toilets in the hall will no longer be opened, unless by a steward on request.

Parish Office Operation:

- ◆ The Parish Office hours will be reduced from Monday 11th. January there will be someone to attend to enquiries only on **Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30am - 12:30**. This measure is to ensure our paid staff can be sufficiently protected in their workplace. Access will only be possible to the reception area, with no visitors permitted inside the office.

Other Lockdown - related Items - How can we reach out?

Do you have re-usable tech at home?

- ◆ We are exploring how we might assist local schools and families who may be struggling to maintain access to lessons due to insufficient access to technology equipment. It has been suggested that we might be able to collect and or recycle useable laptops, printers or other devices that will assist children's access during this time. If you think you can help or have any expertise in this area, please contact us at the office. As yet we don't know how this might work, but the need is real and there may be many who have such items at home or in their offices gathering dust and which might be put to good use. Updates on this initiative will be published in due course.

Do you know someone who is alone or vulnerable and would appreciate a phone call?

Have you got the time to call someone in the parish to check-up on them?

- ◆ We are exploring how we might reach out to people who are lonely through a form of a 'buddy' scheme. If you would like to help, please contact the Parish office.

Can you assist our local foodbank?

- ◆ Our local foodbank operates out of Emmanuel Church on Northwood High Street. Demand for their services has increased in these times. From this week onwards, a donation box will be made available in our church porch for items that can be passed on to them. I will be in touch with Rev. Tim, my counterpart at Emmanuel to enquire if there are other specific needs that we might be able to assist in meeting, - e.g. if there is a need for extra volunteers.

Livestreaming from St Matthew's and our online presence

- ◆ We will continue to livestream Sunday and daily Mass from St Matthew's. We have made temporary improvements to our video and audio quality, and the final product that includes a wired-in IP camera will be completed in due course. We are in the process of creating a Youtube channel that is not quite ready for launch yet. We hope to be able to host our recorded Masses and services there, as well as other video-content such as catechesis when it is fully operational. The Facebook page will continue, but I am aware that this is not the most convenient way for some of our older parishioners to join us for Mass, and so we are looking at other alternatives that are more user-friendly. Feedback from these initiatives is welcomed.

Praying together during lock-down

- ◆ During this period, our prayers are more necessary than ever. We will not be able to have an organised communal Rosary daily in the parish, as we wish to limit the time in which we are gathered in the church. I know that different groups of parishioners keep in touch with one-another and pray together through things like ad-hoc Whatsapp groups. These things, and other initiatives are greatly to be encouraged. If it has not been your spiritual habit up to this point why not try something new for the New year, such as committing to praying a daily decade of the Rosary on your own or in your family?

General parish notices

Sunday School update:

- ◆ Naturally, our plans for face-to-face meeting in person with our children and teenagers preparing for the Sacraments that were due to commence this week have now had to change. We will still be commencing the courses as planned, but will be meeting via ZOOM. You will receive an email from Eileen and I with the details of how these courses will proceed whilst we are in lockdown
- ◆ For those who have expressed interest in enrolling in the other years of Sunday School (Years 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), we have invested in access to the online provision provided by the publisher of our Sunday School curriculum materials. This means that very soon we can commence the roll-out to all our families who are interested in joining in for the remainder of the Academic Year. Details of the material and log-in access will be provided to you over the coming weeks.

COVID-SAFE REMINDER(S):

- ◆ We ask everyone to be particularly vigilant whilst in the church at these times, and follow the direction the stewards. Please co-operate with the regulation to wear a face- mask unless you are exempt. There is always a supply of disposable masks with the stewards if you have forgotten yours and need one. If you have ideas about how we can improve all that we do, please feel free to let us know.

NEW: CONTACTLESS GIVING!

- ◆ We are now participating in a trial through the diocese of contactless giving by card or by smartphone. The new machine is in the church porch, and is very user-friendly. We hope it will help people in planning their contribution to the parish. In due course it will be available to be used for other things such as hall hire or repository purchases. More updates on this initiative will follow soon.

PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK, AND THOSE WHO HAVE DIED.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL:

Philippa O'Connor, Adriano Cunha, Mgr Mark Langham, Victor & Gilda Kumarathasan, Barry Jervis, Audrey Potts as well as others for whom we have been praying together recently. We will happily add any requests for prayer to our sick-list, which will be updated weekly. Please contact us with any additional names and accept our apologies for anyone we have missed off it.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:

Margaret Wedgeworth, Antonia Pirfo, Rita Mulrooney, Jerzey Woicik, Fr Jim Duffy, Cathy Groegan, Stephen St John-Maule, Gavina Battad, as well as others for whom we have recently been praying together. Please contact us with any additional names you may wish to be added to this list which will be updated weekly, and accept our apologies for anyone we have missed off it.

AND THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARY OCCURS AROUND THIS TIME:

Mary McCarron, Deacon Braz Menezes, Julian Asio, Philip Wildsmith, Roland Figueiredo, Maisie Marsden, Indra Swampillai, Sulgoni Savundranayagam, Paul Wright, Joan Healy, Mick Dillon, Florence Daly

MASSES AND SERVICES THIS WEEK (9TH - 17TH JANUARY)

SATURDAY 9th [Vigil]	18:00	CATHY GROEGAN RIP
SUNDAY 10th JAN	- THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (B)	
	09:00	DEACON BRAZ MENEZES RIP (Ann.)
	11:15	BARBARA ORFORD (Sp. Int.)
	18:00	PHILLIPA O'CONNOR (Sick)
MONDAY 11th	10:30	FR ROBERT PLOURDE (Sp. Int.) <i>No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament today after Mass</i>
TUESDAY 12th	10:30	STEPHEN ST JOHN-MAULE RIP <i>No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament today after Mass</i>
WEDNESDAY 13th	11:30	REQUIEM MASS: GAVINA BATTAD <i>No other Mass today and no Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>
THURSDAY 14th	19:00	MARGARET WEDGEWORTH RIP <i>No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament today after Mass</i>
FRIDAY 15th	10:30	RITA MULROONEY RIP <i>No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament today after Mass</i>
SATURDAY 16th	10:30	STEPHEN ST JOHN-MAULE RIP <i>No Exposition or Confessions after this Mass today</i>
	18:00	CATHY GROEGAN RIP
SUNDAY 17th JAN	09:00	PRIVATE - THANKSGIVING TO ST JOSEPH
	11:15	PHILLIPA O'CONNOR (SICK)
	18:00	MARY MCCARRON RIP (ANN.)