

Sunday Services at St John's Church

Dear Friends,

At our annual meeting in April, I mentioned I was going to ask the PCC to discuss the pattern of services at St John's. For example, should we perhaps have two main Sunday services instead of just one? The PCC have debated this over several PCC meetings and, having also taken into account comments from various congregation members, have voted unanimously to trial a new pattern of services beginning in January 2017. This will then be reviewed in summer 2017.

There are 3 main changes:

- a) Firstly, our main monthly Holy Communion will move from the third Sunday in the month to the fourth Sunday in the month.
- b) Secondly, the 8:00am service on the fourth Sunday in the month will cease.
- c) The third and most significant change occurs on the third Sunday of the month. There will be 2 services. The first service will be a "Breakfast Service." Worship will begin at 9:30am, but a light breakfast of croissants and toast will be available beforehand. This service will be informal, will include our children's groups, an adult talk and the band will play worship songs. At 11:00am there will be a Holy Communion service with robed choir and organ. The liturgy will be taken from the red book, but printed separately on a card to make it easier to follow.

The table below summarises our new service pattern.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
	8:00am BCP Communion			8:00am BCP Communion
9:30 All Age	10:30am Parish Praise	9:30 Breakfast Service (served from 9:00am)	10:30am CW Communion	10:30am Morning Service
11:00am BCP Communion or BCP Morning Prayer		11:00am CW Communion		

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

CW = Common Worship

There will be 2 exceptions to the above - On 1 January (New Year's Day), there will just be one service - Holy Communion - at 10:30am. In April, the third Sunday of the month is Easter Day, when there will be an 8am service and a 10:30am service.

Why are we trying out this new pattern of services?

The reason is quite simply mission. Our aim is to encourage growth in our congregation. In particular, we wish to attract younger people in their twenties and thirties. Research shows that many churches which are experiencing growth among this age range are those offering a relaxed, contemporary service with the Word of God taught faithfully. Fresh expressions of church such as Café Church and Breakfast Church are thriving throughout the country, including Suffolk.

However, in Elmswell, we recognise that there are many who still cherish a more traditional style of church. It is hoped such folk will be attracted to the more traditional 11am service on the third Sunday in the month.

The PCC also feel it is important for unity throughout our worshipping community. Therefore, we continue to meet altogether 2 or 3 times a month.

I would greatly value your prayers and support as we try out this experimental pattern of services. The PCC agreed that unless we try something, we do not know if it will work.

With every blessing,

Peter