

COVID-19 UPDATE

2 January 2021

This probably could be termed a “Clayton’s” update—the update you are getting when you probably don’t need an update (because nothing has changed for St. John’s!). However, we thought it would be useful to re-present our strategy given the Premier’s new COVID restrictions announcement of today.

The new rules as they affect churches are as follows:

* Mask wearing is now compulsory by law as from midnight tonight in most public indoor venues, including churches. However, this has been a strong recommendation from both NSW Health and the Archbishop for some time and at St. John’s, in the interests of minimising risk to our parishioners, it has been a requirement imposed by the Wardens and included in our COVID-safe plan since the in-person services were recommenced in August.

* The maximum number of worshippers in a church has been reduced from three hundred to one hundred, but subject to the one person per four square metre rule. At St. John’s—this latter condition has been the overriding criteria which has determined a theoretical maximum of eighty-three in the nave of the church. However, our seating plan uses the ends or middle only of every second pew to maintain a one-point-five metre social distance between parishioners. This has effectively limited our congregations to fifty, depending on the size of household groups who can sit together.

* Churches are not included in the compulsory QR registration with Service NSW provisions that are now required for most other public indoor venues. However, we do need to have all attendee details on-line within twelve hours of a service and they need to be available to NSW Health within four hours of a request. For this reason, we are continuing with a pre-registration process for all services (which allows us also to forecast numbers attending) as an alternative to Service NSW on-line registration at the door when you arrive. The QR code for this is available at all entrances to the church. We should, however, be prepared for the NSW government to extend the

compulsory QR code registration to all attendees on arrival at a future time if this or subsequent waves of infection intensify, as it is much more efficient for contact tracing than a manual entry system.

Please pre-empt this by loading the Service NSW app on your smart phone or go to <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19> now to streamline this registration process.

We look forward to seeing you at either our in-person 8:00AM Book of Common Prayer Eucharist service or on-line at 9:30AM on Sunday. Meanwhile, the Churchwardens wish you a Happy New Year. We pray that by 2021, by God's grace, will be a blessed and more healthy year. The Wardens have their first planning meeting with our new Rector-Elect, Fr. Robert, next week and we will let you know the official date for his commencement service and an opportunity for the parish to welcome him to St. John's as soon as we are advised by our Regional Bishop—Bishop Chris Edwards

The Churchwardens Chris Russell AM JK Seo James Winter