

## RE-OPENING CHURCHES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER FROM JUNE 15th

### Some personal reflections

'My heart wants to hold the door open, my head tells me to keep the door shut'

This quote sums up the mental turmoil that I have found myself in, since the government made its announcement on Saturday night.

The quote came from a Vicar posting on a Twitter feed, where clergy were discussing how stressful the decision about re-opening our churches for private prayer from June 15th is going to be, and how best to lead the discussion in our PCC's (the decision rests with them)

#### Some things to remember:

- \* The government has said we *may* open our churches from June 15th, not that we must.
- \* There should be volunteers present to supervise the private prayer and to wipe down surfaces.
- \* The decision needs to be made by each church separately, as the size of the building, the number of willing volunteers, and the hours they want to open will all vary.
- \* What we have all learnt over the past ten weeks is that 'we don't need to go to church to pray'
- \* The only churches that are normally open to the community outside of service times are Newton Hall and Witton Gilbert.
- \* Is the opening of our churches for a couple of hours each week practically possible and sustainable? It hasn't been in the past.
- \* If the wider community wants to access our buildings, we need to make sure that we advertise the opportunity e.g banners outside, facebook pages, websites, posters, otherwise it will be a lot of work for little gain.
- \* Whilst we are all keen to return to our churches it might be best to focus our energies on getting ready for Sunday worship to re-commence (which might not be that far away)
- \* Durham Cathedral is nearby, for many, that is their first port of call - should we be signposting them there?

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I have shared my thinking on the matter (which continues to evolve) I hope it helps the turmoil you might be finding yourselves in as we face this question together.

with best wishes and prayers,

Caroline