

Sunday 8 a.m. service is moving to 9 a.m. from 6th September 2015

Canon Rob Morris writes:

After careful thought and prayer, the churchwardens and clergy, with PCC agreement, have decided that we have no choice but to move our early Holy Communion service from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. from Sunday 6th September. We have tried but, alas, see no other real possibility for ensuring that this service, precious to many, can be sustained confidently during the forthcoming Rectorial vacancy.

During the vacancy, only the service time will change. All else will remain as it is now: the 1662 Prayer Book offered in the quiet prayerful pattern grown here over so many years. We know that, for many regulars, a change to 9 a.m. will be welcome. For others it will bring difficulty and dismay, but we do not feel there is much choice. We cannot provide an 8 a.m. start without increasing the load on those who will already be taking on extra responsibilities during the coming vacancy.

Why change now?

The churchwardens and PCC have done everything they can to ensure that the vacancy (the 'interregnum') is as short as possible. It will however be January at the earliest and possibly much longer before Kings Norton has a new Rector who can then appoint Team Vicars to bring us back to full staffing.

In the last interregnum, 16 years ago, the Bishop was able to appoint one full-time and one part-time priest to care for the parish, supported by many retired and other clergy and a full complement of wardens, sidespeople and servers. This time, there are far fewer "spare" clergy in the diocese. With vacancies in five other local parishes, these are stretched even further.

We do have the Bishop's agreement that the Revds Jayne Crooks, Robin Mortimore and Jane Platt minister here. They are, however, all unpaid and are already taking on new responsibilities for the care of our whole congregations, for baptisms, weddings and funerals, for schools' work and much else. It is not helpful or right to expect them or lay leaders to cover 8 a.m. fully as well, possibly for many winter months.

We grow in other areas of our church life. The churchwardens and others already heavily engaged have to take on more in the general running of the parish. We cannot expect "visiting" clergy to open, set up and clear away as yours have been very willing to do when needed. A move to 9 a.m. will, however, make it possible to cover both clergy and lay duties by those already involved and by those who are "on" at 10.30 a.m., here or in other parishes. A 9 a.m. start will also enable others to join and older regulars to return.