***From Deacon Corinne***

As we start to move toward the churches being open again for public worship, I just wanted to say a few things about that.

It will be lovely to welcome people back to church on Sunday, and we hope and expect it will be a positive and a joyful experience. But, with all the safety regulations we have to follow, including the needful social distancing, it will take some time for us to become accustomed to the new and required arrangements.

There are those who will say, “*But church is not the same as it was”.* My only answer can be *“But nothing is the same as it was – and the church is doing its utmost to come safely into the new light”.*

We are at the very beginning of Phase 3, and the Government’s Guidelines, as adapted and applied for use in churches, are designed to help everyone move forward safely. Patience will be needed; and care and kindness towards one another, too. Coming out into the light will be a new experience for us all.

Some might ask, “What will it be like to be back in church?” We’ll need to wait and see. However, especially for those with health problems, it is important that you should be at ease with the decision you make whether to come back sooner, or to leave it until a later date.

In the meantime, I suggest we all prepare spiritually and prayerfully, as well as practically and strategically, for coming back to church; and I encourage you to pray for churchwardens, clergy and one another each day, as we prepare for the great day when we can all come back to mass safely.

I offer you this prayer, which comes from The BCP. It is a prayer for a Dedication Festival of a church, but the words would seem to be very apposite at this time, as the prayer invites us to look for God, in the eager expectation of finding God in our churches. It also asks of God that we, being filled with the Holy Spirit, might become a living temple.

**Almighty God,**

**to whose guidance and glory we offer the re-opening of churches in these days,**

**we praise you for the many blessings**

**that you have given to those who worship in our churches,**

**and we pray that all who seek you there**

**may find you, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit,**

**may become a living temple acceptable to you**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**