



THE PARISH OF  
**ST WILFRID**  
H A R R O G A T E



## *Rituale in tempore universalis contagii*

A guide to the celebration of mass  
& other liturgical services

Phase 2: Re-establishing Public Worship

## Introduction

From Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 public worship will be restored here. We will, at that point to my knowledge be the only parish church in Harrogate offering public sacramental worship. That is not a ‘competitive’ statement – for the worship of God is not a competition. Rather, it a reflection of the remarkable work that has been engaged in here to produce and enact detailed plans for this extraordinary time. These have enabled us to move swiftly to this position. I thank you all for your hard work and support in helping to get us this far.

This *guide* sets out the expected ritual, ceremonial and practical elements for the celebration of mass and other liturgical services during this time of Pandemic. This version reflects the expectations and protocols set out in the parish *Emergence Plan* and conforms to both our risk assessments and the guides produced by the Church of England (and other episcopal bodies) for the celebration of the sacraments and other liturgical services.

It is characteristically forensic. This will hopefully alleviate any panic when actual people are back in church, and the inevitable slew of questions about what should we do.

It is for phase 2 – and elements will be revised and added to when we can move into phase 3. As such it does drastically limit involvement. I make no apologies for that – and in mitigation say, we’ve managed four months with even less people involved. This is not permanent and your patience is appreciated. No one should need to feel at all ‘left out’ – we are all ‘in this together’ and there are ways, such as reading this document, that you can help – and be informed for the next stage.

As such though, to be clear, it is as much a set of instructions as it is a guide.

This is important. This is not the time for the introduction of personal novelty or deviations from the expected norms. The guide sets at its heart twin principles: the proper celebration of the liturgy and the wherewithal to do that whilst ensuring the highest degree of safe practice.

This is inevitably a fine balance. To aver from it would be to place others at risk – and for some, that risk would be very significant indeed. Whilst we may bemoan any restrictions which limit our personal freedoms, these are exercised only to preserve the life and sacramental vitality of the parish community. Sacraments are exercised amongst the living. Our task is to ensure that our practice does not become the vehicle by which the living stones of God’s temple join the dead stones.

Thus, this guide sets out how we might most safely celebrate the sacraments and other liturgies in ways which protect those who attend, the priests who officiate and the staff and volunteers who work here.

It is therefore my expectation that it will be adhered to.

This guidance should also be read in the context of, and alongside the parish *Emergence Plan*.

Fr Gary Waddington  
Team Rector

*The Feast of St Thomas the Apostle 2020*

## Access to the buildings

The *Emergence Plan* sets out a set of ‘zones’ throughout the church and indicates who has access to those spaces. This is important in helping to protect both the people concerned and to make sure that the liturgical furnishings, elements and vessels are not contaminated or compromised. It would be deliciously easy for anyone, with the very best of intentions, to seek to ‘help out’ – when in fact their actions would unwittingly jeopardise the safety of others.

### For Clergy

- In this phase, **ONLY** the priest arriving (or leaving) to celebrating the mass or other liturgical services should access the sacristy and ‘safe zone’ of the East end of the building.
- He should preferably enter the church via the cloister doors, which must then be relocked behind him. This is to minimize the potential for contact with others before celebrating or officiating.
- If entering via any other door, he should wear a face covering to pass through the church whilst it is open to the public, especially on a Sunday.
- Anyone accompanying him **must only** enter the building through the Duchy entrance, even if part of your own household or ‘bubble’. Fathers – please do not fall into the temptation to allow people to ‘nip or out in this way’. A ‘safe zone’ stops being that the moment others are allowed passageway through it.
- The priest officiating must make use of the sanitiser available nearest to their entry point (before moving through the rest of the building): either at the Duchy Door, in the parish office, or in the sacristy.
- All other clergy attending mass or another liturgical service should access the building, as the laity do, through the Duchy Door and be ‘sat’ by the stewards amongst the congregation. Please don’t queue jump!
- No priest, other than the celebrant, should enter the ‘safe zone’ unless there is a specific invitation to do so, during the liturgical celebration. This is not the time to ‘pop in’ for a chat. **We must set an exemplary model for the people we are called to care for.**
- The Duchy door will be opened 15 minutes before a weekday mass and 30 minutes before the Sunday mass.
- Again, priests are expected to model social distancing – even if engaged in a necessary pastoral conversation.
- Priests attending masses and other services as part of the congregation, are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering.

## For The Sacristan and Director of Music

- In this phase, **ONLY** the Sacristan and Director of Music, in addition to the priest celebrating or officiating, may enter the building from the cloisters (unlocking and relocking as they go).
- **At the time of mass, they may use this entrance only if assisting for the service they have arrived for.**
- If they have come to attend a service (i.e. are not preparing materials in the sacristy or choir vestry), they should access the building for a service via the Duchy door as per clergy and laity doing so, as set out above.
- Again, arriving or leaving for a service, they should only use the cloister door if assisting and should not be accompanied by anyone else, even from their own household or 'bubble'.

## Access outside service times

- The access to the 'safe zone' is strictly limited to the Clergy, Sacristan and Director of Music.
- Parish staff may enter this zone only for the purposes of their work – but should limit their time there as far as possible.
- Visits by any contractors should avoid this zone unless absolutely essential.
- You should not normally be accompanied by anyone.
- Where any work you are to carry out requires the presence of another person they may only be a person from your own household or 'bubble'. All hand sanitiser and hand washing protocols should be followed when accessing the building.
- Access to the office is limited to the above, the parish staff and the Church Wardens. The same principles should be applied to that space as to the 'safe zone'.
- At all times, you should limit any personal food or drink in the building. This must not be shared. You may not offer hospitality to others. Food and drink should **not** be consumed in public areas i.e. the main body of the church, during this time

**Any access by any other person without the explicit permission of the Rector will result in them being asked to leave the building. Any keyholder infringing this protocol will have their key(s) summarily removed. No 'blanket' permissions will be given – any request will need to be specific and limited. Please communicate that no one has a right of free access, even if they believe they have enjoyed such a privilege previously.**

## Live-Streaming of services

All services will continue to be livestreamed for the foreseeable future. The extremely clinically vulnerable are expected to continue shielding until at least August. There are many of them that will not venture out for some time afterwards. There will also be some for whom there is great nervousness about coming back to church from any group. Live-streaming both enables them to feel part of the worshipping community, and to see good, safe practice being modelled – this will help build confidence.

- All clergy must therefore familiarise themselves with the operation of the Mobile WiFi unit, the MEVO camera and the MEVO app which drives the system.
- It is hoped, in time during this phase to train a small number of people who can ‘drive’ the live-stream system, so that the clergy can concentrate on their liturgical role.
- The Live-Stream to Facebook should normally be set up, as far as is possible BEFORE the doors open to those attending. The broadcast should then ‘go live’ 5 minutes before a weekday mass, and 10 minutes before a Sunday mass.
- (When the operation of this is taken over by those other than the priest officiating, we will ensure that the MiFi box is easily accessible to the operator and/or they have preferential access to allow time for set up).
- Priests should therefore be aware that the congregation extends beyond those physically present and should, wherever possible, tailor the introduction to mass, the homily and any notices or remarks to reflect this.
- Priests or those operating the system **should also be aware** that the phone or tablet which operates the system also acts as a supplementary microphone. Be aware any comments you make, even *sotto voce*, will be picked up, broadcast, and available for posterity of Facebook.
- You should remind those physically present that mass is being livestreamed, and that their voices too may be picked up...
- There **must** be an explicit space left after the invitation to communion before the priest receives, for those participating remotely (or for those who choose to do so, physically present) to make their ‘act of spiritual communion’.
- The broadcast should end, at the priest’s initiative at the end of a weekday mass, and ideally after the final voluntary at a Sunday mass.
- It is possible to offer the live-stream facility to those being married here, as well as to families of those whose funerals take place here. The live-stream is to the parish Facebook page, and a direct link can be created after the service for families etc to send out to others. Clergy may offer this – but will be responsible for either directing the ‘broadcast’ themselves, or engaging someone trained to work the equipment to do so. Families must be told that this is accessible, publicly – and that there may be licencing/copyright complications if they wish to use pre-recorded commercial music.

## Preparation

With the restoration of public worship, more care now needs to be taken than has been over the last few months. Whilst masses have taken place during 'lockdown' either from the Rectory, or latterly, in church this has been in a very tightly controlled environment, with super-limited access, that has allowed greater flexibility.

We must now be more careful – as the presence of more people increases the risk of contamination and contagion.

At all times the sacristy surfaces should be kept as clear as possible to enable cleaning.

Antiviral spray should be used to clean the Sacristy door handles and lock (both sides) after each mass. The safe door should likewise be sprayed after each occasion where it has been opened. Surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned at least fortnightly.

### Frontals, Altar cloths, lamps and church furnishings

- These should only be changed by the sacristan or by one of the clergy.
- Frontals should only be changed when absolutely necessary.
- As many 'soft furnishings' as possible have been moved from areas of general circulation. Nothing should now be removed or introduced without the Rector's explicit permission.
- Cloths for the crossing altar should be changed and washed on the hottest setting available for the material at least monthly.
- Cloths on all other altars may be removed, washed and stored until these altars come back into use. The altars may be left bare, without their fabric covers.

### Electronic equipment

- Particular care should be made with the handling of the MiFi box, MEVO camera and parish iPad. These should only be handled by the clergy (and in time, the broadcast equipment operators).
- These should be carefully wiped with a specialist antiviral wipe after each use by the person who has used them, who should sanitise and use gloves to do this.

### Cleaning of silver, thuribles etc

- This should take place only when absolutely necessary.
- Cleaning may either be undertaken by the sacristan in the sacristy, or by others (with permission).
- Hand washing and sanitising **must** be followed before handling any of these items. Gloves should be worn for the purposes of cleaning. If taken away to be cleaned the same protocol should be used.
- If taken away for cleaning, once clean, the object(s) should be individually wrapped and sealed in a bag before being returned to church.

## Clergy Personal Mass wear: Albs, amices, girdles, cottas etc

- Particular care should now be taken in keeping these items of clerical apparel clean.
- Cassock albs should be washed frequently, and at least monthly.
- Albs, Amices, girdles should, if previously worn be stored in the relevant priests' cupboard. Amices and Albs should be washed where they have been worn when requires (they are likely to be worn at intervals greater than 72 hours).
- Cottas or cassock albs worn outside church, i.e. at the crematorium, should be washed by the priest concerned, immediately after the service they have been used at wherever possible.
- It is therefore my recommendation that cassock albs should be worn at funerals at the crematorium or cemetery, or for the interring of ashes.
- Where such ecclesiastical wear is touched by, or comes into physical contact with a person outside of the 'safe zone' bubble, it should be either:
  - 'Quarantined' for at least 72 hours in a well ventilated space, or
  - Taken off as soon as possible, placed in a bag and washed asap.
- This should also be the procedure if we are notified of a confirmed infection of someone we have come into contact with at mass, or in the course of a liturgical celebration here or in any other place. Vestments etc from that celebration should be treated with caution!
- It should go without saying – please do not share albs etc.

## Chasubles, Stoles and other Vestments.

- The guidance for personal items above should be followed in regard to 'quarantining' vestments which come into contact with others, or in cases of notified infection. This guidance applies to the general use of vestments etc
- Wherever possible, a priest should not wear the same set of vestments that another priest has worn, until 72 hours have elapsed to prevent any personal cross-contamination.
- The Sacristan will therefore manage the 'rotation' of sets of vestments so that the same chasuble and stole is not worn by different priests within the same 72 hour window.
- Chasuble sets which are on 'rest' will be clearly labelled as such – please do not wear them.
- You must therefore, please, wear the vestments put out for you for that days mass.
- Priests should not rummage through the draws and cupboards looking for something else, or something more glittery to wear even if it is the feast of St Margaret the Astonishing<sup>1</sup>, your personal third patron saint.
- If you want to wear your own personal vestments they may be brought from home – and should be taken back after the mass you have celebrated.

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<sup>1</sup> She does exist in the hagiography. Averting the smell of sinful human flesh, she would levitate during mass to the rafters of the church she was in to escape the foul odour of humanity, seeking instead the odour of sanctity.

- If you require a stole for a wedding or funeral, either use one from home (and take it away afterwards), or, if using a stole from a draw, please leave it with a label saying when it has been worn. We will supply bags for these to go into.
- The use of copes should be avoided (and in general, at all costs anyway).

### **Chalices, patens, trays, corporals, purificators, cruets and lavabo bowl jugs and towels**

These must be carefully prepared for each mass, and thoroughly cleansed afterwards.

The sacristan should prepare vessels only after washing of hands and/or sanitising. Gloves should be worn for this, and throughout the preparation. Gloves must be changed if they are compromised or contaminated.

- Each priest will be assigned a tray with their own set of requisites including a chalice and paten.
- Please **ONLY** use your tray. Again, as we have the equipment to do so, please use this to minimise any cross-contamination. This is especially important as we're the people more likely to spread any virus to someone else.
- The chalice and paten should be dressed with the same 'set' of corporal and pall. A normal sized priest's host should be used. This must also be handled in a 'sterilized' way.
- The same purificator *may* be used by the same priest more than once in a week. But if more heavily soiled with the precious blood, it should be changed.
- A ciborium should be used for the hosts to be received by the congregation. Either:
  - A different ciborium can be assigned to each priest, as per above for weekdays *or*
  - The small ciborium, and a larger ciborium can be used with them being thoroughly washed between uses.
- A larger ciborium will (probably) be required for Sunday (and solemnity) masses.
- For each mass, (a) wafer(s) for those with gluten intolerance should be prepared. These should be placed in a open small plastic bag on top of the normal hosts, to minimize contaminating these hosts with the others. If it is clear there is no gluten-intolerant communicant, this can be removed by the priest at the offertory.
- Once hosts have been added to the ciborium, a small post it note sticker should be affixed, indicating how many hosts are inside it.
- Wherever possible, additional hosts should not be added at the offertory – better to consecrate too many and consume or reserve.
- Small wafer boxes if used, must be thoroughly cleaned after they have been opened. Any unused hosts inside, which may have been touched, should be disposed of. Their use is, for the present time, discouraged.

## The Mass of the Day

- Only vestments and mass requisites required should be left in open spaces – and then only for as long as is required. Vestments laid out should be covered. All other vestments should be kept in the relevant cupboard or drawer and not be left out.
- Mass trays (including a dressed chalice and paten) should be covered until such times as they are needed to be put out.
- “Set up” i.e. the placing of trays, chalices, books, ipads, candlesticks etc should be completed before the doors are opened to the congregation. The preparation of broadcast equipment should also be completed by this time (though the live stream should begin at the point required).
- To begin with, the priest presiding at mass should put out the tray and any other requisites on the credence table. If the sacristan is required to do this, gloves should be worn, and hands washed or sanitised. If the priest does this, they should wash or sanitise their hands before doing so, but gloves do not need to be worn by him.
- **In addition to all the usual elements on the credence table should be: Hand sanitiser liquid or gel; a pair of sterile surgical gloves and a sterile face mask or covering – if the latter is not being worn by the priest from the start of mass.**
- The priest may place the corporal on the altar at this point (and leave the corporal in place until after the conclusion of mass). This has the advantage of helping prevent any cross contamination of the altar linen at the veneration of the altar at the start and end of mass.
- The priest alone should make sure the lectionary is in place and correctly marked, and put the ipad and any other materials they require in place before mass begins.
- Candles should be lit, by the sacristan before the doors are opened to admit the congregation, where possible. Only candles on the crossing altar need be lit for any mass.
- Candles on the high altar (the ‘big six’) should only be lit for the most solemn masses – but do not generally need to be lit for every Sunday.
- A set of bells should also be placed by the sacristan, for use at the usual points, from their place in the congregation. For the purposes of ease of access, the sacristan may reserve a seat, either in the nave or Holy Spirit chapel where the bells can be placed.
- If the bells are to be rung by any other person, they should be transferred by the sacristan, or the priest, to that person, wearing gloves. They should be collected wearing gloves, and thoroughly cleaned before being used by another person. Such other person may wear gloves to handle the bells – but should tell the sacristan if they have touched the bells without doing so.
- If incense is to be used, at the discretion of the priest who presides, then the priest should place the thurbile on its stand, together with the boat, spoon and incense in position. He should place charcoal in the bowl, and any further charcoal needed on, or near the stand. The sacristan or priest may light the charcoal. If the sacristan does so, she should not touch the thurbile, and a separate lighter should be used to any that the priest has, or will, use.

- The thurible, stand, boat etc should be moved by the priest after mass to a safe place. It should then not be handled by a different person for 72 hours. If it must be used before then, the sacristan should remove it, using gloves, and ensure it is all thoroughly cleaned.
- When the livestream commences (five or ten minutes before the mass, depending on the day), all set up should have been completed prior to 'going live'.
- During the set up of mass, and immediately behind, the priest and sacristan must work together to spend as little time as possible together in the sacristy.
- From the moment the camera goes 'live' the sacristan should be in the body of the congregation. It is very important now, that there isn't 'back and forth' to the sacristy. (If you've forgotten your glasses, bad luck).
- If the priest goes to start the live-stream, he should vest after starting the broadcast stream.
- Priest and sacristan must ensure that the gate to the choir aisle is left so it may be easily opened – but still prohibit access to the sacristy. Ideally, this should also be sprayed with anti-viral spray after each mass.
- The priest should wash hands thoroughly before vesting.
- After vesting, the priest should take care to touch as little as possible. The sacristy door may, therefore be left unlocked and open from this point to the conclusion of mass.

## The Celebration of Mass itself

For both weekday and Sunday masses, guidance for this present time reminds us (and particularly me) that brevity is a gift. There is very strong evidence that the longer a group of people remain in an enclosed space together, the more the risk rises. The larger the group, the more acute this becomes.

Clergy are therefore encouraged to 'get on with it' and to use 'due dispatch'. Introductory remarks should be pithy. The homily should now, be brief. Notices, short. We must all watch ourselves on this.

The pace should not be unnecessarily slow. Neither should it be gabbled in such a way that no one can join in.

Please refrain from inviting people to make loud responses. They should be encouraged to speak normally, but not to shout.

- The bell is rung at the start of mass.
- The priest, alone, walks through the gates and turns to walk to the altar via the crossing. He should not 'process' through the main body of the nave or any part of it.
- The priest bows to the altar, from whichever side he chooses.  
[On Sundays and some other limited occasions, the reserved sacrament may be moved temporarily to the tabernacle on the high altar. If this is the case, replace the bow, with a genuflection]
- At a weekday mass he says the Angelus, then venerates the altar and goes to the chair.
- At a Sunday mass, he venerates the altar, incenses it, and goes to the chair.
- After 'In nomine' and 'the Lord be with you' he introduces the mass, briefly. He should remind those present the mass is being livestreamed and also welcome those watching. He announces the intention of the day before leading the penitential rite and its prayer of absolution.
- On Sundays, the Gloria is then said (unless we have reached the stage where a cantor will sing the Gloria alone).
- The collect is then said, with the usual 'Let us pray'
- He then reads the reading(s) and leads the responsorial psalm.
- As no singing is currently permitted, the Gospel Acclamation is now omitted.
- On Sundays, organ music may herald and conclude the Gospel.
- It may be more difficult to use a thurible at this point, in which case, incense may simply be added to the thurible, blessed, and left to burn (this will depend on how close of far the priest has put the stand)
- The Gospel is read with its usual greeting and ascription.
- A (short) homily follows.

- On Sundays the creed is said.
- The priest then leads brief intercessions. On weekdays these should be even briefer or may, be omitted. If omitted, the priest should incorporate names *extempore* in the Eucharistic prayer. This should be attempted carefully – there is a potential pastoral minefield, unless well explained.
- The Peace is given, without the invitation to share. You may need to remind people we do this only verbally, and not physically.
- The priest then goes to the credence table.
- On Sundays, organ music will accompany the offertory, on weekdays this is done in silence.
- The priest should sanitise his hands before moving anything to the altar.
- Vessels are placed as usual. Wine and water are co-mixed.
- The ciborium lid should **not** be removed at this point, unless it is **absolutely necessary** to add more people's hosts. Any hosts touched from the box, should be added to the ciborium. The priest alone will consume the priest's host. This **must not** be shared with any other person. So in assessing numbers, the priest needs as many people's hosts as there are people...
- The *berekah* prayers are said at all masses, out loud, with the people's response.
- On Sundays, the gifts and altar are then incensed. After the incensation of the altar is complete, the thurible is returned to the stand.
- Priests should not try to wave the thurible at themselves, or the congregation at this point.
- The priest should complete the lavabo and sanitise (even if again) at this point.
- Returning to the altar the priest says the *orate fratres* and *orate super oblata* as usual.
- The priest then begins the Eucharistic Prayer as usual, with the *Sursum Corda* and preface.
- Wherever possible, short prefaces should now be used and will be provided.
- After the Sanctus and Benedictus are said, the priest continues the Eucharistic Prayer. The Pall may be removed at the Benedictus, or before the consecration of the Precious Blood. The ciborium lid should remain on top of the ciborium throughout. If Rome thinks the holy spirit can get in and work, I'm happy.
- Traditional manual acts may all be used.
- Any intercessory elements should be carefully interpolated into the post-institution section of the anaphora, ideally as per other western usage, immediately before the doxology.
- This is **not** an excuse to go 'off-piste' with Eucharistic prayers from elsewhere. Clergy know what the practice is here, and what I will and won't permit.

- Anyone who encourages you to a sudden shift to the Roman rite should be sent to me. This is being broadcast, and you must be responsible. I like to think that the Bishop of Leeds is watching...
- After the Eucharistic Prayer, the Lord's prayer follows with one of the usual introductions.
- The fraction takes places with the Agnus Dei, and no other words are to be used.
- Priests should genuflect during the Agnus and **before** the invitation *Ecce Agnus dei*.
- After the response to the invitation, and whilst still holding the host, you may invite those watching (or physically present) who wish to do so, to make their act of spiritual communion.
- You should then pray silently the priests' prayer for fruitful reception, and receive the host.
- You must, at this point, consume all the priest's host. You should then communicate yourself with the precious blood, draining the chalice.
- The priest then says the communion antiphon.
- *On Sundays, the priest should then go to collect the blessed sacrament from the place of reservation. This is likely to be the high altar, just to save a whole load of obstacles. The priest returns with the sacrament to the altar, and places the unopened ciborium on the altar*
- The priest then genuflects.
- He goes to the credence table. He sanitises his hands. He puts on a surgical mask (or personal face covering) and gloves.
- He then returns to the altar, genuflects, opens the ciborium and then, taking the ciborium goes to stand the other side of the altar: a pace away from the front of the floor-marking tape, facing the people.
- *On Sundays he does this after opening BOTH ciboria, and transferring all the sacrament to the ciborium used during that mass. The priest should tip the contents of the ciborium from the reserved, carefully to the other. The now empty ciboria may be taken away by the sacristan, wearing gloves, after the priest moves to the point of distribution. That ciborium is returned to the altar, after being washed thoroughly.*
- The priest, should turn to stand side-on to the people to distribute.
- The priest extends his arm as far as comfortably possible and says "the body of Christ" quietly. He places the host in the communicant's hand (deftly dropping it).
- There is NO communion to be given orally.
- If you touch the communicant, stop. Place the ciborium down (using your 'clean' hand) and sanitise your GLOVED hands (i.e. no need to change gloves). Then pick up and resume.
- This will inevitably take a little longer.

- If the communicant gets too close, tell them firmly to stand back: this is for their protection.
- After all have been communicated, return to the altar and place the ciborium down.
- The priest then goes to the credence table and removes, carefully gloves, then face-mask. The priest then sanitises his hands.
- Any hosts in the ciborium should be consumed. A larger number should be reserved only on a Sunday.
- Hosts should be reverently tipped into the (now cleansed) reservation ciborium. The lid to which should be affixed tightly and the sacrament returned to the place of reservation. Please do not let the ciborium you have used for the distribution touch the clean reservation ciborium.
- The priest returns to the altar and completes the ablutions as usual. The Corporal may be left in place, being cleared away after the mass has finished.
- After all this, the priest may return to the chair for a period of silent prayer.
- At the lectern, the priest stands to say the prayer after communion.
- On a Sunday the priest gives any brief notices which are necessary, including the reading of any banns. You should remind the people that they **must** take their pew-sheet and all belongings with them – anything left will be clinically removed and binned. They should also remain in their places until escorted to leave by a steward.
- The blessing is then given. Solemn blessings should **not** be used for the present time. It is quite permissible to use the short form of blessing after the greeting: “May almighty God bless you... etc”.
- After the dismissal, on Sundays, the Angelus is said.
- The Priest then venerates the altar from the working side. He then bows (or genuflects dependent on the place of reservation) from whichever side of the altar he feels appropriate.
- He then returns to the sacristy without passing through the people, via the crossing and choir aisle.
- The priest should then divest as usual.
- If the priest wishes to, he may return to church to bid people farewell, however, priests should be aware that we need to move people out of the building and not ‘log-jam’ the Duchy door. You may instead stand outside, well away from the doorway (please!).
- If a priest does go outside, you must ensure social distancing – and must not have physical contact with anyone outside your own household. You should re-sanitise on entry to the church, taking care not to get in the way of anyone leaving.

## After Mass, and before Apres Mass...

As soon as possible at a weekday mass, and immediately after the end of the voluntary on Sundays:

- The priest should switch off the live feed, turn off the camera and collect the ipad, any book(s) and the WiFi box and return these to the sacristy for cleaning. They should be charged up, if necessary.
- The sacristan should, wearing gloves, clear everything else away. A mask may continue to be worn at this point too.
- Candles should be extinguished – preferably with a ‘snuffer’ rather than blowing them out.
- All vessels and objects that have been touched, should be returned to the sacristy and thoroughly washed in hot soapy water.
- The thurible and stand, if used should be moved to a place where it will not be touched for 72 hours.
- All silver should either be placed on the relevant priests’ tray – or put in the safe. (When clergy are away on holiday, their ‘set’ may be put away in the safe for that time).
- The priest or sacristan should on a weekday ensure the church is empty, locked and the lights switched off.
- On Sundays, the priest and sacristan should liaise with the Warden(s) on duty or their surrogates to ensure this has been done.
- At no point, after the congregation has left should the building be left open, even if you are undertaking other tasks. Doors may only be left open for as long as it takes to sanitise the chairs in the body of the nave where people have sat and the entrance furniture to the church.
- Go home, have a gin.

# Baptisms, Funerals & Funerals

## Baptisms

In this stage it is unlikely that a family will ask for a baptism in the parish mass. If they do, they will be limited in this phase to the parents and three godparents attending only.

Advice from the Church of England on the administration of baptism is appended to these notes.

The salient points are:

- One candidate (or only more than one, if from one household only) per service.
- Anointing must be done via an 'instrument' not a finger or thumb.
- Parents must hold any infant to be baptised.
- The baptismal shell **must** be used.
- Clean, fresh water must be used.
- Disposable paper towels must be used in the place of cloths to wipe water from the candidates' head.
- Sanitising throughout the rite should be used.

## Weddings

Advice from the Church of England on the celebrations of weddings is appended to these notes.

The salient points are:

- Max. capacity is **30** including guests, clergy, organist, photographer etc
- Included must be capacity for any objectors to object...
- Bride and groom who don't live together must sanitise hands before vows and rings
- Clergy must not touch rings or the hands or heads of the couple
- If a best man presents the rings, all who subsequently touch them must sanitise
- Bride may only be given away by someone in the same household or bubble – or if someone outside that social distancing must be maintained.
- At the registration, use either:
  - Different pens for each party, witness and officiant, OR,
  - Sanitise the pen between each
  - AND ensure social distance between each group at the registration

Streaming can be offered, subject to licence restrictions regarding pre-recorded commercial music.

## Funerals

Again, the Church of England advice is attached.

The salient points are:

- Full social distancing must be maintained throughout.
- Exit and Entrance should be mitigated:
  - i.e. no gathering outside
    - no 'crush' following the coffin out
- No touching the coffin by anyone
- Attendance should be limited to no more than **30** – any attendance beyond that limit must be accompanied by a comprehensive risk assessment.
- The service should be completed in the 'shortest reasonable time' – optional elements should therefore be strongly discouraged, such as eulogies.

Streaming can be offered, subject to licence restrictions regarding pre-recorded commercial music.

Government advice still applies that Alongside the member of clergy, Funeral Director and staff, the government has stated that only the following should attend:

- members of the person's household
- close family members
- or if the above are unable to attend, close friends

## **Appendices**

RC guidance on Mass and Confession

CofE guidance on Public worship, Mass, Baptisms, Funerals and Confirmations.

# Guidance for the Celebration of Mass

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## Introduction

The Government has announced that from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, communal acts of worship will be allowed in our Catholic Churches. This guidance, issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for the Celebration of Mass, assumes that the general guidance published by the Conference, based on Government Guidance on the safe opening of Places of Worship for individual prayer, is in place.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the maximum safe operating capacity of the church, based on social distancing guidelines, should be clearly signposted at the door and the number and position within the church of people attending at any one time should be overseen by volunteer stewards.

## Social Distancing - IMPORTANT

The Government maintains that the 2m social distancing requirements should be applied where possible. The Government has said is possible to go to "1m plus;" this means you can space people more closely (with a minimum of 1m) providing a mitigation of risk is also applied. In the case of our churches, this would mean the compulsory wearing of a face covering for members of the congregation.<sup>2</sup> If those on the sanctuary are sufficiently distant from the congregation, there is no need to wear face coverings.

Priests should remain mindful of their own personal situation with respect to potential exposure to virus transmission. It is permissible for those in the 70+ age group, and those who are vulnerable to infection, to celebrate Mass, but it is strongly advised that they do not distribute Holy Communion and take particular care to be constantly socially distant from the congregation. They should return to the sacristy directly after Mass is ended.

## Celebration of Mass within Church Buildings

### *Before the Mass*

Only those necessary should be in the sacristy before Mass. The celebrant, sacristan, or server should prepare everything for the celebration of Mass with care. Single-use gloves should be worn at this stage. Particular care should be taken over the preparation of the elements for Holy Communion. The altar breads for distribution to the people should be placed into a clean covered ciborium (a pall can be placed over a dish paten). Sufficient altar breads for each celebration should be placed within at this stage. A separate ciborium/paten should be prepared for each person who will distribute Holy Communion. The cover of the ciborium or dish paten should not be removed until the time for distribution of Holy Communion.

The priest should prepare his own chalice and paten with a large altar bread for consecration. The chalice should have a purificator and a pall. The purificator should be used only once and then laundered. He should prepare the cruets of wine and water and his own bowl for the lavabo. Again, the towel should be used only once and then laundered.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-easing-of-lockdown-restrictions-23-june-2020>

All hymnbooks and missals and other published material normally used by the congregation and not meant for single use should be removed from the church. The Holy Water stoups should be

dry. Until further instruction is given on singing, there should be no congregational singing at Mass.

### *During the Mass*

Any worship aids (missalettes etc.) should be for single use and taken with the user when the Mass ends. They should not be left in the church at the end of Mass.

The priest, and if present, deacon and server, should remain socially distant at all times on the sanctuary during the celebration of Mass. This is particularly important at the Gospel (for the deacon's blessing), the Preparation of the Gifts, and during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Readers should be supplied with single-use gloves and should avoid touching the microphones or the Lectionary during the Liturgy of the Word, apart from page turning. The homily should be brief, to minimise the time that people are congregated in the church building. The Prayer of the Faithful should be omitted.

There should be no offertory procession of the gifts of bread and wine to the altar; the priest should have these on the credence table or the altar before Mass begins. There should be no sharing of the collection plate or bag. People should be encouraged to make their donation to the church online or via standing order. Plates or other collecting boxes for cash offerings should be placed at the entrances and exits of churches, and this should be overseen by stewards. The collection should be consolidated into plastic bags, sealed, placed into a secure location and left for 72 hours before counting. Counters should wear gloves when doing this task and the area should be well ventilated and cleaned before and afterwards.

### *The Communion Rite*

Members of the congregation should not exchange the sign of peace.

After the prayer and its response "*Behold the Lamb of God...Lord I am not worthy,*" the priest should hold up the Host to the Congregation and say audibly "The Body of Christ" to which the people should respond "Amen." In the same way, he elevates the chalice and says, "The Blood of Christ" and again the people respond "Amen." The priest should receive Holy Communion under both kinds using his own Host and Chalice. The priest will need to explain this to the congregation at this point.

There are two options for the distribution of Holy Communion. In both cases, because the people have already acclaimed the presence of the Lord, at the Priest's Communion, the People's Communion is distributed in silence with no dialogue between minister and communicant.

- Option 1

Once the priest has received Holy Communion, he should cleanse his hands with alcohol sanitiser before opening the pre-prepared ciborium for the Communion of the people. If there is a deacon assisting, or any other Minister of Holy Communion, they should similarly cleanse their hands and then receive communion from the priest from the people's ciborium, and under one kind only. They should then cleanse their hands again before receiving their ciborium from which they remove the covering or pall if it is still in place.

At the place where communion is to be distributed, a physical barrier should be placed, for example a prie-dieu (kneeler on the priest's side) or small table to socially distance the priest distributing Holy Communion from communicants. Communion must be given silently in the hand only, with the communicant standing, and avoiding any physical contact. People should wait in their pews until instructed to move forward to the priest for Holy Communion

by the Stewards, always aware of the regulations on social distancing in the orderly queue. When they approach the priest, they should do so with arms at “full stretch” so that there is a good distance between the priest and the communicant. Their hands, palms upwards, one of top of the other, should be extended as flatly as possible. Having received Holy Communion, communicants should move back to their pews in an orderly manner.

Once Communion is complete, the priest returns to the altar and places the unused Hosts, without touching them, into the Tabernacle and he cleanses the sacred vessels himself in the usual way.

- Option 2

The priest receives Holy Communion as described and immediately cleanses his paten and chalice. He then holds a reverent silence before the Prayer after Communion, giving the Blessing and dismissal. At this point, the other Ministers of Holy Communion who will assist the priest come forward, cleanse their hands and receive Holy Communion under one kind. They then move to the points for distribution and communicants are stewarded forward in an orderly manner to receive Holy Communion as above, and then immediately leave the Church. The remaining Blessed Sacrament is placed into the Tabernacle and the vessels cleansed in the usual way.

#### *After the Celebration of Mass*

The procession from the sanctuary at the end of the Mass should ensure good social distancing. The sanctuary party should return to the sacristy after Mass. If the clergy wish to greet the people, they should remove their vestments first and not engage in any physical contact with parishioners, who should be encouraged to return home and not remain.

The celebrant should place the used altar linens into a receptacle for laundry. All sacred vessels should be washed in hot water with a little neutral soap and dried completely before storing. Any discarded printed materials should be removed and bagged for disposal.

The church should be closed after the Mass has finished in order to clean the space according to the Bishops’ Conference guidelines on individual prayer. If there is cause for concern regarding the possible contamination of clerical vestments worn during the celebration of Mass, these should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, using the warmest water setting allowed for the fabric and allowing time for them to dry completely.

#### **Celebrations of Mass Outdoors**

If there is space for the celebration of Mass outdoors around the Church, which allows for the social distancing guidelines of Government to be fulfilled, and that all of the above liturgical advice can be done safely, then there is no reason why Mass cannot be celebrated outside of a church.

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas  
25<sup>th</sup> June 2020  
Revision 6

## Guidance for Confession

### Confession/Penance

The Sacrament of Confession/Penance requires the one-to-one encounter between a priest and the penitent. As such, this must be conducted in as safe a way as possible.

### Principles

The principles used to stop infection transmission during confession are:

- preventing droplet spread between priest and penitent through physical distance or barriers or positioning and
- by means of cleaning and hygiene preventing spread between penitents using the same kneeler or chair by cleaning points that are touched frequently (eg the top of the kneeler). The times of confession, either indoors and/or outdoors, may now be advertised.

### Outdoors Confession

Confession outdoors is permitted. Social distancing should be observed for this and good hygiene though cleaning surfaces frequently touched by penitents should be ensured. Placing the penitent and priest at right angles to each other or back to back would further reduce air spread containing droplets between them. Asking penitents to sanitise their hands when arriving is a sensible step.

### Confession inside churches or buildings

Within a church, if the church environment allows for confession to take place in an open space (such as a side chapel or other private area), this is preferred. If possible, the priest and the penitent should not sit face-to-face but at right angles to each other or side-by-side, facing opposite directions, whilst still allowing for the spoken matter to be heard. Penitents should have sanitised their hands when entering the church as part of existing measures.

- It may be possible to place a plastic or glass screen between the priest and the penitent which would allow for a face-to-face encounter. If so, the screen should be made of a solid material,
- If a grille is used, a cloth curtain (or a piece of plastic film) should be placed over the priest's side to minimise transmission risk.
- If a chair or a kneeler is used for the penitent, the touchpoints (where the penitent has touched with their hands) should be cleaned with household detergent after each penitent; it may make things easier if the penitent were to stand.

At this time, the use of traditional confessionals should be avoided if possible, due to the restricted airflow within them. However, if they are to be used, traditional "Roman style" confessionals (penitent kneeling at right angles to the priest speaking through a grille) are best. A plastic film on the priest's side covering the grille will provide a barrier against air droplets. The touchpoints on the kneeler should be cleaned after each penitent. Maximising the airflow through the confessional would be a priority; such as, if possible, leaving the door open.

Above all, priests should ensure that through ensuring the regular cleaning of the points that are touched frequently and the positioning of a barrier between penitent and himself, the risk of virus transmission is minimised.

Priests should limit the number of confessions they hear each day to reduce their exposure risk.

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas

24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Revision 4

## CofE COVID-19 Advice on the Conduct of Public Worship

Issue Date	Version	Issued by
30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	1.1	The House of Bishops Recovery Group

*The Recovery Group has been set up to support the Church of England as government guidance changes through the COVID-19 pandemic. This document has been prepared with information available by the issue date. It will be kept under review and updated as the situation develops, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the Church of England website via the [Coronavirus FAQs page](#).*

*“I was glad when they said unto me, “let us go to the house of the Lord.”” (Psalm 122 v1)*

Re-opening our churches for public worship will inevitably be a time of mixed emotions – joy at being able to come together to worship in our church buildings; sadness for the loss or absence of some members of our church communities; uncertainty about what the future “new normal” may be. This guidance is written to offer support in enabling church buildings to be opened safely for public worship. The same basic principles of physical distancing, hygiene and safety that were outlined in the guidance for opening church buildings for individual prayer still apply. This guidance should also be read in conjunction with advice on cleaning and on detailed guidance for conducting services such as Holy Communion, baptisms, weddings and funerals available [here](#).

The guidance below has been adapted from published [Government Guidance](#) for use by the Church of England.

For other denominations who use Church of England buildings to meet for worship we ask that adhere to the same advice (where relevant) including conducting their own risk assessment and ensuring compliance to physical (social) distancing, Public Health hygiene practices and guidance on music and singing for example.

It is lengthy, but as this is the core document for conducting public worship in our church buildings, chapels and cathedrals, we ask you to read it carefully.

### Salient points

- An advisory ‘cap’ of 30 has been set for weddings and other ‘stand-alone’ services such as baptism and confirmation if not conducted during ‘routine communal worship’.
- There is no numerical ‘cap’ on other services, but social distancing and Public Health requirements must be met.
- The two-metre ‘rule’ applies for public worship except in situations where closer contact cannot be avoided; extra Public Health precautions must then be taken.
- Consideration should be given to keeping numbers below the maximum possible to further minimise risk.
- Wearing of face-coverings is voluntary.
- While those at extra risk and the ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ should be advised of the risks of attending public worship, a *decision* to do so is theirs alone.

- Government guidance includes a request for names of attendees to be recorded and kept for 21 days to assist 'track and trace' if required (further details from the government are expected to help parishes and cathedrals who wish to do this).
- Singing, chanting and playing of brass or woodwind instruments are not recommended, but a further update will follow soon.
- Detailed instructions on 'consumables' suggest that services of Holy Communion can be held if specific guidance is followed, including the continued suspension of the Common Cup (see the guidance document on Holy Communion).
- Public worship guidance includes surrounding grounds (including churchyards, car parks and courtyards); meetings in other places should follow other guidance for people meeting in public spaces.
- Refreshments can only be served at tables if a café is included in the church or cathedral building.
- Further Government advice about use of churches and church halls for non-religious activity is expected.

## Detailed Questions and Answers

### **Q. When can we open our churches for public worship?**

A. The government has advised that our church buildings can be opened for public worship from July 4th as long as this can be done safely.

### **Q. Do we have to open our church building?**

A. No, there is no requirement to open. You should only open if you consider it safe to do so. Canon law continues to require that the usual services should be held; but ministers and PCCs can resolve to dispense with those requirements for a short period, or for a longer period by agreement with the bishop (see Annex below for a note on this).

All clergy are encouraged to consider continuing to stream worship or other events, both to avoid large gatherings and to continue to reach those individuals who are self-isolating or particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 as well as to those who have joined worship for the first time online during the lockdown period.

Whatever is decided, please consider how to communicate this to your congregation and community.

### **Q. How should I go about preparing the church?**

A. You should undertake a risk assessment to look at your own situation, as each church building and the local practices there are different. A template can be found [here](#).

### **Q. How many people can attend services?**

A. The government has advised the following:

- For **communal worship**, including led prayers and devotions, limits should be decided locally on the basis of the capacity of the place of worship, following a risk assessment.
- For **weddings** there should be no more than 30 people in attendance. For further guidance about weddings see [here](#).
- For **funerals** there should be no more than 30 people in attendance. For further guidance about funeral see [here](#).
- For **other life event ceremonies** (such as baptism, confirmation, ordination) there should be no more than 30 people in attendance unless this takes place during routine communal worship. For further guidance about other life events see [here](#).

**Q. How can we assess the number of people who can attend communal worship or other services?**

A. You should undertake a local risk assessment to gauge the capacity of the building, allowing for safe entry and exit points and communal areas. The number of people permitted to enter at any one time should be limited to ensure at least 2 metres (or 1 metre with risk mitigation where 2 metres is not possible) between households. The sorts of things to consider include:

- Size and layout of the building, including ventilation
- Total floor space, pinch points, busy areas, entrances and exits, and where possible alternative or one-way systems should be used.
- Travel to and from the church building – whilst it may be possible to safely seat a number of people in the building, it may not be safe for them all to travel to and from, or enter and exit, and so numbers may need to be reduced to allow for this.
- What other venues are open locally and whether to stagger entry times with other venues to avoid queues or congestion in surrounding areas.
- Travel routes and whether it may be necessary to consider one-way travel routes, including between transport hubs and churches.

**Q. How can we maintain physical (social) distancing?**

A. This needs to be addressed as part of the risk assessment. Things to consider include:

- For frequently used places, mark areas using floor tape to help people to maintain social distancing. If your floor surfaces are historic or delicate even so-called ‘temporary’ adhesive products can cause damage if they are left in place for an extended period. Advice is normally available from the manufacturer’s website.
- Consider additional mitigations such as: avoiding face to face seating, reducing the number of people in any one area, improving ventilation, using protective screens and face coverings as appropriate, closing non-essential social spaces, one way flow, staggering arrival and departure times to avoid congestion at entrances and exits including such things as exiting one row at a time, using alternative rooms to separate worshippers.
- Queue management to reduce congestion and contact.
- Clear signposting or assistance with sufficient “stewards” to help maintain compliance. Example posters to help with this can be found [here](#).
- Those leading worship reminding worshippers of the need for social distancing and hygiene.

**Q. Should we ticket services?**

A. It may be necessary for some parishes or cathedrals to introduce a booking system to help with managing numbers, particularly where demand will be high.

**Q. Do we have to keep a register of who attends our church buildings?**

A. This is not mandatory, but in line with other government guidance for other venues you are advised to keep an accurate temporary record of visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your church, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed for contact tracing and the investigation of local outbreaks. The government is working with faith leaders to make the process for recording these details compliant with data protection legislation and as manageable as possible.

**Q. What about hygiene?**

A. On entering and leaving the church building everyone, including staff and volunteers, should be asked to wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or to use hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available. There should be signs and posters on safe hygiene practices. You should provide hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to toilet facilities.

**Q. Can we open our toilets?**

A. Toilets should be kept open if at all possible and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission. Steps that will usually be needed to make the use of toilets as safe as possible:

- signs and posters about safe hygiene which can be downloaded for example [here](#).
- social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks).
- If possible, make hand sanitisers available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand dryers) are available. Communal towels should be removed and replaced with single use paper towels.
- Agree clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider the use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces. Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Putting up a cleaning schedule that is kept up to date and visible.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent refuse collection.

**Q. What about those worshippers who are over 70 or clinically vulnerable, those who may have symptoms, and those self-isolating?**

A. Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household. You may want to consider whether, based on your local

circumstance, you have set times when churches are open solely for those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, such as those over 70 or clinically vulnerable.

Those who are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 will have been advised to shield and are currently advised not to meet more than one person from outside of their own household, and therefore not currently advised to attend places of worship. From Monday 6 July, those shielding individuals may choose to gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a support bubble with another household, they will therefore still be advised not to attend places of worship indoors.

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend the place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household. Remote participation should be considered, for example by live streaming. This applies equally to individuals who work at the place of worship.

Where individuals are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test & Trace, they should participate remotely. See stay at home [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19](#). Guidance is different for funerals, see [guidance on managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic](#).

### **Q. What about children and young people attending worship?**

A. We warmly welcome all children and young people, they are part of the worshipping body of Christ. Young children should be supervised by the parent or guardian and appropriate hygiene precautions followed.

Any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use.

Outdoor playgrounds are permitted to open where a risk assessment shows that it is safe to do so, see relevant government [guidance](#). Particular attention should be paid to cleaning frequently touched surfaces by children and those that are at child height.

Principles in general guidance from the Department for Education should also be followed for any separate children's activities being organised by the place of worship alongside or within a service. Some helpful guidance regarding youthwork can be found [here](#).

### **Q. What about cleaning the church building?**

A. If you only have one service a day, then it would be sensible to clean the church after the service. If you are having more than one service cleaning the whole church may not be possible. In this case, we suggest wiping down those surfaces that are likely to have been touched, paying particular attention to those frequently touched surfaces. You will need to ensure you have identified people to undertake the cleaning. A decision should be made locally on how frequently cleaning should take place based on an assessment of risk and use of the building. If the church is not going to be used for 72 hours there is no need to clean it. For further guidance on cleaning see [here](#).

### **Q. Can we use communal service sheets and hymn books etc?**

A. It is best not to use communal service sheets or books that can be touched repeatedly by different individuals, and which may be difficult to clean. Individual service sheets should not be handed out at the entrance as this is likely to breach social distancing. However, they may be placed on pews/seats before the service, and then taken home by worshippers.

Alternatively, people could print off their own service sheets and take them home afterwards. Similarly, people should be encouraged to bring their own bibles and take them home with them. In

circumstances where worshippers cannot bring their own books, churches should keep a selection of clean books for individuals to use. Clean books should be quarantined for 48 hours since their previous use and should be quarantined for 48 hours again after use.

**Q. Can the organ be played?**

A. Yes. Organs can be played for services, practice and general maintenance, but should be appropriately cleaned before and after use.

**Q. Can we sing?**

A. No, other than where essential a single cantor appropriately socially distanced - the use of plexiglass screens should be considered to protect worshippers from them, as this will further prevent transmission and the screen can be easily cleaned.

People should avoid singing, shouting, raising voices and/or playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplet. Spoken responses during worship should also not be in a raised voice.

You may wish to consider the use of recordings as an alternative to live singing.

**Q. Can our worship band play?**

Yes, as long as there are no wind instruments or singing. Players need to be appropriately socially distanced, and the music should not be so loud that it encourages people to shout above it.

**Q. What about seating arrangements?**

A. People from the same household or “bubble” can sit together. Everyone else will need to observe appropriate social distancing at all times. It may be helpful to remind people as they enter, and to supervise this if needed.

**Q. Should people wear face coverings?**

A. At present there is no government requirement to wear face coverings in places where social distancing can be complied with. However, people may wish to do so, and this is a personal decision.

**Q. Can we pass a collection plate during the service?**

A. Where possible cash donations should be discouraged. Where this is not an option, cash should be collected in a receptacle that is set in one place and handled by one individual, as opposed to being passed around. Regular cleaning and hygiene should be maintained, and gloves worn to handle cash offerings where giving continues.

**Q. Can we serve refreshments?**

A. Hospitality spaces within a place of worship, such as cafes, are permitted to open but should be limited to table-service, social distancing should be observed, and with minimal staff and customer contact in line with government [hospitality guidance](#). Other mitigations should also be considered, for example, foodstuffs should be prewrapped, and a system should be in place to prevent individuals from

coming into contact with consumables and any dishes and/ or cutlery other than their own (for example the use of shared bowls).

**Q. Can we process in church?**

A. yes as long as social distancing is maintained.

**Q. What if someone becomes unwell whilst in a church building.**

A. If anyone becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 in a church building they should go home immediately and be advised to follow the stay at home guidance. If they need clinical advice, they should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they don't have internet access). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. They should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Other people who may have been in contact with the person who has become unwell should wash their hands thoroughly after the interaction, but they do not need to take any other specific action unless they develop symptoms themselves or are advised to do so by NHS Test and Trace. If they do develop symptoms they should follow the stay at home guidance.

The church should be cleaned in line with Government [guidance](#) where a suspected case of COVID19 has been recorded.

**Q. What about other Christian groups that use the church building for worship?**

A. Other groups must undertake to conduct their own risk assessment and observe physical distancing and Public Health guidance.

**Annex: Legal Questions and Answers Relating to the Restarting of Public Worship**

Since 26<sup>th</sup> March, Government legislation has required all places of worship to be kept closed except for a small number of specified uses that do not include public worship. On the 4<sup>th</sup> July this legislation will be repealed and the normal requirements of Canon law will come back into force.<sup>2</sup>

The normal requirement is that Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and a celebration of Holy Communion are held in at least one church in each benefice on all Sundays and on certain feast days and holy days. Where benefices are held in plurality the requirement is to hold each of the services in at least one church in at least one of the benefices.<sup>3</sup>

The minister and/or churchwardens should not feel under pressure to open a church for public worship if it would, in the light of government guidance, be unsafe to do so. Where that means that it is not possible to meet the requirement to hold services in at least one church in the benefice, they will need to follow one of the two procedures set out below.

This annex sets out the legal position under the Canons of the Church of England. While this is law and must be respected as such, it is recognised that the procedures will take time for ministers and PCCs to implement and a reasonable delay will be expected.

If you have any concerns about how you should proceed do speak to your local Archdeacon.

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<sup>2</sup> Because the Canons give way to statute law, the canonical requirements for holding public worship have effectively been in abeyance. It is understood that the Government legislation requiring the closure of places of worship will be repealed with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> July. Once that happens, the canonical requirements in relation to the holding of public worship will come back into operation.

<sup>3</sup> See Canons B 11 and B 14, as recently amended by Amending Canon No. 39 which relaxed the former requirement that these services had to be held in every parish church.

## Q. What if there are particular problems that mean a church is not ready for public worship?

A. If there are particular local circumstances which mean that it is not reasonably possible to comply with the Government guidance for the safe conduct of public worship in any of the churches in the benefices from the 4<sup>th</sup> July, there are two potential solutions.

### *1. Where the problem is likely to last for no more than a few weeks*

If it is likely to be only a matter of a few weeks before at least one church in a benefice may be able to hold the normally required public services then the matter can be dealt with by the minister and each of the PCCs without the need to consult the bishop. The minister and the PCC(s) should set out the arrangements in a formal a resolution. This can be done by email using the Church Representation Rules.<sup>4</sup>

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It is recommended that the resolution(s) of the PCC(s) take(s) the following form:

“The [rector] [vicar] [priest in charge] and the parochial church council of [*name of parish*] acting jointly authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14 on the following occasions:

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020 *etc.*

The reason for the dispensation is that in the light of the Government’s guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus, there is no church in the benefice which can be used safely for public worship on those occasions.”

If some services can go ahead but others cannot, the resolution may be edited accordingly. For example, where Morning and Evening prayer will be possible and Holy Communion will not the reference to Morning and Evening prayer should be removed. Where Holy Communion may be possible on certain Sundays but not on others it can be edited in respect of this as well.

### *2. Where the period will be longer than a few weeks*

If it will not be possible for at least one church in a benefice to hold the normally required public services for an extended period of time, the minister and PCC of each parish in the benefice should make a joint request to the bishop for dispensation.<sup>5</sup> It is recommended that the resolution(s) of the PCC(s) take(s) the following form:

“The [rector] [vicar] [priest in charge] and the parochial church council of [*name of parish*] acting jointly request that the bishop authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14 on a regular basis [until *date*].

The reason for requesting the dispensation is that in the light of the Government’s guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus, there is no church in the benefice which can safely be used for public worship and there is no reasonable prospect of any church in the benefice being made safe for that purpose [until at least *date*] because ..... .

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<sup>4</sup> The minister and the parochial church council of each parish in the benefice may jointly agree to dispense with the canonical requirements for public worship under paragraph 1(a) of Canon B 14A. The PCC(s) can be asked to deal with the matter under the correspondence procedure provided for in rule M29 of the Church Representation Rules (for which email can be used).

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 1(b) of Canon B 14A

Again, the PCC(s) can be asked to deal with the matter under the correspondence procedure provided by the Church Representation Rules and the wording of the resolution can be changed to reflect what service patterns may be possible during this time.

There is no hard and fast rule as to whether a dispensation is needed on “an occasional basis” under paragraph 1(a) of Canon B 14A or on “a regular basis” under paragraph 1(b). Ministers and PCCs will need to exercise a degree of judgement. In cases of serious doubt, the archdeacon should be consulted.

If a benefice is vacant and no priest in charge has been appointed, the sequestrators (usually the rural dean and churchwardens) have responsibility for ensuring the performance of public worship.

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The sequestrators should therefore act jointly with the PCC in dispensing with public worship on an occasional basis or making a request to the bishop for dispensation on a regular basis.

**Q. What if the incumbent/priest in charge is shielding or otherwise vulnerable and cannot officiate?**

A. If the rector, vicar or priest in charge of the benefice is unable to undertake the normally required public services because they are sick, shielding or otherwise vulnerable they must use all reasonable endeavours to find a replacement person to take the services. This also applies to baptisms, weddings and funerals.

In the case of sickness, a common tenure office holder can, where appropriate, comply with the duty to use all reasonable endeavours by notifying a responsible person or authority of his or her absence from work.<sup>6</sup> But where the minister with cure of souls is simply shielding and not actually sick, he or she should do all he or she reasonably can to ensure that a suitable person is deputed to officiate at the required services. END

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<sup>6</sup> See regulation 27(3), Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009

## CofE COVID-19 Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion

Issue Date	Version	Issued by
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020	3	The House of Bishops Recovery Group

*The Recovery Group has been set up to support the Church of England as government guidance changes through the COVID-19 pandemic. This document has been prepared with information available by the issue date. It will be kept under review and updated as the situation develops, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the Church of England website via the [Coronavirus FAQs page](#).*

This advice note seeks to enable Holy Communion to be celebrated in a safe and appropriate way. It includes practical steps in the administration of Holy Communion, as well as guidance on the practice of Holy Communion provided by members of the Liturgical Commission and the Faith & Order Commission which relates both to public worship and to live-streaming.

Where either priests or parishioners have concerns about participating in a service of Holy Communion, it is important that no pressure is placed on priests to preside at Holy Communion or on parishioners to receive the Sacrament.

This advice should be read alongside the guidance for Using Church Buildings for Public Worship and Individual Prayer and Advice on the Conduct of Public Worship found [here](#).

### **Q. Can we celebrate Holy Communion with our congregations in church buildings?**

A. Yes, subject to a number of important conditions outlined below.

### **Q. Are we able to share the Peace?**

A. Unfortunately, in order to minimise risk, there should be no sharing of the Peace through physical contact.

### **Q. What hygiene measures should be followed when handling the Eucharistic elements?**

A. Government guidance indicates that ministers should not speak over uncovered 'consumables'. In practice, this means that while the president can speak the words of the Eucharistic Prayer over bread and wine that he or she alone will consume, bread that will be consumed by other communicants must remain covered until being distributed (e.g. wafers in a ciborium with the lid on or covered by a pall, or bread on a paten covered by a purificator or other cloth).

For the time being we encourage the use of individual communion wafers or bread that has already been divided rather than large wafers or loaves of bread that are broken and shared, as this practice minimises the physical contact the president will have with the elements. It is also advised that the president be the only person to handle the wafers or bread during the distribution, unless there are very large numbers, and that individual communicants should not pass around wafers or bread.

If others assist in preparing the elements before or during the service, then hand hygiene and physical distancing precautions should apply. Offertory processions where the bread and wine are brought to the Communion table are not recommended at this time.

When the president takes the bread and wine before the Eucharistic Prayer, it is recommended that this takes place in silence. If words are said when the bread and wine are taken into the hand, only the elements that the president will receive are taken (the other elements being covered).

At the fraction (breaking of the bread), only the consecrated bread that the president will receive is broken during the words ('We break this bread...' 'Every time we eat this bread...') accompanying that action. The remainder of the bread remains covered. If other consecrated bread needs to be broken before it is administered, this must be done in silence or while the Agnus Dei is said by the congregation and after the priest has sanitized their hands.

At the invitation to communion, if the consecrated bread and wine are shown to the people, only the piece of consecrated bread or wafer that the president will receive is shown while speaking the words of invitation.

At the giving of Communion, the president receives Communion in both kinds. The words of distribution ('The body and blood of Christ' or 'The body and blood of Christ keep you in eternal life' or the Order Two/BCP words of distribution) are spoken to the congregation, and all who intend to receive say, 'Amen'.

At the distribution, Holy Communion is administered in silence. The consecrated bread or wafer will need to be dropped into the hands of communicants.

**Q. What elements can be offered to communicants?**

A. At present, Communion should be administered in one kind only with no sharing of the common cup. The president alone should always take the wine, consuming all that has been consecrated; other communicants should receive the bread only, in the hand. As the Liturgical and Faith and Order Commissions have made clear, this is still 'complete communion'.

In order to minimise overall risk, intinction (dipping the bread into the wine) should not be practised.

**Q. When should the priest and communicants sanitize their hands?**

A. The priest should sanitise their hands before administering the consecrated bread. Each communicant should also be encouraged to sanitise their hands before receiving the bread. The bread should only be administered into the hand with care being taken by the president not to touch communicants' hands. If this does happen, both the president and communicant should sanitise their hands immediately.

**Q. Should the altar rails be used?**

A. We suggest that in order to avoid touching it and to maintain physical distancing, communicants should not come to kneel at the altar rail, but instead they should form a line maintaining two metres' distance to receive the bread, standing, from the priest. The details of how this will be enacted will depend on the local situation, particularly the layout of the building.

**Q. How can the president maintain physical distancing when administering the bread?**

A. We recognise that it will not be possible to maintain the ideal distance of two metres for the brief time that the priest administers the sacrament. However, the risk associated with this is relatively low, especially if face-coverings are worn. Where either priests or parishioners are uncomfortable

with this, it is important that no pressure is placed on priests to preside at Holy Communion or on parishioners to receive the Sacrament.

**Q. What about face coverings?**

A. The evidence on face coverings is not strong and suggests that the benefit is not to the wearer but to others for any potential infection by the wearer. Current government advice states that it is up to each individual to decide whether they wish to wear a face covering.

**Q. How can we clean the chalice and paten?**

A. If the priest is the only person who will touch the chalice and paten both during the service and after, then they can be cleaned in the normal way.

If others may touch the chalice and/or paten, either during the service or after, then they should either be washed in warm water with liquid soap, or if this is not possible, stored safely on their own for at least 72 hours before using again, in case they have been infected with the virus. Further advice on cleaning historic items is available from Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/historic-places/cleaning-historic-surfaces/>

**Q. Can we reserve the Sacrament?**

A. Churches which reserve the Sacrament may do so. The priest should place the consecrated bread in the vessel for reservation. It should not be consumed or distributed for 72 hours by anyone other than the priest who reserved it.

**Some Guidance on the Celebration of Holy Communion**

God's presence is always with us, in ways that often escape explanation. In the long history of God's people, the divine presence has been with us in troubled times as well as in moments of comfort: in exile as well as at homecoming, in haste on the journey as well as in moments of contemplation, in gathered congregations as well as in domestic settings, and in the mysterious One who reveals himself in the daily breaking of bread as much as in the vision of the heavenly Temple. The dominical sacraments, as the Church of England has understood them, both signify and convey the realities to which they refer. It is in this understanding that we offer the present advice, to encourage ministers and congregations to reflect on the sacrament of Holy Communion at a time when the worshipping life of the Church (which normally fulfils the command 'do this in remembrance of me') has been disrupted. In so doing, we consider how we may continue to give thanks to God for the saving gift of Jesus Christ in the present time, but also (like Israel in exile) look forward to the future when we will be able to return home with joyful hearts.

We recognise that the present circumstances have raised in a new way many questions about the celebration of Holy Communion in the Church of England. It is our hope that the Faith and Order Commission and the Liturgical Commission will be able to give more extended theological consideration to these than is possible within the constraints of this short guidance document. While God's people are seeking to discern how to live as a eucharistic community under the current restrictions, we believe that there is much we can learn from the present situation about the celebration of Holy Communion at any time. We encourage deep reflection on our practices, as all members of the Church seek to respond to changing circumstances and the spiritual needs that emerge from them.

## Different approaches and their implications

Holy Communion is, both in form and substance, a shared sacramental meal, and any exceptions to this principle fall short of what would be expected in any normal circumstances.<sup>7</sup> This is reflected in the rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, which states that ‘there shall be no celebration of the Lord’s Supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the priest...’. Clergy, mindful of the centrality of Holy Communion to the life of the Church, are approaching the present situation in different ways.

1. Some bishops and priests may choose to continue to celebrate Holy Communion, even though they cannot do so with their congregations. Those who do so should make clear that the intention is for this to be an expression of praise and thanksgiving within the shared life of the Body of Christ (pointing forward to the time when we can share in Holy Communion together again), not the offering of an individual.<sup>8</sup>

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- a. Those who take this option may be able to do so in their churches, if these can be accessed safely, and nothing would preclude members of the president’s own household from participating in the service or receiving Holy Communion.
  - b. Equally, in the present restrictions, clergy are to be assured that their homes are also proper places for the celebration of Holy Communion, and that the same reverence should naturally be accorded to the sacrament in the home as in church.
  - c. If such services of Holy Communion are recorded or live-streamed to others, it will be important that those watching can see the president receive the bread and wine, emphasising the Anglican principle that the sacramental meal is always to be consumed.
  - d. If the sacrament is reserved in a priest’s home for ministry to the sick, it should be stored in a ‘seemly and reverent’ manner in a suitable and secure place.

2. Some bishops and priests may choose to abstain from presiding at the celebration of Holy Communion for as long as the sacrament is not available to their congregations. Some are choosing to follow this course of action intentionally for the duration of the present restrictions as a sign of solidarity with congregations who cannot receive communion.

## ‘One bread and one cup’

3. Anglican theologies of the sacrament of Holy Communion, whatever their differences of opinion in other matters, embrace the classic formulation that

*[Christ made] by his one oblation of himself once offered... a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again... [and the faithful,] receiving these thy creatures of bread*

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<sup>7</sup> Legally, such exceptions would have to be covered by what is sometimes called ‘the doctrine of necessity’, which allows for exceptional actions to preserve a greater principle.

<sup>8</sup> Although the text of the rite should essentially be the same as if a congregation were physically present, the president should not say the responses of the people who are not present (for example, at the Greeting and Peace;), but rather say the words of the president or other minister (such as the Collect, Prayer after Communion, and Blessing), and the texts that the president and people say together (for example, the Gloria in Excelsis and Lord’s Prayer). However, at the dialogue at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, the president may choose to say or omit ‘We lift them to the Lord’ and ‘It is right to give thanks and praise’.

*and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, [are] partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.*

The action of the community gathered for the Eucharist must necessarily be related to the mystery the Eucharist commemorates. Whilst there can be no repetition of the once-offered sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the members of the Body of Christ continue, in the Eucharistic Prayer, to plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross, to offer through him, our great high priest, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and to anticipate our welcome at the feast in heaven where all creation worships the Trinity.

4. The physical handling and sharing of the elements by participants in the same celebration is traditionally seen as essential to the sacramental action of Holy Communion. The inherent material nature of the sacraments is not simply about material substance being provided from some source that each participant then accesses individually if simultaneously. Instead it is about participants sharing in matter which is rendered as 'holy things' by the Church's action in the sacrament. The material nature of sacraments and associated rites, therefore, is also bound up with their inherent social nature, their constituting those who gather as one body, one society, one church. Common Worship describes this action when it says that 'In Holy Communion the Church, following the example of the Lord, takes, gives thanks, breaks and gives'.<sup>9</sup> The bread and wine that are given and received at the Eucharistic celebration are the same bread and wine which have been involved in this fourfold action of the Church.

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5. In circumstances where there is a reasonable chance of contagion, the canonical doctrine of necessity permits the reception of Holy Communion in one kind.<sup>10</sup> Other such situations of necessity might include the inability to consume solids or, in the case of alcoholics, any quantity of alcohol.<sup>11</sup> The *Notes to the Celebration of Holy Communion at Home or in Hospital* indicate that 'Communion should normally be received in both kinds separately, but where necessary may be received in one kind whether of bread or, where the communicant cannot receive solid food, wine.'<sup>6</sup>

### **Participating in the paschal mystery**

6. Celebrating the Eucharist is literally synonymous with giving thanks for the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ and the benefits that the Cross has afforded us. Many will grieve the physical absence of the sacrament from their lives. Yet this time may be an opportunity to re-discover and recognise some of the other ways in which we participate in the paschal mystery: in the practice of reading and learning the Scriptures, in joining in the Daily Office as an expression of the prayer of the Church universal, in praying for the transformation of the world,

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<sup>9</sup> *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (2000), p333, note 17.

<sup>10</sup> See Section VIII of the *Sacrament Act 1547*: both bread and wine are to be administered, 'except necessity otherwise require' (text modernised).

<sup>11</sup> Legal Advisory Commission, *Holy Communion: Administration of the Sacrament*, art. 6, and see Legal Advisory Commission, *The Use of Non-Alcoholic Wine and Gluten-Free Bread*, arts 12-13. <sup>6</sup> *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*. Note that the doctrine of necessity does not, however, extend to situations where an insufficient amount of bread or wine are consecrated. See *Non-Alcoholic Wine*, arts 6 and 8.

in living out the Great Commission Jesus gave us, and in our own lives continually dying to sin and rising to new life.<sup>12</sup>

7. When services of Holy Communion are broadcast live (whether live-streamed or through videoconferencing), those who tune in are participating in a real Eucharistic assembly.<sup>13</sup> Those who participate remotely in this way, but who are unable to be present physically, can practise a form of Spiritual Communion. *The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing physically in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. An [Act of Spiritual Communion is available on the Church of England website](#).*
8. As the introduction to that liturgical material explains:

*The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and*

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*especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost' (Canon B 15).*

The act of Spiritual Communion can take place at the point in the service when the participant would normally receive the bread and wine – perhaps after having seen the president consume them.

### **Other kinds of table-fellowship within the Body of Christ**

9. In some churches an *agape* meal (sometimes called a Lovefeast) is sometimes shared, to recall the meals shared by Jesus with his disciples and to express the fellowship afforded within the body of Christ. Such meals, whether conducted online or in the home, are not a celebration of Holy Communion, which must be presided over by a bishop or priest. Ministers of the Church of England may be interested in the guidance of the Methodist Church on [how to hold such a meal](#), which may be accompanied by a time of testimony.
10. After a live-streamed celebration of Holy Communion has ended, participants who wish may choose (in the time after the service which would often be devoted to fellowship and hospitality in a church context) to eat and drink as if sharing a meal together. As the Methodist Church puts it, 'there is no question of action towards the food/drink that is shared, other than being thankful for it and consuming it [...] a Love Feast is not a sacrament.'

### *Appendix*

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<sup>12</sup> As an example of the opportunity for sustained learning and engagement with Scripture, we observe that when following the Lectionary the main (or only) streamed service on Sunday should use the readings appointed for the Principal Service.

<sup>13</sup> Whilst services may be pre-recorded for practical reasons, we see the practice of making recordings of services of Holy Communion as distinct from live broadcasts, and as affording different opportunities for participation.

11. *We recognise a real desire of many for some physical engagement during the online celebration of Holy Communion. In some cases, participants in online services have consumed bread and wine in their own homes during the service. Whilst we recognize that this practice may have spiritual value for some, participants should not be encouraged to believe that any bread and wine brought before screens during online Holy Communion has been 'remotely consecrated'. However, we commend the questions raised by this practice for further theological reflection.*

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## CofE COVID-19 Advice for Conducting Funerals

Issue Date	Version	Issued by
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020	3	The House of Bishops Recovery Group

*The Recovery Group has been set up to support the Church of England as government guidance changes through the COVID-19 pandemic. This document has been prepared with information available by the issue date. It will be kept under review and updated as the situation develops, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the Church of England website via the [Coronavirus FAQs page](#).*

*This document should be read in conjunction with '[Opening cathedral and church buildings to the public](#)'.*

### **Pastoral Introduction**

Funerals bring to the fore one of the most urgent, difficult and often cruellest tensions that exist between the realities of human need and the demands that must be met if the current COVID-19 outbreak is to be brought under control. When a loved one dies, our natural human desire is to be surrounded by others in order to experience their comfort and support through presence, touch, prayer and a common acknowledge of grief and loss. It is also known that during the current outbreak of COVID-19, the very gatherings and contact desired by those who grieve are precisely what must be avoided, or at the very least restricted, if transmission of the virus is to be brought under control.

This tension may not be readily acknowledged by those suffering from the bewilderment, pain and agony of grief. The challenge for those leading funerals is with gentleness and compassion to enable those who mourn to receive comfort in the hope of the resurrection and ways though the realities of the current situation. This both acknowledges their needs as people who grieve and the needs of the whole community in keeping COVID-19 under control. This poses a huge challenge for those charged with taking funerals. Where possible, the expectations and needs of those who mourn should be satisfied, while at the same time holding in place the good practice needed to enable the safety of the whole community at this time.

The aim of this advice is to support clergy and others who take funerals. Every parish and each church building is different and there can be no single solution. Parishes and clergy will need to assess how, and in some cases whether, they are able to conduct funerals safely in the light of the advice below. This advice follows government guidance which may change and, if so, will be updated accordingly.

### **Things to think about before the service**

#### **How many people can attend?**

Funerals should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and physical distancing should be strictly adhered to. See more detail in the [COVID-19: guidance for managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic](#).

When determining numbers you may want to consider:

- the space available so a safe distance of at least 2 metres (6ft or 3 steps) can be maintained between households at all times during the service, including entering and leaving the building.
- the number of people that a minister feels they can effectively 'manage' during a service.

Alongside the member of clergy, Funeral Director and staff, the government has stated that only the following should attend:

- members of the person's household
- close family members
- or if the above are unable to attend, close friends

We recommend strongly that discussions with the family and funeral director cover the need to keep numbers within government guidance and that clergy and funeral directors agree responsibilities in advance to ensure good stewarding of the funeral on the day. Where possible, clergy should be free to concentrate on conducting the service and providing pastoral care with the funeral director assuming responsibilities for other aspects of the funeral.

### **What if no family or friends can attend?**

Where family relatives or friends are unable to attend a funeral service, clergy can still take a funeral even if those present are limited to clergy and funeral directors.

### **Can we have the organist and/or verger attending?**

Yes, an organist and those essential for assisting with the service can attend, but numbers should be kept to a minimum.

### **What about those who may be personally self-isolating or have symptoms?**

Sadly, anyone who is showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste and smell) should not attend the funeral due to the risk that they pose to others; remote participation should be considered, for example by live streaming. Failing this, a recording could be made which can be sent to anyone unable to attend after the service. Where no audio/video link can be achieved, ministers may be able to provide an order of service, either by email or post.

### **How can I communicate with the bereaved to discuss the service etc?**

Any interaction with the bereaved should be done safely; this may mean by telephone or video link. It is important not to share documents, books, photos etc.

### **What if I can't offer the traditional funeral service?**

Any changes to the normal service should be explained by the officiant to the family. Consider whether a memorial service could be held at some point in the future, which is an opportunity for more people to come together once Government guidance permits.

## Managing the church

Please read the guidance contained within *Opening cathedrals and church buildings to the public and Advice for conducting public worship* which can be found [here](#).

### What about cleaning the church?

Parishes should ensure that processes are in place to allow a suitable time to appropriately clean the area in which the service has taken place both before and after each service, paying attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, using regular cleaning products. Guidance on cleaning churches is available [here](#).

### What about mourners who are self-isolating due to a possible case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their household?

Key mourners of the deceased person may include those who are **self-isolating due to another member of the household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)**. Where the funeral is scheduled before the period of household isolation has been completed (14 days from the first person in that household showing symptoms) mourners who are self-isolating should be facilitated to attend.

Mourners who are from a household that is self-isolating should:

- not attend if they have any symptoms of any kind, even if these are very mild
- maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between themselves and others
- advise the other mourners that they are otherwise self-isolating at home, and communicate that their presence means that others who are **extremely clinically vulnerable should not attend**
- practise careful hand and respiratory hygiene:
  - washing their hands more often - with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds or by using a hand sanitizer.
  - avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - covering their coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin which should be clearly sign-posted and readily accessible.
- Mourners who are from a household that is self-isolating are advised to use their own transport where possible.

### What about mourners who are extremely clinically vulnerable?

Mourners who are in an extremely clinically vulnerable group should be facilitated to attend, should they decide to do so.

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable should have received a letter telling them they are in this group or been told by their GP. Mourners who are in an extremely clinically vulnerable group have been advised that they should minimise their contact with others for their personal protection. However, they may decide to attend a funeral despite the additional risk this poses to them and should be facilitated to do so.

They are not advised to attend a funeral if there are others attending who are self-isolating due to another member of the household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, as they could be incubating disease. Mourners who are extremely clinically vulnerable should follow the general social

distancing advice for the clinically vulnerable mourners and should maintain a distance of 2 metres away from others as a minimum.

Actions to reduce their risk of infection could include:

- advising other attendees that there is an extremely clinically vulnerable person attending and reiterating the need to stay at home if they are unwell, and to be respectful of the vulnerable person's need to avoid close contact at any point
- advising the mourner to travel to the venue via the safest route possible, preferably in a car by themselves, or with someone from their household
- considering the additional risk involved if attending the funeral requires travelling by public transport
- ensuring that mourners who are in a clinically vulnerable group do not attend the same ceremony as mourners who are in household isolation

## **During the Service**

### **Can we have singing?**

Hymns and singing are not advised as this may encourage droplet and aerosol spread. Recorded music should be encouraged as an option. An organist may play music during the service.

### **What should clergy do in terms of their own personal hygiene?**

Clergy should remain mindful of their own personal hygiene, sanitising/washing their hands before and after the service and again after the committal.

### **Can we use church hymn books, bibles etc?**

The use of communal Bibles or hymn books should be avoided. Orders of service could be placed on pews before the service and then taken away by mourners or safely disposed of.

### **Can we shake hands; can I touch the bereaved as a gesture of comfort?**

While it is contrary to human instinct and normal pastoral practice, it is important to advise mourners that there should be no physical contact including shaking hands, hugging or kissing outside their own households.

### **What about a wake?**

There should not be a "wake" or gathering after the funeral, but if there is one, clergy are advised not to attend.

### **What about laundry, including robes and vestments?**

All items should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, using the warmest water setting while allowing time for them to dry items completely. Vestments that cannot be washed should be hung up and left for 72 hours before use.

### **Can we still bury ashes?**

Yes, but it may still be best to delay this until Government restrictions are lifted and families are able to gather and also to reduce demand on clergy, grave diggers and other workers. If a service does go forward, similar advice will apply with regard to social distancing and hygiene; and managing the numbers of mourners

END

## COVID-19 Advice for Clergy conducting Baptisms

Issue Date	Version	Issued by
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020	2	The House of Bishops Recovery Group

*The Recovery Group has been set up to support the Church of England as government guidance changes through the COVID-19 pandemic. This document has been prepared with information available by the issue date. It will be kept under review and updated as the situation develops, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the Church of England website via the [Coronavirus FAQs page](#).*

As the foundation of Christian life, baptism is a time of joy and celebration for candidates, parents, godparents and the whole church family. While it may be some time before this celebration can be enjoyed as before, there are steps which can be taken to make it as memorable as possible while still adhering to government guidance on physical distancing, public health hygiene and protection of those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

The following advice is intended to assist clergy as they think through the best way of celebrating baptisms. It is not exhaustive, but addresses essential issues that should be considered. It should be read in conjunction with the guidance on Opening churches for Public Worship and Advice for Conducting Public Worship available [here](#).

### General questions

#### What should I do before the baptism?

- It is important that interaction with the candidate/families must be done as safely as possible. This might mean meeting, at least initially, via video link or talking on the telephone. If face to face meetings are held, please follow the [government guidance](#) on working in other people's homes and ensure that everyone adheres to physical distancing requirements and that numbers are limited, preferably to a minimum. Such meetings should not be held in the house of anyone who is self-isolating or who is in a vulnerable group.
- It is important to be careful to avoid sharing documents, books, photos etc and to remember to wash hands thoroughly before and after the meeting.
- The health implications for those in a vulnerable group should be discussed and if some people in these groups intend to be present at the baptism, their welfare should be kept to the fore.
- These will include advising other attendees that there is a vulnerable person attending, reminding them to take particular care in observing physical distancing and refraining from attending themselves if they feel unwell.
- If someone from a vulnerable group intends to be present, they should be advised to travel to the church in the safest way possible, preferably in a car by themselves or with someone from their household

### **How many people can attend the baptism?**

- A baptism should have no more than 30 people present, unless it takes place during 'routine communal worship' (e.g. a Sunday morning service).
- The candidate, his/her parents, godparents and the minister are all that are required to be present for baptism and parents might wish to keep to this number. If they wish to have other family members or friends present, it is important to talk with them about the overall government restrictions on numbers.
- You may find that parents/candidates ask to postpone the baptism in light of the restrictions in numbers. This is a decision for them. However, you will want to think about how to follow up these individuals/families so that the baptism can be rearranged when it is appropriate to do so.

### **What special steps should I take during the baptism?**

- Given the restrictions on numbers attending, clergy might wish to consider ways in which others may be able to join the service, perhaps through an audio or video link. If this is not possible, a recording of the service might be appropriate.
- Please ensure that everyone adheres to the Government guidance on physical distancing. Only clergy and parents should be at the font while godparents should maintain physical distance.
- It is important for clergy to be mindful of their own personal hygiene – please wash your hands before and after, and avoid using communal Bibles etc.
- If the candidate is an infant, he or she should be held by a parent or guardian for the duration of the service, including during the baptism itself.
- The minister should sanitize their hands before and after the Signing with the Cross on the candidate. In some churches candidates are anointed with oil at the Signing with the Cross. This is an optional component of the service. If oil is used, it should be applied with an implement which can be thoroughly cleaned or disposed of.
- Water should be poured over the candidate's forehead using an appropriate implement to pour the water such as a shell. Unfortunately, baptisms by immersion cannot be safely conducted at present. The baptized person, or their parents, may wipe the forehead with paper towels which should be immediately disposed of.
- No one should sign themselves with the baptismal water or be sprinkled with the water after the baptism.
- If a lighted candle is given, the presenting person should sanitize their hands before and after doing so.
- An organist may play during the service, but congregational hymns and other singing are not currently advised.