

CORONAVIRUS - PROTOCOL FOR THE HOLDING OF SERVICES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The vocation of church buildings is to be places of welcome, yet in a time of pandemic our first duty as a Chaplaincy is to ensure the safety, protection and wellbeing of all. This protocol draws on the regulations of the French government and the guidance and recommendations our Diocesan Bishops, Robert and David. It will need to be updated regularly as the situation changes and we receive more guidance. The onus of responsibility rests on the Chaplaincy Council and, in particular, the Warden and Chaplain.

We can now hold services in church buildings or in the open air, but services of public worship can only be held if principles of hygiene and public distancing can be firmly adhered to, as follows – this applies to all 3 centres of worship:

Individuals

1. If you have any symptoms of Covid- 19 or other respiratory or flu like illness DO NOT ATTEND.
2. All those attending a service must wear a face-mask, including clergy. The presiding minister must wear a facemask throughout the service and clean, latex-free gloves when celebrating and administering Communion.
3. All individuals must carry tissues and use them for coughs and sneezes, and then bin them (bins will be provided). If you can please also bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer for your own use.
4. Disinfectants and hand sanitizing sprays will be available at the door – everyone entering the church must use these on entry.
5. A team must be in place at each worship centre to ensure the use of hand sanitizers etc, and also to regularly disinfect door handles and other surfaces people may touch – having also used the hand sanitizer themselves.
6. Entry and exit doors should be left open during the service if held inside a building.
7. There must be no physical touch – handshaking, bise, etc. This includes the Peace.
8. Everyone must sign the register on arrival so that we can easily trace everyone if need be. Please bring your own pen or pencil.

Seating

9. Seating arrangements must ensure there is a 2 metre distance between persons in all directions during a service, whether standing or sitting. We will need to re-arrange pews etc to accommodate this. Families or people living in the same household can sit together.

Singing/Music/Books

10. No congregational singing is to take place, nor a choir for the time being. We can have an organist or other musicians if they are a safe distance away, but no wind instruments may be played.
11. Liturgy and hymns will need to be printed out and thrown away after use – we may not use the service booklets or hymn books. Also we may not hand them out – people will need to help themselves.
12. Readers, preachers, intercessors etc should not touch lecterns or pulpits.

Holy Communion

13. Holy Communion will continue to be distributed in the form of a wafer only. (Both elements will be consecrated but the wine should not be distributed. Anglican theology is clear that the sacrament of Holy Communion is present and complete in either the wafer or the wine.)
14. Only the presiding minister is to handle the Communion vessels.
15. Priests presiding at the Eucharist must either use clean, non-latex gloves for that part of the service, or if this is not possible they must wash their hands in soap and water or with an alcohol based sanitizer just prior to commencing the liturgy of the Sacrament.
16. The wafers should remain covered during the Eucharistic prayer.
17. The words of distribution should be pronounced by the priest to the whole assembly corporately, not to each individual as they receive, so that the actual distribution happens in silence.
18. At all times the presiding minister must avoid contact with the hands of parishioners.

19. Communicants are to approach in a single line with a 2 metre gap between them, for the receipt of the wafer.

Offerings

20. There will be no collection during services. Offerings are to be placed on a tray at the exit (better still, made by on line giving or direct transfer via the bank). Those who count the collection at the end of the service must wear gloves or ensure they wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after handling the money. We also need a method of sending the money to the Treasurer to bank.

Baptisms

21. Baptisms – only one candidate at a service, who is held by their parents and has no physical contact with the presiding priest who must wear a mask and clean gloves. Any anointing is to be carried out with a cotton swab.

Weddings / Wedding Blessings

22. Weddings – only the couple should handle the rings and any candles, and care should be taken on signing any register.

Booking a place

23. We may need to introduce a system for booking or ticketing for services, with named seating cards issued and assigned in advance. This will depend on numbers attending. Once we have reached the limit of safety with social distancing then no one else will be permitted entry.

24. We need to ensure that ordered entry, movement for communion and exit is maintained – we will need at least 2 stewards per service.

Refreshments

25. At present we cannot have gatherings for fellowship and refreshments in the churches.

Cleaning

26. Cleaning of the churches will need to be carried out ‘scrupulously’ both before and after a service or other use of the building. Cleaning personnel will need to be briefed and trained, use proper gloves and disinfectant and masks. Particular attention will need to

be paid to linen used in the service. We will need a list of volunteers for each service who are prepared to spend time cleaning the church.

27. Anyone who uses the WC and washbasin in the church will be required to clean them afterwards using the cleaning materials provided.

Jane Quarmby

Chaplaincy Warden

7th June 2020