

Opening our Churches for Public Worship: Easter 2021

1. St Michael on Greenhill

It is important that we ensure that coming to church for worship under the new conditions is a joyful and uplifting occasion as well as being safe for all involved.

Under the newly issued government guidelines the numbers attending and particular practices, are for each church to decide upon in the light of their own context.

This set of guidelines forms our risk assessment and also the basis of the information that we send out to our congregations.

a. Worship in church in context

Our services on Zoom each Sunday morning have been well received and a number of people have been able to join in who would not otherwise have come to the church building. For this reason we will be live streaming the 10.00am service from St Michael's at least for Easter Sunday and the Sunday after.

We will continue to make Family Praise type resources available on-line and also resources for a Messy Church type activities. These are distributed to a large number of families who usually attend Messy Church, Family Praise and First Steps.

b. The Church building

Currently we have hand sanitisation available in the church.

The toilets are new and relatively easy to clean.

The aisles mean that a circulation plan can be produced that allows for clear ways of entry and exit.

The current regulation do not allow for social gathering in church and so any gatherings or conversations need to be outside.

Access to the clergy vestry is tight and must be restricted

We need to keep the amount of furniture and equipment that we sanitise to a minimum.

The organ is separate from the main body of the church and so can be kept secure before and after it is played.

If we restrict seating to 4 per long pew and 2 per short pew and use only alternate pews **our seating capacity is 50**. Some additional seating in the fellowship corner and beside the sound system could be provided if needed.

We will keep a register of those who attend based on the electoral roll. This will be available for track and trace if required.

c. Seating

The layout at St Michael's allows for seating areas to be allocated to each service and provided for private prayer. The Sunday seating areas may be used for funerals in the period from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday morning but that allows for them to be quarantined before Sunday.

1 Both sets of outer doors will be held open. The glass doors will be shut. This will allow people to see through and so be aware who is in front of them.

2 **For the 8.00am service** the choir stalls will be used and also the modern wooden seats as set out for private prayer. The choir stalls will be secured after the service and the wooden seats wiped down. The white rope slung between clergy stalls will be replaced at the end of the service.

3 **For the 10.00am service**, alternate pews will be sealed off. People should go directly to a pew and stay there until required to move for communion, to leave or use facilities. There should be no standing in the aisles.

4 The long white ropes currently sealing off the main aisle and north aisle pews will be removed. Alternate pews will already be sealed off by a separate string. The white ropes should be replaced at the end of the service.

d. Entering and Leaving

1 Everyone should use the hand sanitiser on the way in and the way out. We will need to make a number of bottles available as well as the wall sanitiser

2 Everyone will need to keep a safe distance between them and others as they enter and find a seat. We have less control over arriving than leaving. It would be good to have a sidesperson near the font to give verbal guidance and to make sure people move on.

3 On leaving people will be instructed to move from the seats with access to the side aisles first, starting with the aisle nearest the door, then the side aisle on the south side, then those with access to the main aisle. Those at the back of each row leave first.

4 The hand sanitiser will be available on the way out.

5 Service booklets will be placed on pew seats before the service along with a sheet containing the readings and psalm for the day.

6 Everyone will be asked to put their booklet in the box on the way out. The box will be closed and as the contents will not be used for another week the quarantine requirements will be satisfied.

7 Everyone must take their printed sheet with them and dispose of it themselves (this is specifically in the government regulations)

8 No hymn books will be required.

9 Any sidesperson who is responsible for collecting booklets will need to wear gloves (blue hygiene gloves are available).

e. The form of the service

1 **For the 8.00am** service the Book of Common Prayer booklets will be used. The box of booklets will be kept in the choir stalls and only opened each Sunday.

- 2 Communion will be in one kind only (bread) and will be distributed to people in their seats by the president.
- 3 The bowl is to be used for the people's wafers and the chalice and paten for the priest.
- 4 Entrance and exit for the president should be via the choir vestry and clergy vestry early which means that these doors must be unlocked before the start of the service. The key is in the key box in the clergy vestry.
- 5 **For the 10.00am** service the seasonal service booklets will be used and the box kept in the usual place under the hymn book shelf.
- 6 Communion will be in one kind only (bread) and will be received standing in front of the nave altar.
- 7 The main aisle will be used by everyone to approach the altar and return will be via the side aisles. It is important to make sure that there is a one-way system in operation.
- 8 There will be a clear marker on the floor as to where to stand for communion
- 9 If someone wishes to light a candle they need to return via the north aisle, otherwise return is via the south aisle.
- 10 The ciborium and large chalice are to be used for this service with the priest's wafer on the large paten.
- 11 At present the person acting as deacon will read the gospel from the lectern and also lead the prayers. If there is another reader for the first reading a separate lectern and/or stand microphone should be provided. The deacon should be the only person to use the main lectern. They should use the lectern and will be the only person to use it.
- 12 There will be no gospel procession.
- 13 Notices may be given by a churchwarden. They should use a handheld microphone and stand away from the lectern and the altar.
- 14 All microphones will be carefully quarantined until the next Sunday. The president is responsible for this and for removing all the batteries.
- 15 **For all Holy Communion Services.** The president alone is responsible for setting up the altar and clearing away. It is recommended that the required numbers of wafers are prepared in the vestry beforehand and placed in the vessel after sanitising the hands. This will limit handling of the bread.
- 16 There will be no offertory procession.
- 17 The government guidelines say that care should be used when speaking words over open food therefore the paten or ciborium should remain covered until the distribution.
- 18 There is no current requirement for the president to wear a mask whilst taking the service but they should wear one whilst setting up and putting away. **A mask must be worn for the distribution and hands sanitised before putting it on and taking it off.** A suitable distance should be kept between the president and anyone receiving Holy Communion. The hands of the president should not touch the hands of the recipient. All communion is to be directly into the hand only.
- 19 The invitation to communion forms part of the service and is said to all. For the present there will be no individual words of distribution.

- 20 There will be no communal singing as part of worship until further guidance is received. A canticle in place of the opening hymn and a psalm in place of the gradual hymn will be provide on the sheet. These are to be said according to the manner the president instructs.
- 21 The organ may be played.
- 22 Limited choir singing is allowed and special provision is being made for this.
- 23 The Peace cannot be shared physically with anyone other than those in a household.
- 24 The president is responsible for giving clear instructions at the start, during and the end of the service. It is important that everyone is clear about what is expected of them. At the same time notices need to be such as to minimise intrusion into the worship.

f. Other matters

- 1 There will be a collection plate at the back of the church and no plate will be passed during the service. At St Michael's people will be encouraged to use the contactless payment machine.
- 2 Access to the vestry must be strictly limited to the president and the deacon.
- 3 The president may stand at the entrance to the church to say farewell to people after the service but must ensure social distancing.
- 4 The organ need not be cleaned down provided that it is not played for 72 hours. If organists wish to practise, they are responsible for cleaning the keyboard, stops and seat before and after playing.
- 5 There will be no refreshments served and no social gathering in church after the service.
- 6 Any gathering or conversation in the churchyard after the service must adhere to the regulations currently in force concerning outside gatherings. Social distancing must be carefully observed.
- 7 Children are welcome but there will be no toys or other activities available.