

Opening our Churches for Public Worship

2. St John at Wall

It is important that we ensure that coming to church for worship under present restrictions 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 proposals 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.

We need to complete a register of attendees at each service, based on our electoral roll for track and trace purposes.

b. The Church building

Currently we have hand sanitisation available in the church.

The toilet is new and relatively easy to clean. Access must be restricted. It is not available when the church is open for private prayer and must not be accessed via the vestry when there is worship in church. The outside door opposite the toilet door should be unlocked.

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.

*If we restrict seating to 2 people pew and people sit in a staggered pattern on alternate pews **our seating capacity is c 20**. Some additional seating at the back of the church could be provided. These would be plastic chairs which can be cleaned down after use.*

c. Seating

The seats allocated for Sunday services and for private prayer are separate and the seats for Sunday will not be used during the week.

- 1 The outer doors will be held open. The glass doors will be left open as people arrive but shut during the service. This will allow people to see through and so be aware who is in front of them.

- 2 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.
- 3 The blue rope currently sealing off the main aisle pews up to the back pews will be removed. A section of white rope will be used to seal off the back pews as these are available for private prayer.

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.
- 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 at the back should 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 on the table on the way out. The service booklet 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.

e. The form of the service

- 1 The appropriate seasonal worship booklets will be used and the box kept in the usual place.
- 2 Communion will be in one kind only (bread) and will be received standing in front of the altar steps.
- 3 Everyone will need to approach the altar carefully observing social distancing
- 4 For the moment there will be no deacon or servers assisting at the service. There may be a lesson reader who will also be the intercessor. They should use their own copies of the reading and prayers. They should use the lectern and will be the only person to use it.
- 5 The gospel is to be read by the president from their stall.
- 6 Notices may be given by a churchwarden.
- 7 All microphones will be carefully quarantined until the next Sunday.
- 8 The president 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.
- 9 There will be no offertory procession.

- 10 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.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 There will be no 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.
- 14 The organ may be played.
- 15 The Peace cannot be shared physically with anyone other than those in a household.
- 16 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.
- 2 Access to the vestry must be strictly limited. When the president arrives they are to be the only person in the vestry and it may only be used by others when the president declares that they are finished tidying up after the service.
- 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 church must be re-set for private prayer after the service and any surfaces common to private prayer and gathered worship cleaned down.
- 5 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.
- 6 There will be no refreshments served and no social gathering in church after the service.
- 7 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.