



Covid-19 Protocol: Reopening for Public Worship

Whilst the church can now legally open for acts of public worship and certain life-event services such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, there are still **many guidelines in place** to ensure Governmental & Public Health Guidance is followed. The safety of clergy, volunteers, members of the congregation, and wider community will be kept paramount. The opening of the church for small acts of worship does not mean that the church is open as normal, or that people can come and go as they wish. Strict guidelines remain in place, and those wishing to come to an act of worship must adhere to the following procedure, accepting that worship will look very different for some time to come. Under government guidance, services must be conducted in the shortest time possible.

Should I come to church?

There is no requirement that you must come to church and we would request that if you wish to come you give it **careful consideration**, especially if you are over 70, and/or are shielding for health reasons. All services will continue to be streamed online. Please remember that whilst our church buildings are a gift to us and can provide comfort, they are not necessary for us to be a praying community.

If you are showing any signs of Covid-19 or have been asked to isolate, please do not enter the church, but continue to pray from your own home and join us for online worship.

If you are planning on attending, please be mindful about your **method of transport**. Lifts should not be offered to anyone who is not in your household, or in your bubble. Where taxis or public transport are used, masks must by law be worn.

St Peters has always been a place of fellowship, but at this time the church cannot be used for that purpose - please be mindful of this in deciding whether or not to attend worship in person.

Children, as always, are very welcome in the church. At present however, we cannot provide the children's corner, or Sunday club. On entering, any children will be given a plastic wallet with some simple activities in for them to use in the pews. These will be prepared 72 hours beforehand to reduce the risk of any transmission. *It is your responsibility to keep your children with you at all times.*

If I decide to come, what do I need to do beforehand?

St Peter's Church building will be open for public worship on Sundays at 10am. By law this will be limited to a maximum of 45 people attending. If you wish to come you will need to '**book in**' to reserve your space. In doing so you agree to act in accordance with the safety measures put in place. When booking your place, or entering the church you agree to sign up to the '**Community Safety Covenant**' (see attached). **If you act in contravention of this covenant you may be asked to leave to maintain the safety of all others present.**

At all times you will be required to keep 2m distance from other people. Where this is not possible, at least 1m distance must be left with risk mitigation (i.e. wearing a mask). Whilst wearing a mask in church is not mandatory by law, **we are a community who seeks always to look out for our neighbour and take care of the more vulnerable in society and so we request that masks be worn by everyone inside the church building** (notwithstanding those with a medical exemption from doing so).

Windows and doors will be left open to ensure a better flow of ventilation, so please bear this in mind and dress appropriately.

Only pews are available to sit on. If you require something special for reasons of Accessibility, please record this when you make your booking on the system. A ramp into the church and out of the church will be available for wheelchair users.

There will be **no orders of service** available. If you wish to use one, please either bring the paper copy that you may have received, print of a copy from our website, or download a copy onto your own phone/tablet and use that throughout the service. There will also be no hymn books, or paper copies of the weekly news sheet available.

Entering the church:

The church will not be open until 15 minutes before the start of the service. **Please do not arrive before this time.** On arrival to the church premises, please **enter the church through the main gates** to the car park. People will enter the church at a 2m distance. You may be required to wait and markings will be clearly visible on the ground.

There will be at least **3 volunteers at each service** (one outside the church, one at the back of the church, and one by the exit). All volunteers will wear a lanyard, and will also be wearing masks. They will be on hand to assist you navigating the new measures, and ensure your worship is as meaningful as possible. Please be mindful of social distancing when speaking with them, but do ask any questions you may have.

On entering the church, you should do so via the **main door only**. You will be asked your name and and ticked off on the booking list. **Please be aware that if you have not booked, you may be turned away.** If there are spaces available you will be asked for your contact details (in case you need to be contacted under the Government Track and Trace scheme) before being allowed to enter. The details of those attending will be kept for 21 days, in accordance with GDPR, and will then be destroyed.

Inside the church:

Alcohol gel will be available inside the porch; please ensure you use this. The door will be opened for you, so please do not touch anything unnecessarily, only touching the pew and kneeler where you are sitting.

Please respect the **areas that are 'out of use'**. These include (but are not limited to): the bell tower, the coffee shop, the children's area, the lady chapel, the choir stalls, the sanctuary, the sacristy, the choir vestry and the toilets.

Candles cannot be lit, pew bibles have been removed, and only attached kneelers are will be available. If you require a cushion for personal comfort, please bring this with you. None will be available in church.

There is a **one way system** installed; please follow this at all times.

The **contactless machine** is available on your way in, should you wish to make your donation. No cash donations can be accepted. If you are using an envelope you will be asked to place these in a box as you arrive. These will be stored for 72 hours before being touched by anyone else.

After entering the church and using the hand gel, please **proceed immediately to your seat.**

Accessible seats have been allocated at a safe social distance. Please sit in one of these and do not move the signs to suit a different position. If you are coming with another member of your household, you may sit together, but please make sure you sit as close to the allocated seat as possible.

Whilst hymns may be played during the service, **singing is prohibited**. Please also refrain from speaking loudly or shouting. When saying the responses throughout the service, please do so quietly and not in a raised voice.

Readers and intercessors will continue to be recorded and projected as has been done for online services. The only microphone used will be done so by the Priest. One server will be on hand to assist the priest in a safe way.

The celebrant will wear a mask throughout the eucharistic prayer and when giving communion, but may choose to wear it for the entirety of the service. Additional hygiene measures will be practiced by the celebrant and these will include:

- only the priest will touch the vessels, linen and hosts when setting up communion
- the priest will wash their hands immediately prior to the service and again just prior to laying the altar
- after receiving communion, the priest will then sanitise their hands before administering communion in one kind to the congregation

Communion will be given in **one kind only**. The Chalice will continue to be prepared and consecrated in the usual way, but the celebrant alone will receive from the Chalice. To receive communion, please go to the pew end nearest to you. The Priest will walk down the side and centre aisles, and will give you your communion. On receiving it in your hand, **please the return to your seat before removing your mask and consuming the bread.**

Exiting the church:

Following the service, please say your final prayers and then follow the one way system and leave the church **via the East Porch**. Please do not congregate at the back of the church, but leave the building directly. Please be aware of other people leaving and maintain a 2m distance at all times.

Other points to note;

Following the service the clergy and volunteers will wipe down all services with antibacterial cleaners. This will include but is not limited to;

- Pews
- Kneelers
- Door handles
- Window opening pole
- Light switches
- Clergy microphone
- Communion vessels/linen will be washed

In the event that the celebrant is unable to lead the service and a priest cannot be found to stand in, a service of communion by extension will be celebrated, using hosts consecrated more than 72 hours beforehand. In such an instance the person leading the service will follow the same hygiene practices as the Priest.

And so in summary....

You will need to book in...*but at least we can worship together*

You will need to wear a mask...*but at least we are doing it as a way of 'loving our neighbour'*

You will need to follow the one way system....*but at least we can go inside the church building*

You will need to stay in your pew for communion...*but at least we can share in the eucharist once again*

You will need to leave immediately after the service....*but at least we can have a service*

You will need to get used to the changes...*but at least we all know that God will never change.*

We look forward to worshipping with you all again.