

St Peter's and Blessed Mary

Church Life - Stage 4 Update - PCC Guidance

Following the weekly e-mail, please find below what St Peter's and Blessed Mary PCC's are recommending as guidance in relation to Church life now we have moved to Stage 4 from 19th July. We would be grateful if you could read this carefully and please do let us know if you have any queries, comments or concerns.

We hope that this new guidance will be helpful and appropriate, but we will be keeping things under review. We very much hope that infections will have settled/moved downwards as we go through August towards September.

At St Peter's this revised guidance will take effect from this Sunday 25th July and at Blessed Mary from 15th August.

St Peter's: James, Paul, Claire and Liz

Blessed Mary: James, Colin and Kerry

Church Life - Stage 4 Update - PCC Guidance

As you will all be aware, from last Monday 19th July, we have moved to Stage 4 of the government roadmap which now allows much more freedom, which is good news, but at the same time given all that is still happening and changing, that we should proceed with good care.

The House of Bishops' COVID-19 Recovery Group has compiled guidance (entitled 'Opening up and managing of Church Buildings') which the PCC has reviewed, and in our context is recommending that we be together as freely as we can, but at the same time to keep in place some key measures which minimize most obvious risk and to give confidence and re-assurance to those of us whose situations (personal or family) mean they need or want to be cautious. The St Peter's and Blessed Mary PCC's have agreed that this is how we should proceed in general but we keep under review over August and as we head towards the Autumn.

The overarching message is that we are moving from the government and national church deciding what we can and can't do, to each person and organisation/church having a duty of care and taking responsibility for themselves and those around them. Situations are going to vary where we will each have to assess what is best to do generally and in specific circumstances i.e., where we can act freely as we would have done, or perhaps act in a more limited way.

In summary, the PCC's are recommending the following guidance:

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitising – that on arrival, during a service (as needed) and on leaving we all continue to regularly and consistently wash our hands and/or use hand gel.

Face Coverings – that these be worn in any 'crowded and enclosed settings' as is being recommended. For example, this would mean when close together with others for a period of time in the main body of the church e.g., sitting/standing close to others, or in a room e.g., choir/clergy/vestry. In general for the moment, we would recommend wearing a mask on arrival/leaving and when moving around.

Social Distancing – this is no longer required and with doors open, fewer attending church and church being a larger space, there is no specific distance we need to keep. In general, we would suggest maintaining a distance that enables each other to feel comfortable. For those who want to continue to wear a mask, keep more social distance and/or not sing, we want you to feel secure to come to church and would suggest that that you sit behind those singing/without masks in the rear of the central pews.

South Aisle - we would like to try to keep the south pews generally free for the choir/band to expand into as needed.

North Aisle - we would like to keep the north pews generally free for any families to use i.e., to keep children/parents a little bit apart from others over the extended period of a service.

The Gallery (St Peter's) – we would like to continue for this area to be open in a general way.

Singing – we want to encourage the freedom now to enjoy worshipping God in our singing, but as described above, those who don't wish to sing yet, wear a mask throughout, and/or want to keep social distance from others, that you sit behind those singing e.g., in the rear of the central pews.

Sharing of the Peace – we want to begin to encourage sharing of the peace in normal ways e.g., shaking hands or sometimes a hug. Over the coming weeks please chat with any around you that you don't know about what they would like/be happy with so that, when it comes to the peace, this can be shared naturally. If you are not sure please continue with a wave, eye contact or a touching of the elbows. We recommend staying where you are at the moment rather than moving around.

Fellowship and Refreshments – we want to re-start a proper time of fellowship with coffee/tea/biscuits when we can. However, as a first step, we suggest focusing on our fellowship and conversation with each other and with 'BYO' coffee/tea if you would like to. We hope to provide some wrapped biscuits/cake as soon as this can be arranged. We propose that our fellowship/conversation time happens in three locations so we are not all in one place: outside (when possible) under the at the back or where you remain seated. When refreshments can be served it will be brought and given to you in these locations.

Communion – we very much want to proceed to give and receive communion in both kinds as soon as we can for those who would like to. However, whilst we settle into all the other freer ways, communion will continue to be in one kind, but where we aim to re-introduce wine when it is safer to do so. The minister presiding will continue to ensure that their hands are sanitized and place, without touching, the wafer/bread into your hand.

Bibles, Hymn Book and Service Sheets - Service Sheets and a Hymn book will be provided by a sides person with washed and/or gloved hands. Please return again at the end and these will then be quarantined for 72 hours. If you would prefer please keep your hymn book and service sheet and bring each week. With regard to bibles please bring your own each week (or use a church one for the moment) or for those with smartphones you can of course look up the reading/s on e.g., Bible Gateway.

**St Peter's James, Paul, Claire and Liz
Blessed Mary James, Colin and Kerry**