

Pastoral advice from the College of Bishops for Phase 3

The College of Bishops is providing further guidance in relation to the pastoral and liturgical ministry of our churches as the lockdown in Scotland further eases. Guidance on the specific actions that may have to be taken to re-open buildings for worship are being provided by the Advisory Group.

The elements of advice that follow in this document will apply once the Scottish Government states the dates for various Phase 3 church activities to recommence.

Indicative dates when Phase 3 relaxations may occur were released on 24th June 2020 and are at: <https://news.gov.scot/news/further-route-map-detail-announced>

Key indicative dates in Phase 3 include:

10 July:

People can meet in extended groups outdoors, with physical distancing;

Households can meet indoors with up to a maximum of two other households, with physical distancing;

23 July: Places of worship are unlikely to be able to open for communal worship before this date.

Initial Phase 3 Guidance if 10 July date is confirmed:

Pastoral visits indoors

Limited pastoral visiting to people's homes may be possible from 10 July. We therefore should:

- Plan for potential pastoral visiting under Phase 3 guidance, which allows people from a household to meet two other households with physical distancing indoors.
- Identify existing pastoral visitors, who are not shielding or in vulnerable categories. These visitors must already be PVG cleared and be trained/supervised.
- Identify members urgently requiring support, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

When pastoral visiting in this stage of Phase 3:

- Visitors can meet with up to two other households indoors, provided physical distancing and hygiene measures such as the wearing of face coverings are followed. No home communion or other physical sacraments are possible at this stage, because of the risk of infection they present.
- The number of pastoral visits per day must follow government guidance.
- Clergy and pastoral visitors manage schedules to prioritise visits to people requiring urgent support.

There will potentially be a huge number of pastoral visits requested in addition to considerable work required to provide ongoing pastoral care and produce

information and worship resources. Please be kind to yourselves and to those who are volunteering. We must pace ourselves as we continue through the long process of lockdown easing. And please remember, even as we enter Phase 3, no cleric should undertake any visits if they have any concerns for their own health or wellbeing.

Outdoor church activities

Events such as congregational picnics, outings, fundraising activities, fetes, car boot sales, should follow and will be dependent on Government Guidance on outdoor social gatherings. In principle, such events should be possible in Phase 3 but must be conducted in accordance with continued physical distancing requirements and good hygiene practice and Government restrictions on meetings of multiple households must be observed.

Unless permitted otherwise by Government, it is recommended that if food and drink is to be part of any such events, each person attending should be responsible for bringing their own food, drink and crockery and it should not be shared with others. Risk assessments and planning for physical distancing and hygiene for any event should be completed by the vestry.

Later Phase 3 Guidance – once dates are confirmed

As we have said in our introduction, in Phase 3 it should become possible for us to gather together again for worship. The careful conditions for gatherings in church described here will make the experience of worship quite different from anything we have known: the Eucharist in one kind only; the wearing of face coverings; the distance between worshippers; the absence of singing. But being able to worship at all, even with these conditions, is something we can give thanks for.

Once churches open for communal worship – and the decision by clergy/vestry is that this is the right time for a particular community and context, pastoral guidance is presented as follows:

- Annex A: Protocol for eucharistic worship
- Annex B: Protocol for home communions
- Annex C: Protocol for anointing/healing/prayer ministry

Job interviews or visits can be held for applicants for posts. Once the Scottish Government's Phase 3 guidance allows non-essential office work to recommence then interviews and visits with physical distancing and hygiene may be possible. The interviewees' travel and accommodation should be also possible at this stage.

+Mark, Primus & Moray, Ross & Caithness
+Kevin, Glasgow & Galloway
+John, Edinburgh

+Anne, Aberdeen & Orkney
+Andrew, Brechin
+Ian, St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

Annex A: Protocol for Eucharistic Worship in Phase 3 of the Scottish Government Lockdown Easing

The management of the buildings and safe movement of the congregation is covered in the Phase 3 Guidance from the College of Bishops' Advisory Group on the Re-opening of Buildings. This Annex has liturgical and pastoral guidance on the conduct of eucharistic services.

The Peace, if that is the local tradition, should be maintained by the president and congregation but observed (maintaining physical distancing) by voice and/or body movement with only those immediately around them.

The Offertory should not have the elements of offering brought to the altar as part of the liturgy. The elements should be on a credence table or similar for the president to prepare the altar. The offering should not be brought to the altar.

Offering/Preparation of the elements

Only the president should touch the elements.

The president must wash hands /use hand sanitiser:

- a) before preparing and setting up the elements on the altar; and
- b) after breaking the bread and receiving the elements themselves, before offering the bread to communicants.

Eucharistic Prayer

Speaking, singing and chanting across the congregational bread is to be avoided. The bread should be covered e.g. with a pall or with the ciborium cover in place during the eucharistic prayer. The president's host should not be shared with the congregation following elevations/fraction.

Communion

Communion should be administered in one kind only i.e. bread only. The president alone should take the wine, consuming the moderate amount of wine that has been consecrated.

The president should wear a visor/face-covering while administering bread. Hand washing/use of hand sanitiser should take place after donning face covering and before administering bread.

Communicants should receive the bread in their hands. All communicants should also be encouraged to wash hands /use hand sanitiser before receiving the bread. The president should avoid any contact with communicants' hands.

Altar rails should not be used but communicants should receive standing maintaining physical distancing (e.g. in a physically distanced queue up to the president, rather than standing at the altar rails). The details of how this will be enacted will depend on the local situation, particularly the layout of the building and should be presented in the pro forma phase 3 plan submitted to the bishop.

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It will not be possible to maintain any required physical distancing for the brief time that the president administers the sacrament. However, it is believed that the risk associated with this is relatively low.

The communicant should extend their hands to receive the host and then step to the side in order to place the host in their mouth.

Ablutions: As normal, done by the president. After the service the chalice and paten should either be washed in warm water with liquid soap detergent, or if this is not possible, cleaned with a 70% alcohol hand sanitizer, taken away and washed up elsewhere.

Reserving Sacrament

Churches which reserve the Sacrament may reserve the bread from the service. The president should place the hosts in the vessel for reservation and place them in the aumbry. They should not be consumed or distributed for 72 hours by anyone other than the priest who reserved them. See Annex C, Protocol for Home Communion in Phase 3 for their use in Home Communion.

Vestments

To reduce the risk of infection it is recommended that vestments are not shared.

Incense

For churches where incense is part of their tradition, the risk of use in Phase 3 must be assessed. Use of incense poses risks because it may cause some people to cough and thus potentially increase the risk of transmission of the virus.

If incense IS used at eucharists (or e.g. solemn evensong), the incense load in the thurible should be reduced and thuribles should not be carried into the congregation. If the building size permits, censuring may be carried out at a distance from the main congregation with reduced incense loads.

Annex B: Protocol for Home Communion in Phase 3 of the Scottish Government Lockdown Easing

Pastoral context

The visit to a congregant's home/hospital bed etc. should only take place if permitted under Government guidelines and once eucharistic worship has resumed in the congregant's church buildings.

The visit must follow distancing & hygiene rules. The visitor must wear a face covering and wash hands /use hand sanitiser before and after the visit.

Records of who conducts all pastoral visits with Home Communion must be kept.

Liturgy

If a shortened liturgy is followed, a paper copy of the liturgy should be given to the communicant. This copy should be left behind and kept for future visits or disposed of into the waste bin.

Reserved Sacrament

Annex A of this pastoral guidance details how the bread should be reserved. The reserved sacrament should not be consumed or distributed for 72 hours by anyone other than the priest who reserved them. Only take bread for a single visit at a time.

Before the visit, while preparing the sacrament, the pastoral visitor should wash hands /use hand sanitiser and place the bread into a pyx to be taken to the communicant's home. The pyx should first be washed.

During the liturgy, the bread should be placed on a paten or plate and offered to the communicant. They should take the bread with their fingers and consume it.

After the visit the pyx and paten (if used) should be washed before any further visits.

Annex C: Protocol for Anointing/Healing/Prayer Ministry in Phase 3 of the Scottish Government Lockdown Easing

Pastoral context

Physical contact is a high-risk activity in a pandemic and should be avoided if at all possible. If it is necessary to have physical contact for urgent pastoral reasons, consult with the diocesan bishop first and follow this guidance.

This contact may take place in a worship setting (e.g. anointing/laying on of hands during a baptism/eucharist/ordination) or a home visit (e.g. anointing a sick person at home).

Physical contact

Any physical contact activities must follow current distancing & strict hygiene rules. The priest/person touching must wear a visor/face covering and wash hands /use hand sanitiser before and after any individual contact. If contact is made to several people, wash hands /use hand sanitiser between each contact.

Oils

The use of oils is not encouraged, but if it essential that oil is used (for e.g. confirmation /ordination /anointing of the sick) then a new drop of oil should be taken from the church's supply for each person anointed and placed on a disposable or clean receptacle, with hand washing /hand sanitiser use before and after each transferral. Do not use an oil stock.

Baptism (once permitted by Government Guidelines)

Only clergy and parents should be at the font while godparents should maintain physical distance. Clergy should not hold the infant but ask a parent to do so for the duration of the service. The sign of the cross should be made using an implement that will avoid direct physical contact. Water should be poured over the infant's forehead using an appropriate implement such as a shell. Parents should wipe the forehead of the baptised person with paper towels which should be immediately disposed of. If a candle is lit from the Paschal Candle as part of the ceremony, this might be done by one of the parents.

Baptisms by immersion cannot be safely conducted at present.

Laying on of hands at ordination

In the case of the ordination of deacons, the bishop alone, as usual, should lay on hands. He or she should wash hands /use hand sanitiser before and after each candidate and wear a visor/face covering.

At the ordination of priests, the bishop should be joined by two priests (and no more). If more than one candidate is being ordained, to minimise the possibility of infection it is recommended that one or both of the priests who assist the bishop in the ordination of each candidate should be the same for each candidate.