

Revised pastoral advice from the College of Bishops for Phase 3

The College of Bishops is providing revised and further guidance in relation to the pastoral and liturgical ministry of our churches following the First Minister (FM)'s announcements on 9 and 14 July and 7 August 2020 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.

Phase 3 relaxations were announced by the FM and are at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-3-update-30th-july-2020/>

Key dates confirmed in Phase 3 include:

10 Jul Outdoor meeting – a household can meet up to four other households at a time – up to 15 people in total.

Indoors – a household can meet up to two other households at a time – up to eight people in total. This includes overnight stays. A house can meet up to four other households per day in total.

15 Jul Places of worship can re-open for congregational services, communal prayer and contemplation with physical distancing and limited numbers to achieve physical distancing (up to a maximum of 50 people). Funerals and weddings have a limit of 20 people.

Phase 3 Pastoral Guidance from 10 July:

Pastoral visits indoors

Limited pastoral visiting to people's homes is possible from 10 July. This means:

- Visitors can meet with up to two other households indoors (up to eight people in total), provided physical distancing and hygiene measures such as the wearing of face coverings are followed.
- A total of four households can be met with in any one day.
- Clergy and pastoral visitors manage schedules to prioritise visits to people requiring urgent support.
- Using existing pastoral visitors, who are not shielding or vulnerable. These visitors must already be PVG cleared and be trained/supervised.

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 from 10 July

Limited outdoor social events will be possible from the 10 July but must be conducted in accordance with continued physical distancing requirements and good hygiene practice. Government restrictions on meetings of multiple households must be observed. This means that outdoors a household can meet up to four other households at a time – up to 15 people in total. The same limit of meeting only four other households per day applies.

Events such as congregational picnics, outings, fundraising activities, fetes, car boot sales are not yet possible.

Further Phase 3 Guidance from 15 July 2020

As we have said in our introduction, in Phase 3 it is possible for us to start 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 numbers of and 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

Later Guidance for Phase 3 – dates to be confirmed

The government guidance on households meeting indoors and outdoors will continue to constrain other activities within Scottish Episcopal Churches. Until the Government guidance changes to permit meetings and other non-worship-service gatherings or larger scope outdoor activities, the following activities are not permitted or must continue as virtual or other non-physical forms:

- Vestry and other meetings (unless within Gov't guidelines)
- Job interviews or visits
- Large social events & activities (indoors or outdoors)

We will issue further revisions and guidance as the Scottish Government announces further relaxations in the restrictions. Please continue to exercise caution in all you do as you resume the pastoral activities in the life of our churches: please do all you can to protect all those in your care.

+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 face-covering (a visor is not an adequate 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 and after 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 an hand sanitizer (with an alcohol content in excess of 60% in the case of an ethanol based product, or in excess of 70% in the case of one using isopropyl alcohol (isopropanol)), 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 Communions 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. Everyone involved must wear a face covering (a visor is not an adequate 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

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. Water should be poured over the infant's forehead using an appropriate implement such as a shell. The sign of the cross should be made using an implement that will avoid direct physical contact. 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. Face coverings should be worn throughout.

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 face covering (a visor is not an adequate 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.