

Changes to Public Worship at St. Paul's Church

On July 19th 2021 the country moved to step 4 of the 'Roadmap out of Lockdown', easing many of the restrictions placed on Public Worship. The vicar and PCC have tried to strike a balance between enabling us to enjoy the greater freedoms we have, while taking sensible precautions to keep us safe from the virus which has not gone away. This means some, but not all, of our safety measures will remain in place for the time being. Note: group leaders should read the paragraph at the end of this document.

Here is a summary of what public worship at St. Paul's will now look like:

- We will continue with online worship provision, in addition to in person services.
- We will continue to provide service sheets for those unable to attend or watch online at home.
- Congregational singing is back.
- Church bibles and the bookshelves are back in use.
- The arrows and one way system marked out on the floor will be removed.
- Midweek Holy Communion will continue in the main body of the church for the time being.
- We will ask welcome team members to continue wearing a face-covering while on duty for the benefit of those they come into close contact with.
- We will no longer take people's temperature as they enter the building.
- We will continue to remind people not to come to church if they have been told to self-isolate, or if they have symptoms of Covid-19.
- We will continue to ventilate the building as well as the weather permits.
- In keeping with the law, and out of a desire not to exclude anyone from public worship, we wish to make it clear that face coverings are optional. Please remember: (a) One of the ways we can love each another is by wearing face coverings to help keep one another safe. Some in our church family have very compromised immune systems. (b) We can also love one another by not judging those who choose not to or cannot wear a mask for whatever reason. There are benefits and costs to mask wearing and individuals will need to make up their own minds. Let us be humble as each of us considers what to do: *"in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."* (Philippians 2:3-4. C.f. Eph. 4:2). One option for people to consider is wearing a mask during the service then removing it at the end for refreshments. Or you may choose to wear it while singing to reduce aerosol transmission.
- Refreshments are back!
- We will retain 1m+ spacing of our chairs/groups of chairs so far as congregation size permits it. We will not attempt to stop people from different households sitting together if they would like to do so.
- People may exit through one of the side doors at the end of the service to minimise crowding as people leave.
- At busier services, especially when we need to close the doors & windows because of the weather, we will encourage people to wear a face covering but we cannot and therefore will not insist upon it.

- We will provide a zone/area of seating for those especially cautious about the virus. We will initially set apart for this purpose the chairs at the very back, just in front of the chapel doors, near the side door which will ordinarily be open for improved ventilation.
- Hand sanitiser will continue to be available throughout the church.
- We ask everyone involved in running the service in some capacity to clean their hands often, especially where people are using the same equipment. Team members should also avoid unnecessary sharing of resources.
- We will continue to fix internal doors open (where possible) to minimise unnecessary contact.
- We will continue cleaning frequently touched surfaces and the current cleaning schedule.
- People distributing items, including service sheets, pens etc should sanitise their hands before doing so.
- We will retain our signage reminding visitors about important safe practices. For example, the importance of regular hand washing.
- We will continue, for now, not passing the collection bag around as this would force people to handle something they may not wish to touch. We will continue to have collection baskets by the exits and make the card reader available.
- We will no longer retain the one in, one out policy for the toilets. Instead there will be a notice on the door saying words to the effect of 'If busy please come back later.'
- The poster in the toilets asking people to clean the surfaces they have touched will be changed to make it clear that it is optional.
- We will continue to display an NHS Test and Trace QR code and keep a record of attendees to facilitate NHS Test and Trace. We will do so at all church services and groups. Please note that registering is optional.
- Holy Communion services from Sunday 8th August: For the time being there will continue to be no physical hand shaking at the peace. Though permitted to share 'the common cup' we will, for now, continue to use the dipping method. The sacristan will prepare the communion table in the same way as throughout the pandemic, and will, along with the vicar, continue to practice good hand hygiene. Instead of receiving communion by their seats, Church members will be invited to receive communion at the dais steps and encouraged to keep approximately 1m apart. Hand sanitiser will be placed on a table in a convenient location so church members can clean their hands before receiving the bread. The vicar and Holy Communion assistant will continue to wear face-coverings when distributing.
- Those leading the singing will be asked to stand at least 1m apart which may reduce the number of people involved.

Group Leaders: Please note that the PCC is required to approve a new risk assessment for every group and ministry of the church. This is a work in progress so groups must maintain the status quo until they have an updated and PCC approved risk assessment. Group leaders can help speed up the process by proposing to the vicar and church warden updated covid risk assessments that imitate the measures outlined above.