

Coming back to church

As part of the process of preparing to re-open St Philip's for church services and other activities, we have (along with all other parishes in the diocese) been asked to prepare a set of protocols that outline how we will be endeavouring to keep the church safe for all who enter. I encourage you to read these protocols carefully, along with all the other associated documents.

I also thought, however, that it would be helpful for me to put some flesh on these protocols and to give a fuller description of what things will be like when we recommence services.

A. Church Services

1. When will the services be?

To begin with, we are planning to have two services a week. One will be on Sunday and the other will be on Wednesday. This will make it easier for us to ensure that the necessary cleaning and sanitising is done before the next service.

After much discussion, we have decided that the services will be held at 9am on both days, at least to begin with.

2. What will the services be?

The services will vary between using the Book of Common Prayer (8am service) and Book of Alternative Services (10am service). On one week, the BCP service will be on the Sunday and the BAS service will be on the Wednesday. The following week, the services will be reversed, so that the BAS service will be on the Sunday.

3. How many people will be able to attend?

The chairs in the hall have been arranged into "bubbles" of two chairs, enabling couples to sit together. A single person will take up one such "bubble" all by themselves. We have 15 such bubbles in the main worship area. In addition, there will be an extra two-seat bubble in the library and four single seats. The wooden pew will also be available as a "family bubble" allowing up to four members of the same family to sit together.

4. Where do I enter the church?

Until further notice, everyone will enter the church by the main double doors into the narthex. Please note that all other doors will be locked. If you are a keyholder, please do NOT use your key to enter the church by one of the other doors.

5. Will I have to wear a mask?

There is currently no absolute requirement to wear masks, although we would recommend that you give this serious consideration. If the advice that we have concerning masks changes, we will let everyone know.

6. What will be the process for entering the church?

a) Outside the church, by the arch near the main entrance, there will be a greeter, whose main job will be to take the details of everyone coming to the church for a service. The names and contact details will be kept in the church for 30 days and then deleted. The greeter will also take your temperature, using an infra-red, non-contact thermometer. They will also keep count of

the number of “bubbles” that have entered the church, and when all “bubbles” have been occupied, will have to refuse access to any further people. With this in mind, please try to arrive at the church at least 10 minutes before the start of a service, so that you can be properly processed. Please also be ready for the possibility that you may not be allowed to enter the church if all “bubbles” have already been taken.

b) Once inside the church, in the Narthex, you will be met by another greeter, who will invite you to sanitize your hands and take one of the printed service bulletins. Please note that the bulletins will be available on the church website a few days before the service, so that you can download it for yourself onto a tablet or other electronic device, if you would prefer to use that rather than the printed bulletin. Please also be aware that we will NOT be using hymn books or service booklets until further notice – all you will need will be in the printed bulletin.

c) Once you enter the main worship space, you will find an offerings basket by the door on your left. If you wish to make an offering, please drop it into the basket as you enter the worship space.

d) You can then take your seat in a bubble. Please be aware that one bubble in the main worship area is being reserved for Honoured Guests, ie visitors and newcomers to St Philip’s. As an act of welcome and hospitality to visitors, please leave this bubble free.

e) The bubbles have been carefully placed to ensure proper social distancing. Please do not move the chairs from where they have been positioned.

7. Will there be singing?

The instructions we have received are very clear that congregational singing is NOT permitted at this time. We hope that the Sunday services will feature a musician who will play a number of hymn tunes.

8. Will there be communion?

Yes, though only in one kind (ie receiving wafers only). We will be following the guidelines provided by the Diocese (in consultation with the provincial health authority) to ensure that distribution of communion is done as safely as possible. Each person will be asked to go forward, one at a time, to receive the wafer from the priest, who will be wearing a mask during this part of the service.

9. Will there be Sunday School?

No. Sunday School will not be recommencing until we have received permission to do so. All children coming to the service will be required to remain with their parents for the whole service. As mentioned, there will be a “family bubble” at the back of the main worship space.

10. Will the washrooms be open?

To begin with, only the Disabled Washroom will be open. If you need to use the washroom, please make sure that you wash your hands thoroughly and then use the surface santiser provided in the washroom to spray all surfaces after use.

11. Will there be coffee after the service?

Coffee times after services remain suspended until further notice. We will, however, be

continuing to have the weekly Zoom Coffee Time at 10:30 on Sunday mornings.

12. How will I leave the church after the service?

Once the service has ended and the priest has processed out of the worship space, you will be invited to leave one by one. You should exit by the double doors at the back of the worship space (by the library). Once into the corridor, turn left towards the Sunday School room, where you will find a table with some hand sanitiser for you to use and also a recycling bin for your printed bulletin. Please leave through the door marked "Exit." Please note that the main doors at the front of the church are for entry only and you should not exit that way.

13. What if I cannot come to church services?

Whilst many people will want to come to the church for services, we understand that there are also going to be a number of people who are unable or unwilling to come to the church at the moment. Therefore, we are putting in place the following actions for such people:

a) Each Sunday service will be videoed and we will be aiming to have the recording available to watch on the church website within a couple of hours.

b) If someone is unable to attend in person and cannot watch the video on the church website, we will be happy to deliver a printed copy of the weekly bulletin to them. If you know of anyone who would benefit from this, please get in contact with the Parish Office or the Rector.

B. During the week

1. Can I enter the church building during the week?

During the week, all doors will be locked but the Rector and/or Parish Administrator will be in the building during the mornings of Monday to Thursday. If you wish to come to the church during the week (other than for services), please follow these instructions:

a) Always enter by the main double doors, even if you are a keyholder.

b) Upon entry, you must use the hand sanitiser and sign in, so that we have a record of who has been in the building. This sign-in sheet will be retained for 30 days.

c) Please follow all normal social distancing precautions whilst in the building.

d) If you need to use the washroom, please use the disabled washroom and use the surface sanitiser to spray the surfaces after use.

e) Before leaving the building (using the exit door by the Sunday School Room), please use the surface sanitiser on all surfaces you have touched. Also use the hand sanitiser as you leave.

2. What do I do if I want to see the Rector or the Administrator?

Please do not come to the church to see the Rector or Parish Administrator without first phoning and making an appointment. We will be delighted to see you (whilst maintaining social distancing precautions, of course) but it will make things much simpler for us all if you phone ahead so that we know you are coming.

3. Can I come to the church for private prayer?

If the Rector and/or Parish Administrator are in the building (ie during the mornings of Monday to Thursday), you would be very welcome to come to the church and sit in the main worship space for some private prayer. Once again, please call ahead to let us know that you are coming and then please follow all the guidelines for entering and leaving the building as described above. If you are intending to come for private prayer, there will be a couple of special chairs set out at the front of the worship space for you to use. Please avoid using the green fabric chairs, as these will be reserved for services on Sundays and Wednesdays.

C. Other important things to note

1. Multi-Purpose Room

This room has been used to store the chairs that not currently in use in the main worship space. As a result, this room will not be available for use until further notice.

2. Kitchen

The kitchen is currently closed for all and any use, including making tea or coffee.

3. Sunday School Room

This room is also not available for use until further notice.

Please make every effort to stick to these guidelines. As the advice we are receiving changes, we will do our best to ensure that any changes in our procedures will be communicated to you as quickly as possible.