

Emerging from Pandemic: arrangements for worship

April 2022



St Andrew's Church Bedford

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

2 Corinthians 5: 17

It is two years since COVID first turned our worship upside down. As the final mandatory controls are removed by the Government, St Andrew's PCC has met to make decisions about COVID measures in our services. This leaflet outlines those decisions, and we hope will help you to understand how services will run as we return to something approaching 'normal.'

These new arrangements will be in place from Palm Sunday, 10th April 2022, to allow us to worship God as fully as we can during Holy Week and Easter.

Do I need to wear a mask?

Only if you'd like to.

We are no longer asking you to wear a mask during worship, but we remain a 'mask friendly' community. So, please do wear a face mask if you feel more comfortable; in turn, please be aware of other people's needs and maintain more social distance if someone is wearing a mask. Please do consider wearing a face covering if you have cold-like symptoms. The President and Chalice Assistant will wear a face covering during the distribution of Communion.

What measures are in place to reduce infection?

Evidence suggests that ventilating communal spaces well is one of the best ways of reducing COVID infection; we will therefore continue to keep doors and windows open in Church and for activities in the Hall.

Our services at 10 am on Sundays will still be live-streamed on YouTube (or on Zoom on the first Sunday of the month); if you are unwell you might like to consider worshipping with us this way.

Hand sanitiser will be available at the door and will be used by the Priest before distributing Communion.

Will there be a Collection?

No.

We will no longer be passing the plate during the offertory hymn. A collection bowl will be available at the back for cash (including gift aid and planned giving envelope) donations. The contactless giving machine is also available for credit and debit card donations, should you wish to give that way.

Will we exchange the Peace?

Yes.

We will be invited to share the Peace. Please be aware that there will be different levels of confidence about doing so, and we might all feel a little wary having not shaken hands for so long.

If you'd rather not shake hands, you might like to put your hands together in the 'Namaste' gesture and exchange a sign of Peace with a small bow.



How do I receive Communion?

We will receive Communion at the altar rail. Please come to the rail as we did before COVID, waiting in two lines then filling from the right (lectern side queue filling from the wall end of the rail, and pulpit side queue filling from the centre of the rail.) You are welcome to stand at the rail if it is more comfortable for you, rather than kneeling.

The common cup will be offered. If you want to receive the wine, please keep your hands raised to indicate this clearly.

If you would rather not have wine, that is absolutely fine, and please be assured that in the consecrated bread you are still receiving the full sacrament. We ask you to stay at the rail until the chalice assistant passes, with your hands lowered to indicate you don't wish

to receive. A little shake of the head might help us if there is any confusion. Please then move only after the chalice has moved on to the next person.

If you'd like a blessing rather than Communion please carry an order of service. The Priest will lay on hands during your blessing, as is tradition.

As always, we are very happy to bring Communion to you in the congregation if you have mobility challenges.

Can I intinct the wafer (dip it in the wine)?

No.

The Bishop of St Albans has made it very clear that he will not give permission to receive by intinction. Apart from being contrary to canon law, there is evidence that intincting (dipping) is a greater vector for infection than sipping from the common cup. It also makes the wine undrinkable for those with gluten intolerance. If you are wary of receiving from the common cup, please do feel free to receive in one kind (bread only).

What about other Church activities?

We follow the same principles in our other activities as in worship:

- You are welcome to wear a mask around the Church centre and are encouraged to do so if you have any cold-like symptoms.
- Rooms will continue to be well ventilated, for example at coffee time or other social and study occasions.

*If you have any questions or concerns,
please do get in touch with Lucy the Vicar.*

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