

Christ Church Duns

Moving slowly into Phase 3 easing lockdown

Dear All,

This is to bring you up to date on the latest proposals for reopening our churches, as since we wrote to you on 30 July there have been some changes in plans.

We are now in Phase 3 of the Scottish Government lockdown easing. BECG now has permission from Bishop John to begin to reopen our churches. There has been much to consider, and broadband connections need to be put in place at Christ Church. Thus, we now are aiming to provide a live ZOOM service from Christ Church Duns until a little later than hoped, on 23 August.

The pattern of Sunday services will therefore initially be as follows:

Sunday 9 August 10.45 am Zoom service, as before.

In addition, from Sunday 9 August:

4:00pm St Ebba's, Eyemouth – A Service of Communion (c.30 minutes). If you wish to attend please contact Chris Jones in advance as numbers are limited there during Phase 3.

Sunday 16 August 10.45 am ZOOM service, as before

More options from Sunday 23 August

10:45am A Service of Communion. Live from Christ Church, Duns and also via ZOOM.

Vestry is in the process of organising broadband capabilities at the church building for this purpose. We anticipate that this will be in place and tested in the week beginning 17 August. We anticipate, however, that some members of the congregation might prefer to continue to attend services in the comfort of their own homes and these will continue to be available via ZOOM.

Arrangements at Christ Church Duns. Some frequently asked questions

Q. What precautions will be taken?

A. We are planning to lay out Christ Church carefully so that social distancing is observed with at least 2 metres between individuals or households. The flow of the congregation will be carefully organised in a one-way system with appropriate markings and other signage so that physical distance between people can be maintained. There will be hand sanitiser available on both entry and exit. The church building including door handles, light switches and allocated seating etc. will be cleaned thoroughly each week before and after Sunday services. There will be no kitchen or toilet facilities except in emergencies. Please do not hug or shake hands with anyone outside your household.

Q. Will we have communion/eucharistic services in church when we re-open?

A. The Bishops' guidance is to only receive consecrated bread (but not wine) as the essential element of the communion. Bread will be served at Christ Church during the service at your seat only.

Q. Why can't we sing in church?

A. As there may be an increased risk of generating infectious aerosol droplets while singing, the playing of wind instruments etc., there will be no live singing in the church building until conditions ease though it will be possible to sing along at home via ZOOM. There will however be music played on the organ, as appropriate.

Q. Do I have to come to church in person to join a service or will there continue to be ZOOM services?

A. No-one should feel pressurised to come to a service in the church building. No-one who is self-isolating or shielding will be invited to undertake functions in church that are contrary to the latest Scottish Government and NHS Guidelines.

This allows us, safely and in a careful and considered way, to slowly re-introduce services back into our buildings. As before, we will send out the hymn sheet and lists of readings along with the links to the zoom services. Details will also be posted each week on our website (<http://www.christchurchduns.org/index.asp?pageid=683800>) or you can contact Reverend Chris Jones for joining instructions.

Q. Will the usual congregation fit into our church? Is there a cap on numbers attending in person?

A. Christ Church has a physical distancing cap of 22 members of the congregation. A steward will be on-hand at all church services to direct you to your seat and ensure social distancing measures are correctly observed.

Q. Should I come to church?

A. Please be responsible. If you have any symptoms such as a high temperature, cough, cold or any flu-like symptoms **do not** come to church, but immediately self-isolate and ensure that any contacts are immediately informed as part of the government's 'track and trace' initiative. If you become unwell with Covid-9 symptoms in church you should immediately return home and follow public health advice. In an emergency, if someone is taken seriously ill or their life is thought to be at risk, a 999 call will be made immediately.

We must remember, if one congregation is required to self-isolate because of one suspected case then it may mean that all of the congregations within the Berwickshire Group will need to self-isolate (as our Rector will be involved across all services). This would potentially mean all services would then only be available remotely via ZOOM for any period of isolation.

Q. Will BECG be enabling contact tracing?

A. Yes. Places of worship will maintain limited records of those attending public worship or those working there, in line with government guidelines.

Q. Can people who are 'vulnerable' (including those who are over 70, or have been shielding) come to church or carry out duties associated with a return to worship in church in Phase 3?

A. Yes. The regulations about those who were shielding have now changed. In line with Scottish Government guidance, people in these groups are in general now able to follow the same advice as the wider public. It is up to you to judge what activities you are confident to undertake but we advise you to err on the side of caution.

Q. Should I wear a face covering?

A. Yes. These are now mandatory in places of worship, unless you are in an exempted category. Please bring, and wear, a face covering during the service, removing it just to receive the bread at communion.

Q. Will we be using hymn books and paper liturgies?

A. No. Church prayer books, hymn books and Bibles will not be available in church. We will give people a service book which they can take home and bring each time they attend. In addition, all soft furnishings including kneelers and hassocks have been removed until lockdown eases.

Q. Will there be a plate collection at church services?

A. Yes. However, this will be by means of a plate left at the back of the church. An opportunity to donate!

Q. Can I give my neighbour (who is not in my household) a lift to church?

A. No. This is not permitted under guidelines as issued by the SEC on 4 August.

Q. Can we serve refreshments after the service?

A. No. These will not be offered before or after the service in line with the guidelines. Instead, you may choose to bring your own bottles of water or other refreshments if you wish to drink, socially distanced outside after the service.

These guidelines inevitably, in the case of Covid-19, err on the side of caution.

As we find we are able to review this pattern of services we will let you know in advance of the changes we will be making.

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Web-site: www.christchurchduns.org