

20 July 2021



The Diocese of  
Southwark

# Post COVID-19 restrictions and the liturgy

## Some frequently asked questions

### How many people can we have in church?

You can have as many people as your church can hold **BUT** should you? We recommend that you think carefully about how many you can safely accommodate. Also think about those who are more vulnerable or anxious. Is there an area that you can maintain socially distanced seating? Make sure you redo all your risk assessments before changing things.

### Do we need to wear masks?

No, you don't **BUT** why not encourage people to do so whilst infection levels are high? Some people cannot wear masks, others really hate it but most of us have become used to it. And whilst you are at it have all the doors and windows open so that there is good ventilation.

### Can we sing hymns?

Yes, you can **BUT** why not consider a gentle reintroduction? Perhaps an offertory hymn to begin with as we all get used to singing again, and a Responsorial Psalm if you do them. Don't forget how wonderful it has been going outside and singing, it's a powerful witness. So why stop doing it whilst the sun is shining?

### Can we physically share the Peace?

Yes, we can **BUT** remember there may be some people who don't want to shake hands or be hugged. We have become used to distance. So, we need to respect each other and not put each other under pressure to 'conform'.

### Do I need to continue to keep the ciborium covered during the consecration?

No, you don't have to **BUT** initially you may choose to do so until we feel more relaxed about the rates of infection.

### Should I still administer in silence and with a mask on?

You don't have to **BUT** you may wish, for instance, to wear a mask but say the words of administration to each person and for them to reply.

### What about the chalice, the Common Cup?

You can share the chalice **BUT** this may be an area of our corporate life where we really have to think carefully and move slowly. There may well be people who whilst missing receiving the Precious Blood will be anxious about doing so. They may feel a lot of pressure to receive the cup unless we can make it easy for people to make their own decision. So here are some ideas.

- Preach or talk about it in preparation, don't just reintroduce it. There is a great opportunity to do some amazing teaching about this element of the sacrament that we can easily take for granted.
- When you are ready, use standing stations rather than a rail to administer and position the person with the cup at some distance from the person with the bread. This allows people to move past without receiving and without being obvious or embarrassed at the altar rail.

- Make sure that you use a purificator to cleanse the rim of the chalice in between each person.
- Discourage people from holding the chalice themselves to avoid cross-contamination.
- As the Canons of the Church of England require us to consume any remaining sacrament - it cannot be poured down the sink or on to the ground - make sure that you only consecrate the amount you need and if you are running short top it up with water before you run out.
- If you would normally ask servers or vergers or other ministers to abluete the chalices talk to them about how they feel about this. Don't assume they will be comfortable about it.

### **Can we resume our work with children and young people?**

Yes, you can **BUT** you may wish to do so in September as the new academic year begins. Whenever you choose to begin make sure those risk assessments are in place.

### **Can we stop streaming the services now?**

Yes, of course you can **BUT** is this something that you really want to end or has it become a Fresh Expression of your church's ministry, does it enable those unable to join you in church to join you nevertheless? How does streaming fit with your Access Policy? If you do decide to end it how will you share the news with those who have come to rely on it? But on the other hand, if it is not sustainable the PCC has to recognise this and be bold and honest.

### **Do we need to make all the changes on Sunday 25 July?**

You can **BUT** we advise you not to. Make one or two adjustments to indicate that we are moving forward. There is a long way to go and we need to travel together as communities and in many ways going at the speed of the most anxious and not leaving them behind, whilst encouraging one another in Christ.

You may have other questions. Please do ask them.