

Revd. Nigel Beer

St Michael's Parish Office
Church Street
CARLISLE
CA3 9DJ

Vicar of Stanwix

St. Michael's, Stanwix with St. Mark's, Belah
and Rural Dean of Carlisle

Phone: 01228 514600

email address: rev.beer@hotmail.co.uk

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Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Vicarage. I do hope that this letter finds you in good spirits and good health.

I wanted to write to you to bring you up to date with developments. There is news from the PCC meeting last week and further information about the opening up of church for Sunday worship and what you can expect if you choose to attend. We have been at work ensuring that we are following the relevant Government and Church of England guidelines and producing the required Risk Assessments.

Sunday Worship in our church buildings:

Sunday worship will start at

St Michael's on 20th September at 9.30am

St Mark's on 27th September at 11.00am.

For those of you who are not able to join us, we will be continuing with the Sunday Online Services.

As you can imagine, our worship under the restrictions of the guidelines will feel very different compared to our experience of worship prior to Covid-19. However, the Lord God has not changed and we are promised the presence of His Spirit when we gather for worship. Our task is to worship from our hearts whatever the form of worship and in spite of the restrictions in place.

What to Expect:

On arrival: there may be a queue of people waiting to enter the building. Please maintain a social distance of 2m at all times, both in the church grounds and in the church building.

Face Coverings: These should be worn inside the church building at all times, unless you are exempt. Please see the detailed guidance below.

Contact Details: We are required to take contact details of everyone who attends worship for Test and Trace purposes. If you are on the Electoral Roll of the church, a note of your name will be made on entry. Otherwise your name **and** a contact telephone number will be requested. This information will be kept for 21 days and then securely disposed of.

In Church: Please maintain social distancing, use the hand sanitiser provided and follow the directions of the Sidespeople. There is a one way system in church and seating has been marked out to maintain social distancing as much as possible. It might not be possible for you to sit in

your usual place in the church, but if you come with people from your household you will be able to sit together.

Children's Activities: For the first few weeks we will not be having separate children's activities. We hope to start with these at St Michael's on 11th October.

Singing: You may be aware that congregation singing is not yet permitted. There may be music and singing by our musicians. Otherwise, pre-recorded music will be used during the service.

Holy Communion: Initially our services will follow a Morning Prayer format. We will introduce communion in due course.

At the end of the service: Please leave the building promptly from the front of church as directed. Unfortunately, there will not be the opportunity for refreshments or lingering for conversation while the current guidelines are in place.

Toilets: Toilet facilities will be available.

PCC Notes:

The notes from the latest PCC meeting (held remotely by the wonders of Zoom software) are included with this letter. If you have any questions about these notes or any matter you wish PCC members to discuss at a future meeting, please do let me know.

Online Giving:

The PCC has updated Parish website so that you are now able to use an online giving facility to give to the work of God in the parish.

Go to <https://www.stanwixchurch.org.uk>

On the 'ABOUT' tab, go down to STEWARDSHIP AND GIVING and follow the link to the relevant page. You can give to either St Michael's or St Mark's with a one off donation or to make a regular payment.

With my prayers for your safety and wellbeing at this time.

Yours in the love of Christ Jesus,

Nigel Beer

Church of England COVID-19 Advice on Face Coverings (summary)

1. Should I wear a face covering in a church building?

Face coverings are currently mandatory on public transport and in a range of indoor venues including places of worship and church halls. While there are exemptions, outlined below, **this is a legal requirement.**

2. What is a face covering?

A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face.

These are different from surgical and other face masks that are part of PPE used in health and social care settings. We do not recommend the use of PPE in church buildings other than for specialist cleaning activities.

3. Why should we wear face coverings?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can spread predominantly by droplets and perhaps aerosols (which can linger in the air) from coughs, sneezes and speaking. The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering can reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets and aerosols in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they are not a replacement for physical distancing and regular hand washing.

4. Who is exempt from wearing a face covering?

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

- Those who are leading services or events in a place of worship, and those who assist them (for instance by reading, preaching, or leading prayer) do not always need to wear a face covering, although one should be worn especially if physical distancing cannot be maintained (i.e. distributing consumables) *This exemption does not apply to worshippers, who should wear face coverings consistent with the requirements for any other public space.*
- These exemptions are made to enable communication, particularly with those who rely on lip-reading, facial expressions or clear sound; they do not exempt clergy and other leaders from wearing face coverings in other situations or during other activities.

There are a range of other reasons for not wearing a face covering, including:

- young children under the age of 11
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- to eat or drink, but only if you need to
- to take medication
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

5. How should I wear a face covering?

A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

When wearing a face covering you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it

When removing a face covering:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not share with someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed.

6. How do I wear a face covering if distributing or receiving Holy Communion?

Face coverings should be worn by the president and anyone assisting at the time of distribution of the consecrated bread.

Face coverings need not be worn by worshippers when they consume the consecrated bread.

Congregation Notes of PCC Meeting

Thursday 3 September, 7.30pm

After welcome and opening prayer from Nigel, Daphne Libby offered to be Secretary for this meeting.

Children and Young People's Worker – Ruth Younger is now back in post and due to Covid and is working the hours necessary within the guidelines mainly via Zoom, pre-recorded online activities and detached youth work.

Community Online Development Worker – Sarah Nixon has produced a new church Facebook page and works behind the scenes preparing the Sunday YouTube service.

Opening of Churches – it was decided to open St Michael's for a 9.30 am service on 20 Sept and St Mark's will also be open for an 11 am service on 27 Sept. The online service on YouTube will continue. Children's activities propose to start on 11 October. Toilets will be open.

Slimming World has resumed at St Mark's and the Cleaning Rota group will be cleaning St Michael's.

The Mother's Union ladies have been very busy and have produced 200 Muffin Bags and over 300 small crosses for patients at the Cumberland Infirmary.

Mission Community Food Bank – the PCC voted to donate £250 to their valuable work via Holy Trinity church.

Mission Giving – a small sub-group is to meet to decide who will receive the Parish Giving for Mission for 2020.

Anna Bainbridge is off to university and the PCC agreed to give her a small gift.

Giving to church – both online giving and contactless giving are being investigated.

Bishop's Harvest Appeal – details to follow.

Memorials in St Michael's – these have been checked for safety by our architect and a contractor has been contacted to remove the broken and unsafe ones. The area concerned in church will be taped off for safety.

The next PCC meeting will be on 8 October via Zoom. The meeting closed with prayer.