

Dear Friends,

We have heard today that tighter measures will be introduced to take in most of Lancashire (excepting Blackpool) from Tuesday. As announcements are made please note:

- Public worship is NOT viewed by Government as a social activity. Public worship can continue as long as you adhere to the appropriate guidelines.
- The measures are intended to reduce social contacts between people, especially in homes. You will need to ask therefore if pastoral visiting to someone's home is essential or whether the aim of the visit can be achieved by a phone call or video call.
- As community leaders we have a key role to play in passing on measures and ensuring that people understand what is being introduced. This of course includes acting as role models ourselves.
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We will bring more news after the weekend. Meanwhile if you have concerns please email coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org

This news was pre-empted by alarming data concerning the spread of the virus in our own county. Especially in many of our urban areas, deep-seated problems involving chronic levels of poverty, low-paid and insecure work, poor and cramped housing conditions and inter-generational living are creating ideal conditions for the virus to transmit. The tasks laid before those responsible for public health are formidable.

It demonstrates the need for us to commit ourselves constantly to deep and committed prayer, our primary calling as the Church. You may be aware that Blackburn Daily Prayers has a special coronavirus intention for each day. You can subscribe to these so that they are sent direct to you by email each morning [here](#).

It's another full briefing today which includes:

- New advice and guidance from the Church of England
- Worship this Sunday
- Weekly Video Message
- Video for Day of Prayer on September 24th
- Christmas 2020 - 'Comfort and Joy'
- Have I got COVID
- Alexa meets the BCP

New Advice and Guidance from the Church of England

The Church of England Coronavirus guidance has been updated to reflect the new regulations. It makes no changes to how we offer public worship. You can find the new guidance [here](#).

Please note that this advice came before today's news for Lancashire. Any local restrictions will supersede the advice given by the CofE, particularly around home groups. If in doubt please go with the most local advice available and avoid any action which is contrary to this advice.

But here is a helpful set of new FAQs...

HOW DOES THE NEW 'RULE OF SIX' AFFECT REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES?

Public worship can continue. There is an exemption that covers places of worship making it possible for more than six people to gather for acts of communal worship. However, it is not a blanket exemption. People must not be part of a group of more than six unless they are from the same household or support bubble.

ARE PLACES OF WORSHIP EXEMPT FROM THE 'RULE OF SIX'?

There is an exemption that covers places of worship making it possible for more than six people to gather there. The exemption covers church services and as well as some other activities that take place in church buildings.

However, it is not a blanket exemption. People must not be part of a group of more than six unless they are from the same household or support bubble.

CAN BIBLE STUDY GROUPS OR HOME GROUPS NOW MEET IN PERSON?

A group can meet in someone's home as long as there are no more than six people in the house in total, including those not taking part in the group at that time. (*ed - not so for Lancashire*)

Groups can meet on church premises under the same conditions as apply to services of worship – for example people attending must not be part of a group of more than six unless they are from the same household or support bubble.

However Government guidance states:

“However, for activities and social groups where there is a significant likelihood of groups mixing and socialising (and where it will be difficult to prevent mingling and therefore breaking the law) should not take place in a community facility.”

Please take this into consideration.

[CAN A CHOIR SING DURING WORSHIP IF THERE ARE MORE THAN SIX MEMBERS?](#)

Although the congregation may not sing yet, provided adequate physical distancing can be achieved, a small choir may sing. There may be more than six members depending on whether adequate physical distancing can be achieved.

Please see our [guidance on public worship](#) for more information.

Please also see [Guidance from the RSCM](#) on the safe resumption of choral singing.

CAN A CHOIR REHEARSE?

Choirs can rehearse for a worship service in a place of worship with more than six people.

However, Government guidance suggests amateur choir rehearsals are an activity where there is a significant likelihood of groups mixing and socialising. They should therefore be carefully risk assessed.

Worship This Sunday

From this Sunday, we are beginning a series of services from different churches around the Diocese. This week we will be joining the people of St Laurence's, Chorley for a service led by Fr Neil Kelley. You can view this on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#) from 9am on Sunday.

You can also join the Cathedral community for worship from 9am on Sunday. Just go to the [Cathedral YouTube channel](#).

Weekly Video Message

This week's message is recorded by the Archdeacon of Lancaster, David Picken. You can view it [here](#).

Video for Day of Prayer for Schools on September 24

The prayer specially written for this day has been recorded by staff and students of St Christopher's School in Accrington and can be viewed [here](#). Please pass it round, share it with your school and use as you wish.

Christmas 2020 - Comfort and Joy

There may be 97 shopping days until Christmas (or fewer if we have to go back into lockdown) but the Church of England has launched its 2020 Christmas Campaign which goes under the well-chosen heading 'Comfort and Joy.' You can find out more [here](#).

We will have more ideas for Advent and Christmas nearer the time.

Have I got COVID?

With big problems confronting the test and trace programme, if you feel unwell it is worth checking if your symptoms are consistent with COVID. There is a handy guide on the BBC website [here](#).

And finally... "Alexa, let's say morning prayer"

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer is now available on internet enabled smart speakers. You will now be able to say morning and evening prayer from the comfort of your own sofa. Ask your relevant device for set up details.

The Coronavirus Email Address

If you have questions or problems, please get in touch:

coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org.

Please email if you are off work or shielding.

**Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Yours,

The Coronavirus Task Group