



Diocese of Christchurch

Anglican Centre, 10 Logistics Drive, Harewood, Christchurch 8150
PO Box 4438, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand
Telephone: 03 348 6960 · Web: www.anglicanlife.org.nz

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Directions from the Bishop's Office to all Ministry Units in the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch Effective immediately Monday 16 March 2020

Directions for Liturgy, Hospitality, Pastoral Care and Church Group ministries in the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch in response to COVID-19 to be put into effect immediately Monday 16 March, 2020.

Please note, these directions may be overridden at any time by

- *the NZ Government (especially if there is a request to cancel gatherings),*
- *the NZ Ministry of Health, or*
- *updated advice from this Diocese.*

Please note that nothing in these directions is intended to override protocols and policies of institutions in which our chaplains work in respect of hygiene, interpersonal contact, and gatherings of groups.

People who are unwell, or deemed high risk, should NOT attend church services/activities/events.

This applies to both clergy and laity, staff and all parishioners or visitors.

LITURGY

Ordinary Sunday Worship

- Each person entering worship is advised to wash their hand at home before coming to worship and on entering should be given a hand cleansing agent (preferably 60%+ alcohol content).
- At The Peace, or any other occasion for congregational greeting, people should not shake hands, hug or physically touch another person, and instead acknowledge each other with a smile, nod or bow.
- Offertory plates or bags are not to be passed around during the service. You may have a retiring or on entering collection plate available. Where possible, encourage people to give via online banking. Money counters should sanitise their hands thoroughly after counting the offertory.



The *Anglican* Church

in Aotearoa, New Zealand *and* Polynesia
Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa, ki Niu Tireni, ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa

Holy Communion

- HC is now to be distributed in one kind only – Communion bread only. Communion bread – the body of Christ – must be placed in the hand (not on the tongue) and avoid touching the recipient's hand. (Bread here = wafers, pita bread, other crumbless bread).
- Communion wine – the blood of Christ – Administration of the chalice is suspended. This includes all forms of the Chalice: the common cup, via intincture and individual cups (if used).
- Along with the usual bread to be consecrated, the presiding priest should consecrate a small amount of wine in a chalice in the usual way. The presider is the only one to consume the consecrated wine.
- Communion wine – the blood of Christ – is NOT to be distributed from individual small cups. Many hands are involved in filling, distributing and handing back individual cups, and so in terms of hygiene, this practice is just as dangerous as any other.
- All persons engaged in preparation and distribution of Holy Communion must sanitise their hands before and after preparation and/or distribution. Unless taking communion to a station in another part of the church, or to an individual unable to leave their seat, those so engaged should remain in the sanctuary area.
- It is desirable to minimise the number of persons involved in the preparation and distribution of Holy Communion. In the light of the above suspension of the common cup and of individual cups, there will normally be no need for more than two people to be so involved (the presiding priest and one other).
- Disposable gloves should be worn when transferring bread from the producer's packaging into a container used for storing the bread for the purposes of a Communion service and between Communion services.
- It is acceptable to wear disposable gloves for distributing bread but the gloves should not touch recipients' hands.
- Holy water is to be removed from fonts, stoups or other containers at the church door.
- Priests – do NOT touch children's (or adults') heads or shoulders when blessing them.
- When a priest is not available (following the rule about not be present when unwell), we advise the conducting of a service of Morning or Evening Prayer. Note that an unwell priest should not be presiding over communion bread in order that another person might lead a reserved sacrament (extended communion) service.

Communion rails and other objects

- Where possible, communicants should be encouraged to stand to receive communion and where this is not possible they should be asked not to touch the rail with their hands.
- No objects within the church, including crosses, crucifixes and images, should be kissed or unnecessarily touched. Holy Week and Good Friday services need to adapt practices to take this instruction into account. It is possible, for example, to reverence the Cross by bowing towards it and not touching it.
- Church and hall cleaning should include thorough cleaning of altar rails, door handles, light switches, microphones and the like. Particular attention needs to be given to any children's toys and anything for babies and children made available by the church in services and at other times. Frequency of cleaning may need to be increased (especially when events follow one another with less than three days between them).
- **Vestments:** for the period of this pandemic, please hang vestments in a light, airy place between uses. Where possible garments should be individualised, and not used by multiple people. Where a garment is re-used, and is within 48 hours of the previous use, a light mist of sanitizing spray around the collar and cuffs is recommended.

Baptism

- The Priest must sanitise their hands before and after making the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead.
- Where possible, if the candidate is a baby or small child, they should be held by the parents/godparents rather than the priest taking them in their own arms.
- It is preferable for water to be poured on the candidate's head using a baptismal shell, except where this is culturally inappropriate (Māori and some other Pacific Island cultures), in which case an alternative receptacle for pouring water is acceptable.
- If chrism/oil is to be used the priest should use a spoon or similar implement.
- In any event the priest should sanitise their hands before and after the baptismal act.
- Baptism by Immersion should not take place as this represents a transmission risk.

Confirmations and Ordinations

- **Confirmation Candidates:** The Bishop must sanitise their hands before and after the laying on of hands for each candidate.
- **Deacons:** The Bishop must sanitise their hands before and after the laying on of hands for each candidate.
- **Priests:** The Bishop must sanitise their hands before and after the laying on of hands for each candidate. Two priests (but not more) should be invited to join with the bishop in the laying on of hands. Those priests must sanitise their hands before and after the laying on of hands for each candidate.

Chrism/Oil

- This should be administered using a spoon or similar instrument.

Foot Washing

- This practice should not take place as it represents a transmission risk.

Home Communion

- Only in special circumstances, on the considered judgement of the Vicar or Priest in Charge should Communion be taken to the Home of a vulnerable person. Since a home is involved, there must be careful washing of hands in soapy water before and after Communion is administered.

HOSPITALITY

- Tea, coffee and cold drinks may be provided, but care should be taken to have as few people involved in preparing and distributing refreshments as possible (to avoid multiple handling of cups).
- All preparers and distributors of refreshments should wear disposable gloves.
- Food: we cannot advise the serving of food during the pandemic, however, each ministry unit needs to make responsible decisions in respect of food for gatherings. "Responsible decisions" means taking account of latest Ministry of Health advice in respect of the serving of food when people gather. In general terms, if in any doubt, please do not serve or provide food as part of church gatherings.

PASTORAL CARE

- **Self-isolation:** No pastoral visits should be undertaken to people who are self-isolating until isolation ends. However do offer phone, email or skype support. See also suggested visiting card opposite. If you deliver anything to someone self-isolating, remember to stand back 2 m from the door.
- **Home visits:** When visiting parishioners at home, wash hands before and after entering their home.
- **Home Communion:** see above under Liturgy.
- **Care facilities:** Visits to people in care homes or hospitals should follow advice from the home or hospital staff on infection control.

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

Picking up shopping Posting mail

A friendly phone call Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. #ViralKindness

CHURCH ACTIVITY GROUPS (including Sunday School, crèche and the like)

- Babies and Children represent a low risk in terms of infection from COVID-19, but by their very nature carry many cold, flus and other bugs. Keeping hands away from nose, eyes and mouth is virtually impossible, but caregivers need to pay special attention to their own hygiene, for their own sake. Being vigilant with the basics such as not leaving used tissues around or allowing children to drink from shared cups. We recognise how hard this environment is, so we ask you take all reasonable precautions, and enjoy your children without fear or undue worry.
- Toys or musical instruments that children play with during a service, or in crèche, must be cleaned after each use. You may like to rationalise the items to those easy to clean. Most children's toys can go through a dishwasher or sanitiser unit. If toys are too large for this treatment, a wipe down with antibacterial wipes and/or a spray of sanitizer is acceptable.
- Any groups that run such as Mainly Music, study groups, craft groups and the like must also follow the same "clean after each use" procedure.
- Please follow the rules as outlined in the HOSPITALITY section of this document.
- Food in a preschool environment: if families bring food for their own children, as long as this is not shared, this is acceptable.
- Sunday Schools: Talking to children in a supported way about the changes they see and experience is important. [Netmums](#) has a video resource that is simple. If you need further advice, please get in touch with Emma Tovey or Sammy Mould on the Diocesan Ministry Team..

UNDERLYING THEOLOGY

- We live and worship to the praise and glory of God.
- The people of God are called to love and care for one another, for our neighbours and even our enemies. Our love and compassion is especially directed to the vulnerable who appear, in this current situation, to be the elderly and those with existing health conditions.
- In the context of a global COVID-19 / Coronavirus Pandemic (as declared by the World Health Organisation), of many nations declaring drastic measures in order to slow down if not halt the spread of this infectious disease, and of our own nation imposing a 14 day self-isolation of all arrivals on our shores, it is incumbent

on churches to demonstrate our commitment in love for others by change in practice and custom in order to collaborate in the prevention of the spread of this disease.

- Churches together have a common task in respect of the people of God who meet for worship and in respect of all people in society and thus we adopt and adapt each other's best practice and wisdom in order to achieve common messaging in this critical time.
- With respect to Holy Communion and concerns people may have about receiving communion "in one kind" only, the following should be noted as the common mind of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, as expressed in our prayer book: *When people who desire to receive the Holy Communion are unable to do so for any other reason, their desire and such prayers as they are able to offer ensure that they do spiritually receive the body and blood of Christ.* [A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa page 729](#)

Appendix 1

Ministry of Health Advice specific to churches (as received Friday 13 March 2020)

"All faith communities should ensure that the practices that they use do not put their community at risk.

In particular, we do not recommend sharing of communion cups, or shared dipping of hands in holy water. People who are unwell should not attend, and should avoid personal contact such as shaking of hands.

Faith communities can play a role in supporting people and assist with practicing and disseminating evidence based health advice to help keep their communities safe such as through hand hygiene, social distancing and cough etiquette.

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

You may get infected by the virus if you touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

The Ministry's advice on the best way to protect yourself and others is available on our website. And this will be updated regularly with new information as it comes available/relevant."

Appendix 2

Sources for the Directions above re church liturgical, hospitality and pastoral practice

- (1) Directions for the NZ Roman Catholic Church, as circulated to NZ Anglican Dioceses, 13 March 2020.
- (2) Church of England guidelines at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>



The Right Rev'd Dr Peter Carrell
Bishop of Christchurch