

To: All Clergy, Lay Readers, Vestry Secretaries and Treasurers

Coronavirus – Additional Guidance (26 March 2020)

In light of the latest Government guidance over the coronavirus pandemic, and the number of queries being fielded by Bishops and clergy seeking clarification on certain areas, the College of Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church today issues updated guidance on how to respond. This guidance supersedes any previous guidance on the subject areas covered below.

The College of Bishops has agreed the following:

1. No weddings should take place until permitted by Scottish Government advice.
2. Church buildings may no longer be used for funerals and similarly the lying in of remains must also cease until further notice. Funerals elsewhere are permitted where those present are limited to the immediate family (or a friend in cases where no family members are attending). A distance of 2 metres must also be maintained between every household group, as per public health guidelines.
3. Baptisms should not take place in a church building, and until further notice should only take place when there is an emergency situation. If in doubt, clergy should confer with their Bishop.
4. A local resident Priest or Lay Reader may visit their churchⁱ and may only be accompanied by someone who is currently resident in the Priest's/Lay Reader's own home. That principle likewise applies to live streaming/broadcasting from a church building. Live streaming/broadcasting may be done from home (and should not involve others from outwith the Priest's/Lay Reader's home).

The Bishops thank all those for their support and assistance in adapting and responding to these unprecedented circumstances.

Blessings

+Mark Primus, and Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness and Acting Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway

+Kevin, Bishop of Argyll and The Isles

+John, Bishop of Edinburgh

+Anne, Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney

+Andrew, Bishop of Brechin

+Ian, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

ⁱ Periodic visits to church buildings which are temporarily closed are indeed advisable but should not be undertaken by those who are vulnerable or at risk. A useful checklist of points to consider in that regard has been produced by Ecclesiastical Insurance:

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/unoccupied-properties-during-covid-19/church/>