

Advice for Churches: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The following is offered as guidance to congregations across the Church of Scotland.

At Communion services, churches should already be following best hygiene practices. This includes advising parishioners with coughs and sneezes to refrain from shaking hands during The Peace, if that is part of your service, and to take only the bread if your church does not use individual cups.

If you need advice on Communion cups, or individual glasses, [please contact Brian Auld, Safe Buildings Consultant](#).

It is also best practice for churches to have hand sanitisers available for parishioners to use.

Best hygiene practice should continue to be observed in all pastoral contacts.

Updated advice is available from [NHS Scotland](#).

Whilst in places of worship, there is no need to avoid other worshipers who are well or to change normal faith practices – this includes taking alcoholic wine from the common cup.

[Public Health Scotland](#) and [the UK Government](#) recommend that you should take usual infection prevention precautions including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Churches can underline the importance of handwashing by ensuring that hand sanitisers are not available in toilets where soap and water can be used.
- It is particularly important after taking public transport to use sanitiser on your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Carry tissues to catch coughs and sneezes and bin the tissue.
- If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not attend work or school.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in church buildings.

The threat posed by COVID-19 has been assessed by the Chief Medical Officer as ‘moderate’. This permits the Scottish Government to plan for all eventualities. The risk to individuals remains low.

Travel advice

[Advice has also been issued](#) to travellers who have returned to the UK from a number of countries.

This list of countries has been revised on 25th February and now includes parts of Northern Italy.

Anyone who has returned to the UK from any of these areas in the last 14 days and develops symptoms of cough or fever or shortness of breath should immediately:

- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu.
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of your recent travel to the country.

This page will be updated when new advice becomes available from NHS Scotland and the UK Government.