

THE ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST EPHRAIM

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE

1. Services

1.1 Numbers attending services will be limited to comply with the appropriate social distancing requirements which apply. **It is important that you book your place before attending any service, and to ensure there is space available. Please do not come to any service without booking first.**

1.2 Vespers will continue to be served at 17.00 each Saturday.

1.3 Confessions will now be heard in church on Monday to Friday, by prior arrangement with the priest. **There will be no confessions on Saturday evening.**

1.4 Those wishing to attend any service on Saturday or Sunday will need to register online by 12.00 on the preceding Friday. It is important that everyone books online since we need to be able to contact those who have been in church, in the event of anyone who has attended a service over a particular weekend, showing symptoms of Covid-19. The list is retained by the parish for three weeks before it is destroyed.

1.5 A steward will monitor the names and contact information for all those attending the services.

1.6 Entry to the church will be via the South Door (on Portugal Place).

2. Ensuring safety during services

General

2.1 There will be a team of 'stewards' to assist in directing people into the church and ensuring that social distancing and other requirements are maintained. They will also be responsible for ensuring the church is cleaned, as necessary, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

2.2 Everyone attending the church is to wear a protective mask or other face covering. It is a mandatory requirement to wear a face mask in church, unless you are certified as belonging to one of the exempt categories. Details may be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

2.2.1. **Any parishioner who may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, or anyone with the symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home.**

Procedures

2.3 Upon entering the church each person is to sanitise his or her hands with hand gel provided. The toilets must be cleaned at the end of the service.

2.4 To avoid cross contamination, there will be no commemoration papers/books. Those attending the Liturgy may each submit, electronically, a maximum of 10 names of the living and 10 names of the departed, when registering their attendance at the Liturgy. People may make the usual donation when arriving at the church.

2.5 There will be no prosphora for the people to 'send up' to the altar or receive at the end of the Liturgy.

2.6 To avoid cross contamination, Candles will be available for sale, in bundles of 10, rather than individually.

2.7 There must be no physical contact between worshippers in the church. Two metres social distancing is to be observed, as far as possible. Family members should stand together and space will need to be adjusted accordingly, under the supervision of a steward. Parents remain responsible for the behaviour of their children in church.

2.8 For the immediate future, there must be no kissing of icons, the Gospel, the Cross or the hand of the priest. Veneration of icons, the Gospel and the Cross must only be by making the sign of the Cross as usual, then bowing to the icon but not kissing it.

2.9 The choir will consist of a maximum of four people. They will stand at the front of the church, about three metres from the foot of the steps, and will maintain social distancing, as far as possible.

2.10 Each family is asked to come to Holy Communion as a group. The Body and Blood of Christ will be given using individual metal spoons, which will be sanitised after the Liturgy, by being boiled or steamed for a minimum of ten minutes.

2.11 Zipifka will be available. One of the stewards, wearing latex gloves, will pour a small amount into individual paper cups. The cups should be disposed of after use into a bin which will be placed by the table. The cups will be put into the recycling bin outside the church after the service.

2.12. The inside and outside vestry door will remain open, as far as possible, to assist ventilation of the building.

3. Ensuring safety after services

3.1 At the end of the service, directed by a Steward, the people should walk two metres apart, towards the front of the nave, back up the north aisle, and leave the church via the west door - at the back of the church. Unless you intend to help with 'taking down' icons and removing pews, do not remain in the Church. Leave the building promptly and do not loiter outside the church i.e maintain social distancing.

3.2 There will be no Coffee Hour or Church School until further notice.

3.3 When counting cash at the end of the service, those involved must wear latex gloves. A sheet of paper, or something similar, should be placed on the surface on which the money is being counted to avoid contamination from the cash.

3.4 Following the Divine Liturgy each Sunday, the Stewards will supervise the cleaning of all door handles, railings and surfaces using anti-bacterial cleansing wipes. They will also remove the cups used for zipifka, paper from the tray etc.