

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Administration of Holy Communion

This risk assessment is based on guidance issued by the Church of England which can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

It should be used in conjunction with the Church of England Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public a template for which can be found under 'Documents' on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#) and needs to be completed before embarking on this risk assessment, which specifically addresses additional risks that arise during the administration of Holy Communion

In creating this document, specific reference should be made to the Church of England document [COVID-19 Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion](#).

Underlying Assumptions for this Risk Assessment

The transmission of COVID-19 is thought to occur mainly through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through contact with contaminated surfaces. The amount of time that the virus can survive on a surface is variable, but 72 hours is commonly considered to be a maximum.

The recommended mitigations for avoiding transmission are:

- Frequent hand washing
- Social distancing (2 metres)
- Removal/avoidance or cleaning of surfaces
- Wearing of face covering (to reduce the possibility of contaminating others)
- Good ventilation

Before undertaking the service, the Minister should confirm that they have read and will follow the guidance on the following pages.

Introduction: extract from Church of England 'Covid-19 Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion'.

Hygiene measures to be followed when handling the Eucharistic elements

Government guidance indicates that ministers should not speak over uncovered 'consumables'. In practice, this means that while the president can speak the words of the Eucharistic Prayer over bread and wine that he or she alone will consume, bread that will be consumed by other communicants must remain covered until being distributed (e.g. wafers in a ciborium with the lid on or covered by a pall, or bread on a paten covered by a purificator or other cloth).

For the time being we encourage the use of individual communion wafers or bread that has already been divided rather than large wafers or loaves of bread that are broken and shared, as this practice minimises the physical contact the president will have with the elements. It is also advised that the president be the only person to handle the wafers or bread during the distribution, unless there are very large numbers, and that individual communicants should not pass around wafers or bread.

If others assist in preparing the elements before or during the service, then hand hygiene and physical distancing precautions should apply. Offertory processions where the bread and wine are brought to the Communion table are not recommended at this time.

When the president takes the bread and wine before the Eucharistic Prayer, it is recommended that this takes place in silence. If words are said when the bread and wine are taken into the hand, only the elements that the president will receive are taken (the other elements being covered).

At the fraction (breaking of the bread), only the consecrated bread that the president will receive is broken during the words ('We break this bread...' 'Every time we eat this bread...') accompanying that action. The remainder of the bread remains covered. If other consecrated bread needs to be broken before it is administered, this must be done in silence or while the Agnus Dei is said by the congregation and after the priest has sanitized their hands.

At the invitation to communion, if the consecrated bread and wine are shown to the people, only the piece of consecrated bread or wafer that the president will receive is shown while speaking the words of invitation.

At the giving of Communion, the president receives Communion in both kinds. The words of distribution ('The body and blood of Christ' or 'The body and blood of Christ keep you in eternal life' or the Order Two/BCP words of distribution) are spoken to the congregation, and all who intend to receive say, 'Amen'.

At the distribution, Holy Communion is administered in silence. The consecrated bread or wafer will need to be dropped into the hands of communicants.

Church: St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Date completed:	Date approved by PCC:
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What is the general risk?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What is the specific risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks? (refer to C of E guidance where possible)	Who needs to ensure this action is carried out?	Done
Risk of Minister not following the Church of England guidelines	Guidelines are referenced or copied in this document	Risk that Minister does not have the most up to date information	Minister to confirm that they have read and will follow the guidance in this document.	Minister	
Risk of virus transmission by touching an infected person	Social distancing	Risk of touching an infected person while exchanging the Peace	Congregation to be reminded that there should be no sharing of the Peace through physical contact.	Minister	
	Social distancing	Risk of touching an infected person while taking communion	Communicants should form a line maintaining 2 metres' distance to receive the bread, standing, from the priest.	Minister and churchwardens	
	Face coverings	Impossibility for minister to maintain social distancing while administering the bread	The risk associated with this is relatively low, especially if face-coverings are worn (see later section). Where either priests or parishioners are uncomfortable with this, it is important that no pressure is placed on priests to preside at Holy Communion or on parishioners to receive the Sacrament.	Minister	

What is the general risk?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What is the specific risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks? (refer to C of E guidance where possible)	Who needs to ensure this action is carried out?	Done
	Hand sanitising	Risk of minister touching an infected person while administering communion	Hand sanitiser to be available for the minister along with the elements etc. The minister should avoid touching the communicants' hands when administering communion. If touching occurs, the minister will re-sanitise their hands immediately.	Churchwardens and Minister	
Risk of virus transmission by touching an infected object	Covering 'consumables'	Risk of contaminating the bread	Bread that will be consumed by other communicants must remain covered until being distributed	Minister	
	Minimise physical contact with 'consumables'	Risk of contaminating the bread	The minister should set up the elements. Individual communion wafers to be used.	Minister	
	Hand sanitising	Risk of contaminating the bread	The minister should sanitise their hands before setting up the Communion Table and again before administering the consecrated wafer.	Minister	
	Hand sanitising	Risk of contaminating the bread	Each communicant should be asked to sanitise their hands before receiving the wafer, and again afterwards, to reduce the risk of then	Minister and Churchwardens	

What is the general risk?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What is the specific risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks? (refer to C of E guidance where possible)	Who needs to ensure this action is carried out?	Done
			touching anything with contaminated hands.		
	Removal/avoidance or cleaning of surfaces	Risk of contaminating the wine	Communion should be administered in one kind only with no sharing of the common cup. Only the minister should set up the cup.	Minister	
	Removal/avoidance or cleaning of surfaces	Risk of touching altar rail	Communicants should stand (not kneel) at the altar rail		
Risk of virus transmission by breathing in infected airborne droplets	Face covering	Risk of someone transmitting the virus by coughing or sneezing	The government has made the wearing of face masks mandatory for the congregation in places of worship from 8 August 2020. The minister should wear a face covering for the administration of the bread.		
	Good ventilation	Risk of virus circulating in the building.	During service main door to be open if weather conditions allow, with the temporary netting in place to prevent entry of birds.		