



United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough Reopening of Church Buildings for Public Worship

We have reached a point where we can now look forward to reopening our church buildings for public worship and begin to connect again as church communities. How we gather will be quite different from what we are used to. To support parishes, the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough Reopening of Church Buildings for Public Worship Guidelines have been prepared following consultation with the parishes in the dioceses to provide guidance for parishes as we start to reopen church buildings for public worship. These diocesan guidelines are in addition to The Church of Ireland return to in-church worship protocols (issued on Friday 5th June). Decisions taken must at all times be informed by the Governments' road map including road map updates <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/> and guidelines on return to work protocols <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/> along with all current health guidelines issued by the Government, HSE, or the National Public Health Emergency Team. There are also a number of resources available on the Health and Safety Authority website including signage <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/>. In the early stages of return we will be feeling our way. At the same time there is a range of baseline requirements for which we all need to adhere in line with the HSE guidelines.

These guidelines which are in the form of checklists have been prepared by the archbishop, the archdeacons and the staff of the diocesan office following consultation with the clergy of the dioceses. This document is concerned with the reopening of church buildings for public worship and separate consideration by select vestries must be given in relation to the reopening of parish premises for other parish activities.

The reopening of church buildings for public worship is only possible if and when it can be done safely and by minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19, therefore there is no pressure for all churches in the dioceses to be ready to reopen for public worship on 29th June. Churches should only reopen when the incumbent and select vestry feel they can do so safely, even if that requires taking additional time. Everyone is in a position to make a personal contribution to our return to church. You can do this by washing your hands before coming to church and on returning home and by carrying your own hand sanitizer and tissues as a regular norm.

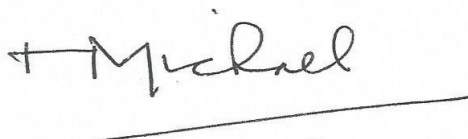
It is the responsibility of the incumbent or other officiating member of the clergy in charge, along with the select vestry to ensure that churches are only reopened if it can be done safely. Expert advice should be sought where necessary.

You are strongly encouraged to seek information from your insurer directly to clarify that the Select Vestry is covered for any claims.

These checklists are not exhaustive. Select Vestries may feel that more is required in order to open safely but this gives a starting point to be in a position to consider reopening on or after 29th June. If you have further helpful suggestions you might like to let us know.

This is an encouragement to use the summer months as a time of getting going, our hope is that each parish will have a stronger sense of what can be done and what can be sustained by September 1st. We are still in a phase of easing restrictions nationally. For this period you are encouraged to keep services shorter than we may have been accustomed to (eg 30 minutes).

Separate documents will be issued by the House of Bishops in relation to a return to Holy Communion, Baptism and Funerals.



Archbishop of Dublin
15th June 2020:

Step 1	Action	Comment
<p>Have all pre-return to work protocols been completed?</p>	<p>1. Has a Parish Covid-19 Implementation Team been established, as is required, and a Lead Representative been identified? (ie Rector & Churchwardens).</p>	
	<p>2. Have all employees and office holders (including Clergy) completed a COVID-19 Return to Work Form (Appendix 1).</p>	
	<p>3. Have those with responsibility for the reopening of your church been familiarised with the necessary steps required to ensure the safety of parishioners and themselves during worship.</p>	
	<p>4. Secure an appropriate supply of signage, cleaning/sanitising materials and accessories and items necessary for everyone's protection.</p>	
	<p>5. Provide clear advice as to who should not attend for their own safety and safety of others– e.g. those in at-risk groups or people who may have come in contact with COVID-19.</p>	

Step 2	Action	Comment
<p>Social/physical distancing</p>	<p>6. Having considered the most up-to-date advice on physical distancing, what is the number of people that can be accommodated safely in your parish church(s).</p>	
	<p>7. How and by whom will this be managed (ie Churchwardens or 'greeters')?</p>	
	<p>8. How will this be communicated to parishioners, preferably in advance?</p>	
	<p>9. Has advice on social/physical distancing in the church grounds and car parks been communicated?</p>	

Step 2	Action	Comment
	10. Is there appropriate clear signage to communicate social/physical distancing?	

Step 3	Action	Comment
Maintenance and Hygiene	11. Who will maintain and replenish hand sanitizers?	
	12. Parish Prayer Books, Hymn Books and lectern Bibles should be removed from churches during this time. Parishioners should not bring their own prayer book. Those attending worship are to be encouraged to bring their service sheet away with them and not leave in the church.	
	13. Ventilation – can door(s) and/or windows be left open to allow for greater ventilation during services?	
	14. What mechanism has been put in place for taking church collections (many parishioners can be encouraged to set up standing orders and retiring collection at every service)?	
	15. Has a process been put in place to ensure the regular cleaning and ventilation of churches, including after every gathering?	
	16. The use of face-coverings will at any time be dependent on the current advice from State agencies.	

Step 4	Action	Comment
Entering church	17. Single point of entrance to avoid unnecessary circulation and to minimise movement. Where the layout of the church allows separate doors should be designated for entering and exiting the building using a one-way system. Bottlenecks should be avoided.	
	18. Where possible, you are encouraged to fill seats in order, starting from those furthest from the entrance.	

Step 5	Action	Comment
During service	19. Avoid unnecessary movement around the church.	
	20. The inclusion of singing will at any time be dependent on the current advice from State agencies.	
	21. No physical exchange of The Peace.	
	22. Ensure that those reading lessons or leading prayers have been given these on a separate sheet in advance, are seated close the microphones and do not to touch any surface when reading (ie microphone, lectern etc)	

Step 6	Action	Comment
Leaving church	23. Use a single door to preserve one-way traffic	
	24. Leave by pew, nearest exit door first	
	25. Avoid bottlenecks on departure (eg door and car park)	
	26. Worshipers are to be instructed to 'leave no trace' and take everything home with them.	

Step 7	Action	Comment
Contact tracing	27. An appropriate system, in compliance with GDPR, must be put in place to record attendance and communicated to all attending worship.	

Step 8	Action	Comment
After the service	28. Post-service tea & coffee cannot be provided. The reasoning behind this should be explained ahead of the churches opening.	
	29. In compliance with HSE guidelines arrange for appropriate cleaning to be carried out as soon as possible after each act of worship.	
	30. Additional cleaning will need to be considered when facilitating funerals/weekday baptisms/weddings (NB In compliance with HSE guidelines COVID-19 relating funerals should continue to be conducted solely in the church yard)	

Services and other 'remote' spiritual supports should continue to be provided for parishioners who cannot attend church in person.

Thank you for your continued compliance in our joint effort to return to church.

Appendix 1

COVID-19 Return to Work Form

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, all officiating clergy readers and church office holders must complete and sign this form before returning to work. The signed form is to be retained by the parish clergy.

N.B. Every question **must** be answered.

Name:	Role:
Church & Parish:	
Question	Yes / No
1. Do you have symptoms of COVID-19 either now or in the past 14 days. Current guidelines suggest these symptoms include cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms.	
2. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?	
3. Are you aware that you have been in close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?	
4. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?	
5. Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon/shield at this time?	
6. Please provide details below of any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the above, which may need to be considered to allow your safe return to work. Further information on people at higher risk from Coronavirus can be accessed https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html .	

*if you are unsure whether or not you are in an at-risk category, please check the information at the link in Question 6.

Print Name:.....

Signature.....Date:.....

Your personal data will be processed fairly, transparently and lawfully in accordance with data protection legislation. Your personal data will only be used for the reasons outlined above and will be kept confidential, safe and secure. Should your information change after you complete and submit this form, please inform the incumbent, employer, bishop or diocesan secretary as appropriate