# Chapel and Covid – guidance for the Autumn Term 2021

Though we hope and pray that the worst of the pandemic has passed in the UK, Coronavirus has not gone away, and in our practices for worship in chapel we will need to tread the difficult line between making the most of our current freedoms, whilst also taking account of the needs of those who are still particularly vulnerable (or who care for others who are at risk).

This document gives some guidance about our plans for chapel this term. Those plans will be under constant review, and will, no doubt, be adjusted as we progress through the term. They may also be affected by further Government guidance or restrictions, and by advice from our churches.

Each of us will also have experience from our own local church, and it is important to remember that different churches are also taking different approaches. What follows tries to take account of the particular needs of the communities at Queen’s and our particular building.

#### Seating

In the main body of the chapel we have increased the distance between the rows and introduced more gaps in the front row. We encourage people to leave spaces when choosing where to sit, when the numbers in chapel make that possible. Those who lead services should put out hymnbooks and/or service sheets (when used) in such a way as to encourage people to spread out.

The inner row of chairs in the apse (at the far end of chapel) have been deliberately spaced with gaps between them, so that those who feel particularly vulnerable have choices about how close to others to sit.

#### Ventilation

The windows in the chapel are currently open – and will remain so until the temperature outside makes that completely unbearable. While the weather is warm, leave the main doors open during services – or close the inner doors but leave the outer door open.

#### Masks

Though we will generally not be asking people to wear face coverings on the campus, we *will* be asking people to wear them in chapel (for now), and spare masks will be available in chapel as you enter. Masks can be removed by those who are leading/preaching/doing Bible readings or prayers, etc.

#### Sanitiser

A foot-operated sanitiser dispenser will be located in the entrance lobby for use as you enter and leave chapel. A further bottle will be available in the vestry.

#### Singing

Because we will be wearing masks in chapel, we *will* be singing, though possibly not as much initially as we might normally have done.

#### Physical contact

For now, we will continue to share the peace in non-contact ways – so we will not be shaking hands or hugging one another.

At the end of services, the leader and preacher may still greet people at the door as they leave, but they will *not* be shaking hands with members of the congregation.

#### Holy Communion

Practice varies hugely from church to church:

* Some churches are still offering only the bread at Holy Communion (often using either wafers, or bread that has been pre-cut into portions);
* Some churches are offering the bread (a wafer) dipped in the wine (sometimes called ‘intinction’) – though with the leader dipping the bread, not the communicant;
* Some churches that are used to receiving the wine in individual cups have started to do so again;
* Some churches which are used to sharing a common cup have restored this, whilst accepting that not everyone will want to receive the wine at the moment;
* Some churches may be using pre-packaged disposable communion cups, containing wine/juice and a wafer.

Our plan is to be cautious, for the sake of those who are most at risk. We expect to use a variety of approaches across the term and the year, and those choices may be affected by numbers and other factors. Our initial plan is to begin with offering just the bread at Holy Communion, and then to explore other patterns as the term progresses.

We will continue our commitment to making sure that whenever bread is offered, there is gluten-free provision.

Mark Earey - Revised 8th September 2021