

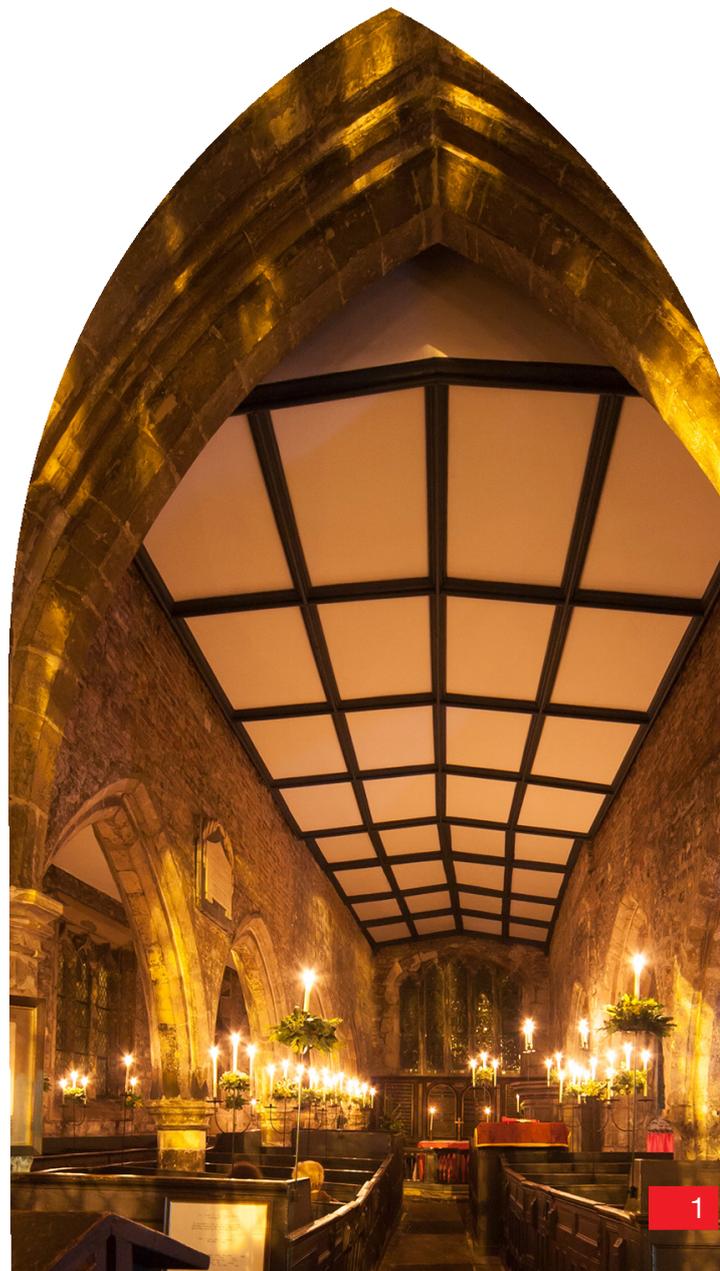
Events fact sheet 4: Holding religious services

It will be no surprise that one of the common events held in CCT churches are religious services! In putting together this Factsheet, we have followed the guidance provided by the Church of England. Sometimes, you will require more detail than we can provide here, and we have included useful hyperlinks where this is the case.

Holding a general service

The minister (often known as the Incumbent, priest or vicar) holding the service is responsible for ensuring that the Church of England guidelines are adhered to, including supporting the NHS Test and Trace system. Until all Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, there are some specific things that you and the minister will need to think about when planning the service:

- For general services of worship, including led prayers, capacity limits should be decided locally using a risk assessment that ensures that the rules on social distancing and households mixing can be maintained. Please our website for the current rules.
- Cash for service collections should be gathered in a receptacle that is set in one place and handled by one individual, as opposed to being passed around.
- For advice on singing, please refer to the guidance provided by the Church of England linked [here](#)
- For advice on Holy Communion, please refer to the guidance provided by the Church of England linked [here](#)
- Where the organ is in a playable condition it can be played for services, practice and general maintenance, but should be appropriately cleaned before and after use i.e. all contact point such as keys and knobs.





Holding a wedding

The wedding couple are responsible for ensuring that the ceremony complies with any Covid-19 guidelines in place, and for ensuring compliance with the NHS Test and Trace system whilst this remains in place

- Whilst restrictions remain in place, numbers attending weddings will be dictated by the maximums set out in each stage of the Government's Roadmap, but maybe less depending on the numbers of people that a specific church can accommodate safely. This maximum number covers all those at the ceremony, including the couple, witnesses and guests. It also includes any workers who are not employed by the church such as photographers. It does not include those employed by the Church of England, such as the priest and organist.
- The minister must follow Church of England advice on conducting the marriage ceremony safely
- Whilst guidance on social distancing and hand hygiene remains in place, all those signing the register should sanitise their hands before signing, complete all the signatures necessary for them and then sanitise them again. Apart from the bride and groom, all those signing should maintain physical distancing if practicable and, where available, individual pens for each signatory should be used.

Holding a funeral

CCT is very conscious that funerals bring to the fore one of the most difficult tensions that exist between human need and the demands to control the Covid-19 pandemic. Please be aware that our standards for funerals at this challenging time are based on Government guidance and CCT will be managing the expectations and needs of those who mourn, while at the same time following good practice to support the safety of the whole community.

- Whilst restrictions remain in place, numbers attending funerals will be dictated by the maximums set out in the Government's Roadmap, though this may need to be less depending on the numbers of people that a specific church can accommodate safely.
- The funeral director is responsible for ensuring that the funeral complies with the guidelines and, whilst it remains in place, for collecting data on all attendees for retention of 21 days to support the NHS Test and Trace system.
- The minister must follow Church of England advice on conducting the funeral service, and burial service where relevant
- While it is contrary to human instinct and challenging to adhere to, it is important that whilst social distancing guidelines remain in place there should be no physical contact, including shaking hands, hugging or kissing between mourners outside their own households
- Burials in Trust churchyards may continue to take place during this time. The burial of ashes is permitted, but it may be best to delay this until Government restrictions are lifted and families are able to gather. If either does go ahead, similar advice will apply with regard to social distancing and hygiene, and managing the numbers of mourners





Holding a baptism

Baptisms can happen as part of a communal service, or as a private ceremony.

- If a family wishes to have their baptism as a private ceremony then the attendees must follow the rules on social distancing and household mixing whilst these remain in place.
- If the baptism is happening within the course of communal worship - a service at which the general public can attend, not just an invited group, and normally referring to an advertised regular act of worship - then the numbers who can attend need to be assessed for the building to determine how many it can hold safely with physical distancing.
- The person being baptised is responsible for ensuring that the service complies with these guidelines, and for ensuring compliance with the NHS Test and Trace system whilst this remains in place. In the case of a child being baptised this responsibility rests with the parents/carer.
- Everyone must adhere to the Government guidance on physical distancing whilst this remains in place.
- The minister must follow Church of England guidance on performing the baptism service safely

Bell Ringing

Bell ringing can take place in CCT Churches. If you would like to ring bells, please contact a member of staff, usually your Local Community Officer, for specific guidance.

