

This news release may not reflect our latest advice and guidance.

Please visit our dedicated Coronavirus (COVID-19) page to view our most up to date advice and guidance.

Clergy are being advised not to share the chalice and to encourage worshippers not to shake hands during the 'Sign of the Peace' in services, as part of updated guidance on coronavirus issued by the Church of England.

A letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York advises priests to suspend the use of the shared chalice – known as the 'common cup' - as well as physical contact during the sharing of the peace when traditionally worshippers turn to each other during a service and shake hands.

The Archbishops are also advising that priests should suspend direct physical contact as part of a blessing or 'laying on of hands'.

The Archbishops say that from today when they preside at Communion services in their official residences – Lambeth Palace in London and Bishopthorpe in York – they will give communion in one kind only – bread – and they will not share the peace or lay on hands for blessings.

In their letter, they call for prayers and pay tribute to the 'dedication, expertise and hard work' of health service staff and those in leadership roles in the face of the continued increase in the number of Covid-19 cases.

They urge communities to pay particular attention to the needs of the elderly, the vulnerable and the isolated.

"We want to assure you all of our prayers and thoughts as across the country, communities consider what steps they can take to care and support one another," they tell clergy in the letter.

"We are certain that plans are being made around the country to care in particular for the elderly, vulnerable and the isolated; it is crucial that we give attention to those most at risk."

The Archbishops' letter adds to advice already issued by the Church of England to parishes on coronavirus. Churches have been encouraged to download and display the NHS poster '*Catch it, Bin, it Kill it*' on coughs and sneezes and to follow Public Health England advice on washing hands.

Parishes have been advised to place hand sanitisers in church entrances for congregations to use before the start of services and ensure ministers of the Eucharist (Communion) sanitise their hands before and after distributing communion.

Read the Archbishops' letter in full.

Full guidance from the Church of England on coronavirus.

Communion

a) the sacramental sharing of bread and wine by the faithful, following the example given in the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples; b) a service in which Holy Communion is received.

Intinction

The action of dipping the bread in the wine at a Eucharist so that a communicant receives both together.

Communion in one kind

Taking communion through only receiving the bread and not the wine.

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