



hes, and all who have made sacrifices to help protect one another

s on Thursday.

Bishop Sarah, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, was speaking as new advice was published by the Church of England ahead of Thursday's change of national rules.

She said: "When the first measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 were introduced in March 2020, few would have imagined that we would still be making adaptations to the way we live our lives – including our worship – almost two years on.

"It has been a very challenging time.

"People have made huge sacrifices to protect one another – not only those they know and love but strangers they might never meet. We've learnt again as society something of what it means to love our neighbour, as Jesus taught.

"And it has certainly not been without cost.

"The loneliness and isolation many have experienced; the impact on people's mental health; the lost jobs and failed businesses and strained relationships must not be overlooked.

"Yet, terrible as the toll from this virus has been, and continues to be, the actions people have taken have saved lives and prevented countless infections, with all the potential long-term consequences that could go with them.

"We may never know what good has been done.

"So as we can begin to look forward with cautious hope, we once again thank those who have done so much to protect us all - particularly our NHS, carers and other front line workers.

"I want to thank everyone who has made sacrifices for others. I think particularly of younger people who, though often least at risk, have sometimes given up the most.

"And I want especially to thank our clergy, parish volunteers and congregations for all you are doing - not simply to keep worship going, but to innovate with bold and remarkable new ways of doing so; reaching new people and, of course, serving your communities.

"As 'plan B' restrictions come to an end the future remains uncertain and we must continue to be cautious. In our churches government rules have been eased but I would still encourage congregations to consider what mitigation can best protect others.

"As we look now towards spring and the vivid demonstration of new life it offers us, my prayer is that we won't forget what we've learnt; that we take this opportunity to thank others and that we look with hope to the future."

More information

- [Covid-19 advice](#)

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