

From your Bishops

Only if you are able and it is safe to do so

"Proceed with caution: risk assessment, strict social distancing, restrained liturgy and an emphasis on safety."

That was Bishop Nicholas' advice to clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers in respect of the latest guidance from the Church of England, [here](#).

In his 17th Ad Clerum since the coronavirus outbreak began, Bishop Nicholas said:

"I underline again that no church has to open again for public worship this Sunday if its resources do not allow it to do so safely. As the Church in our communities, we have a duty to set a good example of a responsible approach to the easing of lockdown.

"I hope that we may continue to work together exchanging ideas and other resources on how we go about this."

Writing about how worship will be different under the restrictions imposed by the Government, Bishop Nicholas said:

"It is possible now to celebrate the Eucharist again but in one kind only. Canon law militates against the use of individual cups and, in any event, our Anglican theology encourages the use of 'one cup'. If you do celebrate the Eucharist, great care will be needed.

"The guidance advises against singing at the moment but, as you may have seen on the national television news, our own cathedral choir has been engaged in helping Porton Down to reach a conclusion on the safety of singing."

And addressing enquires about outdoor worship, he said:

"I think that a point to note here is that the guidance that will apply will depend upon whether the space to be used is public space, private space or part of the 'place of worship', the definition of which in the government guidance includes 'surrounding grounds, for example, adjoining car parks, courtyards or gardens for which the venue managers are also responsible'.

"I think that the first and second spaces will allow for only very small gatherings under current government general guidance while the last may, for some, present opportunities."

Finally addressing the strains many of those in our ministry teams have been under over the past few months, he said:

"Many of us are finding this experience very tiring and burdensome. It is easing as we begin to see people and meet in small groups outside face to face. I am sure there will be joy for those able to be in church for worship but how we do this is not easy.

"The Gospel this Sunday speaks to my and our condition: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11.28)

"Being yoked with Christ and one another lightens the load.

"So take care of yourself physically and spiritually. I encourage you to pray continually but not to work continuously!"

You can read the full Ad Clerum [here](#).