

Reopening of St Leonard's church: COVID-19 related medical emergency procedure

Reopening the St. Leonard's buildings following the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown is an exciting time. Many of our members and parishioners have been looking forward to this day for some time.

It is our responsibility and legal obligation to make sure that everyone who enters our buildings can do so safely and in accordance with the Scottish Government's and the Church of Scotland's guidelines and advice.

We, as a congregation, must know what to do in the event that someone in our buildings displays any of the symptoms of Covid-19. This procedure sets out what we must do.

What to look for

The symptoms of illness caused by Covid-19 are:

- A new and continuous cough **OR**
- Fever **OR**
- Loss of/change in sense of taste or smell

What to do if someone becomes ill while in our buildings

The following guidance is taken from Health Protection Scotland's paper *Core COVID-19 Information and Guidance for general (Non-Healthcare) Settings V4.6 dated 30 July 2020*

- a) In preparation, make sure that everyone, including children and young people, know to inform a responsible person¹ if they feel unwell. This advice should be displayed on the AV screen at the start of every service.
- b) Social distancing **MUST** be observed – members of the congregation must not gather round the symptomatic person.
- c) If the affected person has mild symptoms they should go home as soon as they notice symptoms and follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. Where possible they should minimise contact with others, e.g. use a private vehicle to go home. If it is not possible to use private transport, then they

¹ Member of the welcoming team, church Elder etc

should be advised to return home quickly and directly, and if possible, wear a face covering in line with Scottish Government guidance. If using public transport, they should try to keep away from other people and catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of the elbow.

- d) If they are so unwell that they require an ambulance, phone 999 and let the call handler know you are concerned about COVID-19. Whilst you wait for advice or an ambulance to arrive, try to find somewhere safe for the unwell person to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible and it is safe to do so, find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office or meeting room. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. If no bin is available, put the tissue in a bag or pocket for disposing in a bin later. If you don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow. Where possible, a separate bathroom should be designated for the individual to use.
- e) Once a possible case has left the premises, the immediate area occupied by the individual, e.g. pew or chair, should be cleaned with detergent to remove organic matter such as dust or body fluids then a disinfectant to kill pathogens. This should include any potentially contaminated high contact areas such as door handles, telephones and grab-rails. Once this process has been completed, the area can be put back into use.
- f) Any public areas where a symptomatic or COVID-19 diagnosed individual has only passed through (spent minimal time in), e.g. corridors, and which are not visibly contaminated with any body fluids, do not need to be further decontaminated beyond routine cleaning processes.
- g) All waste items that have been in contact with the individual (e.g. used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths) must be disposed of securely within disposable bags. When full, the plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. These bags should be stored for 72 hours before being put out for collection. Other general waste can be disposed of as normal.
- h) Hand hygiene must be observed at all times.

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Health & Safety Coordinator

References and further reading

Note: Advice on COVID-19 is constantly being reviewed and updated. Please consult the appropriate websites for the latest and current advice.

The Church of Scotland. Covid-19 (coronavirus) Reopening of Church Buildings July 2020 version 3.0.

The Scottish Government. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship. 14 July 2020

Health Protection Scotland. Core COVID-19 Information and Guidance for General (Non-Healthcare) Settings. Version 4.6. 30 July 2020.