

Guidance for Resuming Services at Waltham Abbey Church during the Covid 19 Emergency

With effect from 4th July, Waltham Abbey church is permitted to restart some services – with restrictions, as set out by Public Health England and the Church of England.

We very much look forward to welcoming you back into the church; however, during these extraordinary times we are required to implement a number of measures to ensure your safety, which is very important to us. A strict 2 metre distance will be maintained inside and immediately outside of the church and services will be restricted to 30 people initially. Unfortunately, there will be no hymns or singing at this current time.

From 24th July face coverings will be “highly recommended” in places of worship, so we would encourage you to wear one from that date onwards. Having taken advice from our own diocese, and because we want everybody to feel safe, we have decided that the wearing of face coverings will become mandatory across the churches in our benefice from Sunday 2nd August.

In addition to the above, the following will be put in place.

- Members of the congregation who are aged 70 or over, clinically vulnerable, or shielding, are encouraged to take the government’s advice to stay at home. You can continue to participate in the weekly Sunday zoom service, which has been moved to 5.30pm. However, should members of the congregation who fall into the above categories (with the exception of those shielding until 31st July) wish to attend Waltham Abbey church for a service, the government advice is that set days for services should be agreed. With this in mind we will be designating the Wednesday 10.30 morning service for these members of the congregation.
- There will be three services during the week.
 - **Sunday 08.30** and **10.30**
 - **Wednesday 10.30** (designated for those aged 70 and over or clinically vulnerable)

If you wish to attend any of these services, you are asked to **contact the church** either by email churchwardens@walthamabbeychurch.co.uk , providing your name, contact number and the service that you wish to attend. We require this information for the government’s track and trace programme and also to ensure that the services are not over-subscribed (the details will be recorded on a register for each service and held for a period of 21 days). Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee admittance into the church if these details have not been provided prior to the service.

- On arrival at the church, you will be welcomed and advised on how the church will be maintaining the 2-metre distance rule. Hand sanitiser will be provided, and individual service sheets will be handed out which should be taken home after the service.
- There will be floor markings throughout the church indicating the 2-metre distance and familiar faces will be on hand to advise and guide you throughout the service.
- As you enter the church you will be asked to confirm your name and contact details and will then be guided to your seat.

- The pews have been carefully marked out to ensure that social distancing takes place, you are therefore asked to remain in the seat that has been allocated to you. Household members and “bubbles” can be seated together.
- Communion is a very important part of the service and to ensure that we are able to maintain this part of the service, communion will be given at the end of the service as you exit the church. Hand sanitiser will be provided for you prior to this.
- You will be guided to exit the church via the south door at the end of the service. This will take place row by row starting from the front of the church.
- Toilet facilities will be available, however, please be mindful that cleaning of the toilet area will need to take place after each use. Comfort breaks, therefore, are encouraged prior to coming to church in order to avoid queues in the church.

Unfortunately, the children’s corner will no longer be available; children are therefore asked to remain with their guardians throughout the service.

In summary

- There will be 3 services each week
 Sunday 08.30 and 10.30
 Wednesday 10.30 (designated to those aged 70 and over or clinically vulnerable)
- You will need to register your attendance prior to each service for track and trace purposes and to ensure that we do not have too many people at each service
- You will be guided to your seat to ensure that we are able to maintain a 2 metre distance
- You will be guided from the church at the end of the service to ensure that 2 metre distancing is maintained
- Hand sanitiser will be provided on entry and exit

These are unusual times and whilst, we are looking forward to a return to normality and greeting each other in person, we need to ensure that we keep ourselves and each other safe, therefore your support and patience during this time is greatly appreciated.