



1 Hill Top  
Coventry  
CV1 5AB

Tel: 024 7652 1200  
Fax: 024 7652 1330

**The Venerable Sue Field**

**Archdeacon Pastor**

[Sue.Field@covcofe.org](mailto:Sue.Field@covcofe.org)

Direct Line No. 024 7652 1337

Mobile: 07885 714829

**By E-mail only**

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**To all licensed Clergy and Readers, Churchwardens**

Dear friends,

I am writing to you again with some further information. We are just sending this to licensed clergy and Readers (ie not those with Permission to Officiate) as this information is primarily for them but please do share if there are others who need to know. For churchwardens, you may wish to share this with your parish administrators (if you have them) and also with PCC secretaries, treasurers etc.

- 1. Fees for funerals** – you will be aware that as soon as lockdown began, the Diocesan Board of Finance agreed to waive its portion of the fees for funerals. **Now that funerals can happen in our church buildings and that numbers at Crematoria are beginning to increase, the DBF has agreed to charge 50% of the DBF portion of the fee for services that take place from 8 July and 100% for services from 1 August 2020.**

In case you are in any doubt about what that means, here is the link to the Fees table for 2020 which gives the breakdown of the fees. This means, for example, that for a funeral at the Crematorium where the only fee goes to the DBF, the charge from 8 July will be £99.50 and the charge from 1 August will be £199.

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/2020\\_parochial\\_fees\\_table\\_a4.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/2020_parochial_fees_table_a4.pdf)

The Area Deans requested this staggered approach. Those clergy or Readers able to claim fees according to our Fees Policy will still only be able to claim a maximum of £50 until the end of July but will be able to claim the full fee (£110) that they are due from 1 August. I will be writing to them about that.

I will also write today to Funeral Directors. If you have any queries, please do raise them with your Area Dean or with me.

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2. **Daily Hope** – I have been asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Adviser for Evangelism and Witness to make you aware of the Daily Hope phone line which offers a menu of well-known hymns, joining in with Morning or Evening Prayer or receiving the latest public health advice. This is available via a free phone line 0800 804 8044 and may be of particular interest to those who can't access the internet or who are shielding or lonely. Please do let others know about this service. Further information about this can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/daily-hope-phone-line>
3. **Looking ahead** – I wrote to you a week ago about the steps to be taken as you and your PCCs considered whether or not to open your church buildings for private individual prayer. It seems as if there might be some move towards allowing small acts of worship to take place in our church buildings as part of Step 3 of the Government's roadmap which would at the earliest be 4 July but that depends on the Government allowing that to happen.

Our experience thus far is that we tend to learn these things quite late on as I imagine they weigh up the scientific evidence at the time. We would therefore strongly urge you to begin to think about how this might happen in your buildings when we are allowed to.

Key to all of this is your risk assessment so please keep an eye on the Church of England Coronavirus page for the latest version of that document. This might change as more activities are permitted.

Whatever we are told nearer the time, we are fairly certain that initially, and maybe for some time, the gatherings permitted will be very small so a key question, as well as the safety of the building for those coming in, is how those leading worship can continue to minister to the worshipping community as, if there is more than one service in the building during the day, there will need to be a thorough clean in between services. One option might be to livestream a service with a small congregation so that others can join in online. In order for this to happen, you may need to make some adaptations (eg installing wifi or 4G equipment) and I have already had a conversation with the Registrar about how we can grant permission for those adaptations. Please do contact that DAC Secretary, Will Jones, if you have any questions about that.

I am really therefore encouraging you to think ahead as to how you can make your building safe and also care for your worshipping community without expecting clergy and Readers to lead several acts of worship both in person and online.

Again, for clergy, please do talk about this in Chapters with your Area Dean. They have regular communication with me but also feel free to come to me directly with anything that is more specific. For churchwardens in vacancy, please do talk with your Area Dean initially but, of course, I am available too.

Graeme will continue to let you know via the bulletin when there are updates on the Church of England coronavirus page but do keep an eye yourself as things change and, of course, a reminder that church buildings are only open at the moment for individual prayer. I will be in touch again as things change.

Thank you so much for all you are doing in these difficult and testing times. Things are changing fast and we are all struggling to keep up so please do ask for help as we try to encourage and support one another!

With my prayers and best wishes,

*Sue Field*

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