

Attending St. Patrick's Church during the National Lockdown

We know that you may be a little hesitant in coming to Church and we want to make sure that you can do so safely and comfortably as social distancing guidelines and public health measures are in place.

You must stay at home if you are unwell or have any symptoms of Covid-19 or are shielding.

If you are vulnerable or feel unsure about returning to Mass, please consider the wisdom of doing so.

You are not obliged to attend Mass. Sunday obligation is still suspended.

In the light of our risk assessment and because of social distancing, the number of people allowed in church for a parish Mass is 70. When we are in a position to be able to offer services other than a parish Mass, the maximum number is determined by the current Government guidelines.

Currently Mass will be on a Sunday only. There is a telephone booking system to ensure our capacity is not exceeded and no-one has to be turned away. Details will appear in the weekly Newsletter.

The Mass will be different to the way we are used to celebrating it, but it is to ensure everyone's safety.

Thorough sanitising of the Church must take place after each celebration which relies on volunteers.

You may check the details on the parish website <http://www.stpatricks-felling.co.uk/> or ☎ 495 2277

Before you arrive at Church

Face coverings



You must bring your own face covering. **It is now mandatory for all people entering a church to wear a face covering** except children under 11 and those with a medical exemption.

NHS Test and Trace Requirements

Unless you have booked a place by telephone, to comply with the Government Test and Trace System, please bring an envelope to church **on every occasion you attend** containing your name and a contact telephone number. These will be retained for 21 days in accordance with Government requirements. Place the envelope in the box provided at the front of the Church. Alternatively you may use the NHS Covid-19 App to "Sign in" using the QR Code displayed in the Church.



Please be aware that there are no toilet facilities available

When you arrive at Church

The Church will open 20 minutes before Mass. Please do not arrive any earlier as you will not be able to enter, but do leave yourself time to register on arrival. Please avoid arriving in the last 5 minutes! Enter through the top door off Church Street. The parish centre doors and the main doors of the Church are closed. You may have to form a socially distanced queue to enter the Church. Please be patient.

On entering, you will be welcomed by a volunteer steward who will direct you to the hand sanitisers. There is no holy water, Mass Books, votive candles nor access to the sacristy or to the rear of the Church.

Seating arrangements

You will be shown to a bench. It will probably not be where you usually sit. Please co-operate with the stewards. What they are inviting you to do is for your safety and for the safety of all other parishioners.

Please remain in your seat at all times. Do not move around the Church.

When you are in your bench, you must adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rule from parishioners who are also in the bench, unless you are from the same household or bubble. You must not sidle up to anyone else in your bench for a chat!

You must ensure that children in your care adhere to all the guidelines. There will be no Children's Liturgy.

During Mass

To help maintain social distancing, please remain seated at all times during Mass.

There will be no Sign of Peace, Offertory Procession, singing nor altar servers or readers.

Arrangements for receiving Holy Communion

Following the Guidelines of our Bishops, Holy Communion will be distributed at the end of Mass.

The words “The Body of Christ” and the reply “Amen” will only be said once at the beginning of the distribution of Holy Communion. They will not to be repeated for each person receiving Holy Communion, nor will you need to make an individual response.

The volunteer stewards will direct you to approach the altar. Please stand in front of the “prie-dieu” to receive Holy Communion or a blessing after which you are asked to leave the Church immediately and prayerfully. It is important that you follow this guidance. Do not attempt to return to your seat.

You may only receive the Sacred Host in your hand and not on your tongue.

Lower your face covering, using the ear loops, when the person in front of you is receiving the Sacred Host. Avoid skin to skin contact with the minister’s hands by extending your arms as far as possible and keeping your hands flat, one on top of the other. Make a slight bow of the head when the Sacred Host is offered to you. No words should be spoken by you or the minister.

Place the Sacred Host in your mouth, replace your face covering then leave the Church immediately. Do not return to your place. Sanitise your hands as you leave.

Leave by the exit at the front of the Church taking everything you may have brought with you. When you return home, or on your way home please make an act of Thanksgiving having received Holy Communion.

Following the advice of our Bishops, as Fr. Patterson is in a clinically vulnerable category, he will not be distributing Holy Communion nor will he be available either before or after Mass. Eucharistic Ministers, who are not in a vulnerable category, have offered to distribute Holy Communion.

Leaving the Church

Please do not gather in the porch or church grounds afterwards. Under the Lockdown regulations, you must not mingle outside the Church after Mass. Parishioners are asked to disperse immediately on leaving the Church. Fr. Patterson urges those of you who come to Mass to follow this rule and in doing so prevent the possible transmission of the coronavirus.

Offerings/ Test and Trace envelopes/Mass Intentions

There is no collection taken. A container is available at the front of the Church for your weekly offering envelopes and loose monies, Test and Trace envelopes and any Mass Intentions you may have.

Stewarding arrangements

Please respect the efforts of our Stewards, all of whom are volunteers. They are a necessary requirement for our Churches to be able to be open and they are there to help you and ensure your safety in keeping with Government Guidelines and those of our Bishops’ Conference.

Archbishop McMahon’s words:

Let us all take to heart these words of our Metropolitan, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon:

“As we begin to return to Mass we have to provide guidelines to ensure a safe and reverent environment. We all have a role to play in keeping each other safe and healthy. **We are not going back to normal. It is not going back to what it was like before March. We have to think differently.**”

While we will attempt to take appropriate precautions consistent with the advice of public health authorities, parishioners should understand that they assume the risk of contracting COVID-19 any time they enter a public space, since such precautions do not eliminate the risk of infection.