

Scottish Episcopal Church suspends services

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) has today asked clergy to cease church services until further notice, to help protect the vulnerable from coronavirus.

The College of Bishops took the decision after careful consideration of social distancing advice from The Scottish Government.

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange, Primus of the SEC, said: "This is a difficult time for many people, some are fearful for themselves or their relatives, while others want to know how to help stem the spread of the virus.

"Our guidance is given not just to address medical concerns but also with pastoral concern being uppermost in our hearts and minds, particularly the care of the vulnerable in our congregations and communities."

Church buildings will be allowed to stay open for private prayer, with visitors asked to follow all public health guidelines over hygiene. The SEC will also deliver a video service of the Eucharist every Sunday via its website, to reach members who will still want to worship at home despite there being no service at their church.



Before asking for the suspension of services, the SEC had already recommended earlier this month that clergy suspend the sharing of the Chalice at communion, and avoid physical contact on arrival at church and departure, as well as during

sharing of the Peace, which is normally a handshake.

Last week, the SEC also announced the postponement of its annual meeting of the General Synod, which was due to take place in Edinburgh on 11 to 13 June 2020.