



St. Thomas' Indian Orthodox Church London

St Agnells Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7AY, U.K.

Charity Registration No. 1118820

(A parish of the UK-Europe & Africa Diocese of the Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church)

(Member of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)

(Member of the Churches Together in England)



Vicar:

Fr. Varghese John
Mannamcheril

Hon. Secretary:

Mr. Anil Abraham

Hon. Treasurer:

Mr. Shelvin
Kuriakose

Guidance on Corona Virus (COVID-19)

(Dated 13/03/2020)

As a church, we continue to be guided by our Triune God, our eternal refuge and fortress, in putting this guidance together.

Please ensure that each of us reads this guidance completely, especially items 3,4 and 5 along with our families. There are a **few additions to the guidance issued on the 6th of March.**

- (i) Please **self-isolate (stay at home) for 7 days** if any of us have symptoms of high temperature, cough or flu-like illness. Kindly **refrain from coming to church** if any of us have any of these symptoms.
- (ii) Kindly reiterating that COVID-19 can cause more severe symptoms in people with **weakened immune systems, elderly people, and those with long-term health conditions**. If any of us feel that we are in any of these categories, please **take extra precautions**. It would be prudent for parents of **very young children and expectant mothers** to be aware of this too.
- (iii) **If any of us are diagnosed with COVID-19, it is our responsibility to please inform the Vicar.** The Vicar, supported by the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer will **need to seek Public Health England advice and guidance** to ensure that all possible contacts are identified.

This guidance reflects current Public Health advice as well as precautionary measures. This may change during the upcoming days. All of us will need to be aware of the contingency measures that need to be put in place in the event of a rise in the number of people affected. Depending on how the situation progresses, we will need to make decisions that are appropriate and proportionate along with responding quickly to developing situations.

1. Public Health England advice is that individuals should follow **good hygiene practices** including:
 - Carrying tissues and using them to catch coughs and sneezes, and binning the tissue;
 - Washing hands with soap and water (for 20 seconds) or using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel to kill germs. This is particularly important after taking public transport.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not attend work, school or public places.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.



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2. Advice has also been issued (Refer to [Public Health Info for returning travellers](#)) to **travellers who have returned to the UK** from a number of countries (Iran, Hubei province in China, lockdown areas in northern Italy, special care zones in South Korea, mainland China outside of Hubei province, Italy outside of the lockdown areas, South Korea outside of the special care zones, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Japan, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand).
3. **General Instructions for Parishioners:**
 - (i) Kindly **refrain from coming to church for at least 14 days:**
 - *If you have a **fever, cough, shortness of breath or flu-like symptoms**. Please use the 111 online coronavirus service to know what to do next.
 - *If you have **travelled** to the above-mentioned countries.
 - (ii) Coronavirus can cause more **severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, elderly people, and those with long-term health conditions**. If any of us feel that we are in any of these categories, please take **extra precautions**. It would be prudent for parents of **very young children and expectant mothers** to be aware of this too.
 - (ii) We will be keeping a **register of parishioners attending church every Sunday**. Please give in your name to the volunteer doing so at the entrance of the church.
 - (iii) Please ensure that you have **washed your hands and/or used the hand-sanitiser before entering the church and after leaving the church**.
 - (iv) Please use **tissues if you sneeze, cough or blow your nose and bin** them after use.
 - (v) Kindly, **bring along your own copy of the Liturgical Service book or use an e-copy**.
4. **Instructions during the Worship Service:**
 - (ii) **Avoid contact** with others as much as possible, especially hands.
 - (iii) If **any parishioner experiences flu-like or fever symptoms in church, please return to your car or home straightaway**. Please refer to the <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> and contact the 111 online coronavirus service if you feel you fit the criteria to do so.
 - (iv) During the **Kiss of Peace**, we will **bow down with folded hands** without touching each other's hands.
 - (v) The Vicar will endeavour to administer the holy elements **with least oral contact**. The Vicar will **wash his hands thoroughly** as per guidelines and clean with the hand-sanitiser prior to administering the holy elements.
 - (vi) **Water will be dispensed in individual glasses** following the administration of the holy elements. Each individual is to please use one glass and then **deposit in the provided collecting bin**.



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5. **Instructions after the Worship Service:**

- (i) Use the **hand sanitiser** when exiting the church.
- (ii) **Avoid contact** with others as much as possible, especially hands.
- (iii) There will be **no fellowship meal or drinks**. Please make **your own arrangements** for water, snacks and lunch, if needed. This will be reviewed on a weekly basis. This is a precautionary measure at this stage.
- (iv) There will **not be Sunday school or any other activities following the worship**. This will be reviewed on a weekly basis. This is a precautionary measure at this stage.
- (v) **Kindly return home after the service.**

Thank you so much for your kind understanding and cooperation in taking care of each other and keeping all of us safe. May we all be equipped with the peace and strength to combat the virus. We entrust ourselves to the steadfast care of our Lord.