



LAMBETH PALACE



BISHOPTHORPE PALACE

Guidance for parish churches following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

8th September 2022

Purpose of this document

1. Following today's announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This guidance provides some general advice on what parishes may wish to do today, and in the coming days. Dioceses and local authorities will have their own plans and guidance, and this document is intended to support those plans at parish level. It gives a framework from which parish churches can decide on the best course of action in their own contexts, and should therefore not be seen as prescriptive.

Planning a local response in conjunction with national plans

2. A significant amount of national planning has taken place in relation to the death of senior members of the Royal Family. It is expected that the death of Her Majesty the Queen will be a time of significant national mourning and parish churches will play a key role in the life of the nation at that time. The material below suggests some ways that local plans can be arranged in line with the national timeline.
3. Although all restrictions in England due to Coronavirus have been removed from the 24th of February 2022, risk assessments still need to be undertaken to see what impact Covid may have on any of these potential arrangements, as people may still be concerned about potential infections. Issues around pandemic planning are in red in this document to enable as many people as possible to respond to the death of the monarch.
4. News of the death of Her Majesty are already well known, and the national structures will be communicating details of the official commemorative events and the Ceremonial Royal Funeral. The death of the Queen has been announced formally from Buckingham Palace and by the Government. For the purposes of this document, Friday the 9th is designated as D-Day with all subsequent days numbered after this day. The days between D-Day and the funeral are likely to be designated as days of mourning. The table below suggests the likely sequence of events. The funeral will not take place on a Sunday, so the timings in the box below may have to be amended to reflect potential changes. The process for the Accession and Proclamation of the new King takes place during these days of mourning. Due to the need for the Accession Council to be summoned, some of these timings may be amended.

We anticipate the period of National Mourning will continue as follows in the days ahead, further confirmation of key dates such as, the funeral are to be made available in the coming days by the Royal Communications Office.

Please note – For the purposes of this document ‘D-Day’ is **Friday the 9th of September** with D+1 being Saturday the 10th and so on.

D-Day (Friday 9th September)

- The formal announcement of the death of the Queen was made yesterday evening.
- Bells may be rung (muffled where possible) or tolled at the discretion of local Parochial Church Councils. They may be tolled for one hour at noon. See [Guidance Note: Operation London Bridge](#)
- Flags to be flown at half-mast and to remain at this height until the day after the funeral. See guidance: [British Flag Institute](#) – see especially [Flying flags in the United Kingdom](#) and [Flags for Churches](#)
- A **service** to gather people together for reflection, or an informal time of prayer, could take place in the local church as soon as it is practical to do so, either today or on a subsequent day. *Consider hybrid / online services for those who are concerned about large gatherings. See further information on resources, below.*
- Areas for floral tributes (local outdoor locations) to be identified and communicated. *Co-ordination with local authorities on the most appropriate location and any control measures.*
- **Books of condolence** may be made available both physically and online. They are to be open until the day after the funeral. Online national books of condolence will be made available – see the further information in sections 12-15 below. *Consider Coronavirus cleaning arrangements for physical books / pens / seats. Loose leaf books are a viable option.*

D+1

- 11.00 – **Proclamation of new Monarch** at the appropriate Royal Palace, followed by further proclamation at noon in London.
- 11.00 – **Flags** to be raised to full height until 13.00 on D+2.

D+2

- Noon – Proclamation of new monarch in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.
- 13.00 – **Flags** to be lowered to half mast, and to remain at this height until the day after the State Funeral.
- 14.00 – Proclamation of new monarch at County/Unitary Authority level.
- 16.00 onwards – Proclamation of new monarch at parish level.
- **Bells** should be rung open (ie unmuffled) in celebration of the accession at a practicable time (with the agreement of the Parochial Church Council) following the announcement. Bells should then revert to being rung muffled until the day of the state funeral.

D+5

- Lying-in-state at Westminster Hall.

Sunday(s) during the period of mourning

- Sunday worship continues as normal, and parishes may wish to review their plans for services. Special material will be available to add to existing forms of service (see below), and official Commemorative Services are also commended for use during this time.

Day before the funeral (D+9 or later if D+10 is a Sunday)

- 18.00 (suggested) – Parishes may wish to plan for a local church service. A model order of service and additional resources will be available through the [Church of England website](#) to plan this service. *Consider hybrid / online services for those who are concerned about large gatherings.*

D+10 (although this may be sooner) (or later if D+10 is a Sunday)

The Royal Household have requested that, if they can, parishes toll their **bells** for the hour immediately prior to the time of the funeral service.

- See guidance : Bells – [Central Council of Church Bell Ringers](#) – see especially [Guidance Note: Operation London Bridge](#)
- Funeral takes place at Westminster Abbey.
- *Time tbc* – National two minutes' silence

Day after the funeral

- 08.00 – Flags to be returned to full mast.
- Floral displays to be ended (possible local ceremony to mark this).
- Online books of condolence to be closed at the end of the day.

Further updates to timings and confirmation of key dates will be released by the Royal Communications Office, and through the media as the days progress.

Prayer and worship

5. Resources for private prayer and public worship have been made available through the [Church of England website](#) and also via your archdeacon. These include prayers which can be said in homes and families, and fully worked-out orders of service which can be customized, as well as resources (proper texts, intercessions) which might be added to services during the period of mourning:
 - simple prayers for use on hearing of the death;
 - a service of prayer for use in families or in church;
 - prayers for use at home, or to share in church;
 - Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic orders of service for use in the parish between the death and the funeral, including on the Sunday or Sundays during the period of mourning;
 - Official Commemorative Services, appropriate for a parish or civic context, which could be held in place of, or additional to, regularly scheduled worship.

Resources have been made available for schools to use at this time on the Church of England website at <https://www.churchofengland.org/remembering-her-majesty-queen>. These include several different primary and secondary school collective worships for remembering Her Majesty the Queen's life, marking her death, celebrating her role both as a servant leader and in the life of the commonwealth. The resources include suggestions for activities that can be used in school and in the context of the home and provide opportunities for pastoral engagement.

6. The official Commemorative Services mentioned above have been published online by the Printer to the Crown, Cambridge University Press, and published online on the day of demise on the [Church of England website](#). Additional materials have also been shared on official Church of England social media channels.
7. Official prayers are on the [Church of England website](#) and also shared across social media on the Church of England's [Facebook](#), Twitter (@churchofengland) and Instagram (@thechurchofengland) accounts, which can be shared by local churches on their own social media accounts or used in printed material.
8. A nationally produced service will be streamed on the Church of England's Facebook and YouTube channels as well as being on the [Church of England website](#). This can be shared on social media by your church to complement your local services.
9. Churches should check the schedule of national, diocesan and regional events in planning their own.
10. Weddings, funerals and baptisms may continue as planned through the national period of mourning. Clergy should check with those planning these events whether they wish them to take place during this time. Particular sensitivity should be taken when reviewing those which are planned to take place on the day of the funeral.

Areas of mourning and floral displays

11. It is likely that members of the public may wish to express their grief through the placing of bouquets, flowers, cards or other items. Consideration should be given to a site which could be used for this purpose, and the need to clear it away on the day following the funeral (it is suggested that there could be a formal marking of the removal of the flowers at 9am). Local councils should be consulted about an appropriate site and for disposal purposes.
12. It will be important to consider how many people in your parish may look to churches to be a location of mourning, and to address how they will gather and possibly queue in and around the church. Consideration might be given to providing areas where people could light candles, (with appropriate fire risk controls in place).
13. A suitable framed photograph on the table, perhaps with a black cloth under it, may be appropriate. An authorised photograph will be made available on the Resource Hub on [AChurchNearYou.com](https://www.achurchnearyou.com). The pastoral needs of those who are gathered to mourn will also need to be considered.

Books of condolence

14. Books of condolence may be opened on the day after the day of death (D+1). Local discussions will need to be held with the appropriate local council to decide upon the appropriate way to put these in place as they may have local arrangements in place – both physically and online. *Consider Coronavirus cleaning arrangements for physical books / pens / seats. Loose leaf books are a viable option.*
15. National online books of condolence will be made available as a safe and convenient way for the public to leave messages of condolence. You will be able to find these on the [Church of England's website](https://www.churchofengland.org) and the [Royal Family website](https://www.royalfamily.gov.uk).
16. It is suggested that the online books of condolence should be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral. Books of condolence are essentially a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure. As such, they should form part of the church's or local authority's archive, so that future generations are able easily to gain access to them and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area.
17. Those who are responsible for an online book of condolence may wish to send a letter to the Royal Household, detailing where it can be accessed. Such letters may be sent to the Private Secretary to the Queen (Buckingham Palace, London, SW1A 1AA), asking that condolences be passed to the monarch.

Further information

For further information or clarification please contact your diocesan communications team, your Rural/Area Dean or your Archdeacon.

Information will continue to be released through diocesan communications team, from your Bishops, Rural/Area Deans and the Archdeacons in the coming days.

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