

Churches Opening for Prayer

The provision does vary: here is a round up:

The Catholic Diocese of Lancaster: <http://www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/>

Our Lady of the Assumption, Blackpool; St John Vianney, Blackpool.
St Cuthbert, Blackpool; St Clare, Preston; St. Joseph, Preston; Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Annes on Sea; St. Anthony of Padua, Preston; St. Andrew and Blessed George Haydock, Cottam; Our Lady and St. Edward, Preston. St.Thomas Apostle, Claughton on Brock; St. Francis, Goosnargh; Sacred Heart, Thornton le Fylde. Holy Family, Freckleton; St Anne, Westby. St. Mary, Fleetwood; St. Kentigern, Blackpool; St. Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster; St. Walburge, Preston

The Catholic Diocese of Salford will be opening 18 churches in total some of which are in Lancashire: <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/churches-opening-for-private-prayer/>

Archdiocese of Liverpool... only St Mary's Chorley will be opening <https://www.stmarys-chorley.org/>

The Anglican Diocese of Blackburn is recommending that all churches continue as they are for the time being – however those that wish to open for private prayer may do so provided they follow the Gov't safety guidelines. There is no date yet for resuming Weddings and Baptisms: <https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/>

The Methodist Church in Lancashire is not opening churches. This is rooted in the theological basis of the Methodism where its places of worship are spaces where the community gathers, not the individual. They make the point that whilst the R rate is above 1 it makes sense to keep things as they are. <https://www.lancashiremethodist.org.uk/methodistchurchesinlancashireremainclosed.htm>

The Salvation Army Right from the onset of lockdown TSA has had 3 missional priorities that still stand, these being:

1. Spiritual Nurture (pastoral & worship) - This is encouraged by the denomination, but recognises that every local expression needs to carry this out as best suits them
2. Community Support & Collaboration - This is encouraged by the denomination, but again is dependent on local need and local response and in some in some places that is done by TSA alone and in other places through collaboration and partnership with others whether that be local councils, other agencies, other churches or combinations of all and more - The picture is that it varies right across the country and across regions
3. Contracted Services - Where we receive government financial support to deliver services such as HSU, homeless service support and OPS, elders

persons work then this is being carried out and in some instances working in partnership with others

So right now as a movement we are still carrying the above mentioned ministries and no changes have been made. So there is no statement or proposals been given yet for our buildings to re-open for worship, prayer or small group gatherings. The Army from THQ national level is listening too the government and devolved parliaments and following their guidelines."

The United Reformed Church: *we generally focus on gathering for worship, and we have been less concerned to set venues aside for private prayer.*

If this is a move you want to make, here are some guidelines:

These ought to be read in conjunction with the Synod Moderators' 'New Normal' Document. <https://urc.org.uk/new-normal.html>

- 1) **Plan very carefully** before you act. Haste will surely cause problems.
- 2) **Many people cannot visit church** at all at the moment because of medical concerns. That might affect both the value of reopening, if some members felt excluded, and the number of people who could help with matters such as door stewarding.
- 3) Further to the point above, some elders and ministers will be very uncomfortable with reopening now, perhaps for reasons of personal health or out of concern for others. We **must not pressure one another**, either to consent to a decision to reopen at this stage or to participate personally in the activity needed to reopen.
- 4) If you do want to go ahead, remember that this is **a local decision, but not only a local decision**. The Elders' Meeting is responsible for practical matters. But before going ahead, elders should check with the building's trustees (usually the Synod Trust Company). They must also check with insurers; the Trust Company may be able to help with this.
- 5) What works in one place might not be right elsewhere. Do **a proper risk assessment**, for your building and context, and record this in the Elders' Minute Book.
- 6) **Churches must be Covid secure** before opening even for private prayer. Care will be needed around cleaning, staffing, stewarding and monitoring toilets, entrance and exit, and social distancing. This will not be easy.
- 7) Any use of the building in this way should be **genuinely individual - not an organised gathering of church members who are 'all, of course, praying privately.'**

8) Churches with **community facilities** - a cafe, for example - should not confuse opening for private prayer with a decision to open the cafe. These are different matters, and a decision about one does not automatically decide the other.

9) **We must take public guidance seriously.**

We are currently falling into categories 2/3. Elders are certain Burnley & Nelson United Reformed Church will not open before September at the earliest. I am in agreement with them

Baptist Churches have been advised to be extremely cautious. You can find advice on their website here:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/580007/Coronavirus_Open_churches.aspx?fbclid=IwAR09TaTgl7_s4JJ3myfy08hfkcCnBzBbho9H7sIE8Fvfo1s1Ty3BhamlRpk

Quakers... like the Methodists.. do not have a tradition for private prayer in their buildings, this is something that Quakers are encouraged to do anyway... at home.
<http://www.lancsquakers.org.uk/>

Blackburn Cathedral will be open between 10.00 and 2.00pm. There will be a one way system with five stations for prayer, each properly equipped with sanitisation products. Like many places, Blackburn Cathedral has been streaming recorded services, morning prayer and mid week reflections. This will continue
<https://blackburncathedral.com/>