

Guidance following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Following the death of Her late Majesty church communities across the Church in Wales will want to pay tribute to her and give thanks for her life of exceptional and dedicated service to the nation and Commonwealth. This guidance note sets out a number of areas where advice may be helpful. In the preparation of this guidance, advice has been sought from the Cabinet Office, Welsh Government and the Church of England.

This document will be updated as required during the period of national mourning.

General overview

The advice provided by the government for use during the period of public mourning is not prescriptive. Therefore, local church communities are able to make their own decisions of how to pay tribute to the late Queen and mark her death as appropriate to their local areas. Local civic services may be organised and local churches will almost certainly be involved in their planning.

Details of public mourning and funeral arrangements will be confirmed via the media.

Liturgical resources

The Church in Wales has prepared some simple prayers for use which can be accessed [here](#).

A liturgy for memorial services has been prepared for use, which can be accessed via the following link:

[Memorial service liturgy](#)

[Litwrgi gwasanaeth coffa](#)

These are not obligatory but may be used as a resource as needed.

Flags

While public mourning advice is not prescriptive there are protocols for the flying of flags and, following the late Queen's death, flags should now be flown at half-mast.

(Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole, with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. More detailed, helpful information about the protocols of flags at half-mast can be found via the [Flag Institute's](#) website.)

During this period of mourning there may be times when it will be expected that flags are flown at full mast to mark the accession, but exact arrangements are currently subject to confirmation - guidance will be provided shortly.

Bells

During this period of national mourning church bells should be tolled only, or rung half or full muffled.

Books of condolence

There are no restrictions on the opening of books of condolence – if you would like to provide a book of condolence you are free to do so. Local authorities may have plans to place them in specific locations within communities and so it may be worth making local enquiries. Nevertheless, the presence of other books in the locality does not limit others being opened too.

Books of condolence can be very simple – paper held within an ordinary black ring binder may work well as the tributes written can then more easily be collated and sent to the local central repository after the period of public mourning. Books of condolence usually close after the conclusion of the period of public mourning.

The positioning of the book of condolence can be decided locally, although placing it on a table (with a chair) in an accessible yet suitably dignified place, perhaps with a tablecloth, posy of flowers and a cross, would seem fitting. It may be felt appropriate to place a photograph of the late Queen on the table also, but this is not essential.

Photographs

You may consider it appropriate to display a photograph of the late Queen - whether you have a book of condolence or not. Photographs displayed could be official ones, or perhaps from a local visit the late Queen undertook during her reign.

Photographs may be draped with a black ribbon or inserted in a black frame (or a black ribbon fixed to the top right of the photograph) as a mark of respect, but there is no requirement to do this.

Flowers

All local authorities will make provision for official sites for floral tributes within their local areas, which may or may not be the parish church, depending upon the context of the community. Churches may still however become focal points for floral tributes even if not officially designated as such by the local authority, something which will need to be managed appropriately.

All floral tributes must be removed the day following Her late Majesty's funeral.

Parochial activities

It is likely that Her late Majesty's death comes amid the planning of activities or events within church communities, or the wider community. It may now be appropriate to consider postponing such events. This is a decision to be taken locally. The views of those involved should be sought and the implications of change considered before making firm plans to rearrange.

It is possible occasions such as weddings, funerals or baptisms are due to take place during what is now a period of mourning. Again, decisions about postponing these events must be made locally following consultation with those involved – it may be that rearranging events such as these at short notice will not be possible. Where events do go ahead a mindfulness of the sombre national context would be appropriate.

Websites and social media

Parishes or ministry/mission areas may have their own websites and social media presences. These can of course proceed as normal, but it would be appropriate to ensure any such activity is sensitive to the period of mourning. Some announcements may not be appropriate during a period of national mourning and may need to be postponed until national mourning is over.

Churches will play an important role in communities' responses to the late Queen's death and websites and social media (as well as notice boards and other parochial communications) should aim to keep the wider community informed of any services or other events taking place. Updating other key information such as times of normal services or church opening times continues to be important.

If a church has a book of condolence, practical information about this – where it is, accessibility and opening hours – will be helpful information.

Websites may have a temporary black border added to them, but there is no requirement for this.