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From the Vicarage

10 December 2021

The arrival of a new variant of the coronavirus, omicron, has prompted the government to move into its winter plan B. This now means that face coverings are currently mandatory and should be worn in places of worship. While there are exemptions, including singing which I will set out below, this is a legal requirement.

Therefore

- **Face coverings.** These are to be worn at all times for those attending services and other events inside our church buildings.
- **Exceptions** to this as a legal requirement are:
    - Those leading a service, reading, or leading intercessions.
    - Children under the age of 11.
    - Not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability.
    - If putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress.
    - To eat or drink.

- **Singing.** Removal of masks is permitted for singing in places of worship. However, although it is legally permitted, I strongly encourage all those attending worship, as part of the congregation, to wear masks or face coverings throughout, including the singing of hymns/carols.

  The choir and music group may remove masks for singing during services, and where items such as carols are to be sung in quick succession e.g Nine Lessons and Carols, they may remain un-masked throughout, to minimise potential contamination by removing and replacing it in quick succession.

All of this will of course be kept under review, and will be subject to change should further government announcements be made.

With my earnest prayers for you all,
Shaun