

PLACES of worship are not required to close under a new national lockdown announced by the Prime Minister on Monday 4th January 2021. The lockdown, which will continue at least until February, temporarily replaces the previous four-tier system.

Unlike in the first lockdown, however new guidance states that **public worship is exempt from the new rules**, making no change from the tier 4 regulations, previously the most severe. “**You can leave home to attend or visit a place of worship for communal worship**, a funeral or event related to a death, a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a wedding ceremony.

Weddings can be held, but only in exceptional circumstances (such as imminent death) with up to six people. (The figure does not include those conducting the wedding.) The limit on **funerals** remains at 30; the number permitted at a wake is no more than six. As before, **face coverings are mandatory in all indoor settings, including places of worship.**

“The Government has chosen not to suspend public worship in England at this time, and we will continue to follow the guidance and ensure that churches remain as safe as possible. The Government guidance on the safe use of places of worship makes clear that **those attending a place of worship must not mingle with anyone outside their household or support bubble.**”