



St Mary's Church, Thorpe
Church Approach, Thorpe, Surrey, TW20 8TO
Vicar: The Revd Damian Stewart Miles, BTh
www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk



Emergency Evacuation and Fire Policy

Introduction

Fire prevention is of vital importance. Many fires are caused by accident, carelessness and ignorance. It is the responsibility of all volunteers, church leaders and those in charge of events or premises at St Mary's Church, including the Rutherwyke Room, Wallace Room and associated facilities, to be familiar with the following instructions.

In the event of fire or other emergencies requiring evacuation, the prime objective is the safe clearance of all persons from the buildings. The second objective is notification of emergency services, so the situation can be dealt with by the appropriate authorities. Once the building has been cleared and emergency services notified, the fire may be tackled by designated persons, with the appropriate extinguisher, only if it does not expose any person to risk.

Procedure in the event of a fire:

1. On discovering a fire, operate the nearest red fire alarm call point by breaking the glass. These are located in the Rutherwyke Room, Wallace Room and kitchen. In the church this may also be an announcement over the sound system.
2. On hearing the fire alarm, leave the buildings by the nearest or safest exit in a calm manner. Do not stop to collect personal belongings. Emergency torches are available in the church at following points: by the pipe organ, by the choir stalls in the Chancel, in the church porch and in the Link. These are pre-charged and important for helping people to exit safely in the dark.
3. Assemble in the Vicarage car park at the designated 'meeting point' outside the Vicarage front door. (This is the area with York stone paving.)
Parents of children in the Sunday Club or Noah's Ark Group should wait at the meeting point to collect their children.
4. On hearing the fire alarm, dial 999 and alert the Fire Service.
5. Remain at the assembly point until instructed it is safe to return by the person in charge or the Fire Service.
6. Once the building has been safely evacuated and the roll call taken, the fire may be tackled by an appropriate person (with training), using the appropriate extinguisher, if it poses no risk to them.

Emergency Exits

There are three Emergency Exits in the buildings: the main church door (North West end) and two Rutherwyke Room exits (west and east). The Link door may be used to leave the church and exit via the Rutherwyke Room when it is safe to do so. (This door is not suitable for wheelchairs). The Rutherwyke Room fire doors must always be kept closed and may not be wedged open.

Fire Safety in the Church

When the church is in use for a service, group, session or activity, the outer door at the main entrance (north east end) must be unlocked to allow for quick exit in an emergency. It must remain unlocked throughout the event.

Risk Assessment

An annual risk assessment will be made by the Churchwardens and Vicar and reviewed by the Standing Committee of the PCC to:

- identify any persons particularly at risk and make plans for their safe evacuation
- review the Evacuation Plan for St Mary's Church and Rutherwyke Room
- review the previous year's records of fire drills, fire log books and fire risk assessment sheets
- ensure adequate provision of training
- review instructions to visitors to the buildings and volunteers.

Record all training in the fire logbook with all staff and volunteers receiving annual reminders of the correct procedures.

Fire Drills

One annual fire drill will be conducted for St Mary's Church congregation, and the Churchwardens will ensure that the welcome team and sidespeople are trained to facilitate safe evacuation in the event of a fire. This will include use of the four emergency lighting torches, which remain plugged in and charged, in the event of a power failure or emergency.

Testing of Safety Equipment

There is one fire alarm system which covers the Link, Rutherwyke Room, Wallace Room, stores, toilets and kitchen. (It has been proposed to install a bell in the church, located under the choir stalls, linked to this system, so that when an alarm is triggered the bell will alert all in church to evacuate.) If the alarm is activated in any room, it will sound in all buildings and can be heard in the church.

Each fire exit (except the church door) has an alarm call point next to it so that the fire alarm can be activated as you exit the building.

All buildings except the church have smoke detectors that will set off the alarm if triggered.

All buildings except the church have automatic emergency lighting installed which is tested annually and checked monthly. In the church, emergency lighting torches are provided. The Churchwardens will conduct a monthly check to ensure that the torches are in good working order and are in the correct locations.

All fire extinguishers will be tested by an approved company once per year. Monthly checks will be conducted to ensure that the fire extinguishers have not been tampered with.

The testing of all the above will be recorded in the Fire Log Book.

Father Damian Miles, Barry Huxley & Margaret Roberts (Churchwardens)

This policy was last reviewed in September 2018.

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