



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

21 November 2020

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Open churches by Christmas

At this time of year, people would usually be making plans for Christmas.

This year's plans have been disrupted by a virus that has already brought so much pain and frustration to people's lives.

Something that would bring enormous comfort and joy to millions of Christians in this country is the certainty of being able to go to church this Christmas.

The current national measures in England – which ban religious services – are due to expire on 2 December. As the Government considers its next steps in the fight against this virus, we ask that churches across England are allowed to open for services as soon as possible, and at least in time for Christmas.

Churches have shown they are capable of introducing social distancing and following Government guidance. As you know, your Chief Medical Officer has said there is no evidence of places of worship contributing to the spread of the virus.

Closing places of worship has caused hardship to people across the country. These most recent restrictions fall during the festival of Diwali and the First Sunday of Advent – occasions which would usually be marked by religious services.

We all want to see the rates of coronavirus infections brought down. But it's essential that measures to control the virus are based on evidence and respect people's fundamental freedoms, including the right to worship in accordance with their beliefs.

Whatever replaces the current restrictions in England from 3 December – whether that is new national measures or a local approach – we must never again stop people from attending religious services.

You have previously said you want to see churches opened for services again soon. We hope you will provide a guarantee that all people across England – regardless of where they live – will be able to go to church this Christmas.

The Christmas message of hope is needed more than ever in a year that has brought dark days for so many people.

Yours

Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP

The Lord Alderdice
The Lord Alton of Liverpool
Sir David Amess MP
Lee Anderson MP
Shaun Bailey MP
Steve Baker MP
The Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville MBE
The Lord Balfe
Bob Blackman MP
The Rt Hon the Lord Boateng
Sir Peter Bottomley MP
The Lord Brennan QC
The Viscount Bridgeman
The Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe
Dr Lisa Cameron MP
The Rt Rev and the Rt Hon Lord Chartres GCVO
Sir Christopher Chope MP
Damian Collins MP
Rosie Cooper MP
The Baroness Cox
Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP
Tracey Crouch MP
The Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC
Philip Davies MP
Steve Double MP
Richard Drax MP
The Lord Maginnis of Drumglass
Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
The Rt Hon the Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP
The Rt Hon the Baroness Garden of Frognal
The Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank GCB LVO OBE DL
James Grundy MP
Andrew Gwynne MP
The Rt Rev the Lord Harries of Pentregarth DD
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Stephen Hammond MP
Tom Hunt MP
The Lord Hylton
Mike Kane MP
Barbara Keeley MP
Julian Knight MP
Pauline Latham OBE MP
Emma Lewell-Buck MP
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Chris Loder MP
Jack Lopresti MP
Tim Loughton MP
Craig Mackinlay MP
The Baroness Masham of Ilton DL
Paul Maynard MP
Anne Marie Morris MP
Joy Morrissey MP
The Rt Hon the Lord McNally

The Baroness McIntosh of Pickering
Sir Robert Neill MP
The Baroness Noakes DBE
The Baroness O'Loan DBE
The Lord O'Shaughnessy
Andrew Rosindell MP
Andrew Selous MP
Henry Smith MP
Rt Hon John Spellar MP
Alexander Stafford MP
John Stevenson MP
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Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne TD MP
The Lord Swinfen
The Rt Hon the Lord Touhig
Tom Tugendhat MP
Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP
Martin Vickers MP
The Lord Shinkwin
The Rt Hon the Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC
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