

LEADING THROUGH THE RECOVERY PHASE

'THINK LONG TERM,
PREPARE MEDIUM
TERM, PLAN
SHORT TERM'.

It's Time...

This is a simple guide to leading through the recovery phase over the next few months. It contains links (underlined) to other resources and a simple process to follow with those you are leading with at this time. If you didn't attend the CPAS webinar in February on this topic, take a look at the [recording on our website](#) (available towards the end of February). It overviews the approach we are suggesting.

What We Are Aiming For

It seems likely we will enter the 'recovery' phase over the next few months, and therefore now is the time to prepare for this.

Recovery is important after an illness, a traumatic event or an unexpected challenge in life. It takes time, often longer than expected, and involves a process of engaging with our emotions, integrating our losses, and embracing our new reality. Healthy recovery includes:

- Remembering.
- Reflecting.
- Recuperating.

When exactly it will be best to offer this is unknown. It will depend on a number of factors, and may well vary from community to community, but as lockdown eases and the vaccination programme spreads, as spring comes and new life explodes around us, and as we journey through Easter and encounter the risen Christ afresh, it is likely to be over the next few months.

We have a great opportunity to help people within our churches and communities to recover well. We are, perhaps uniquely, able to offer help across the nations through the outposts of God's kingdom that the local church represents, and through the incredible resources available to us within the Christian tradition.

Let's not miss this opportunity to build on the relationships established through lockdown with our new online fringe and new community connections, and also to reconnect with the new dechurched. Let's help the country recover and people process their pandemic experience in a healthy way.

Let's help the Church be at the centre of our communities, and Christ be at the centre of people's lives.

REMEMBERING

This includes both thanksgiving and lament. We remember with thanks those who have served and cared for us (frontline staff), the daily blessings we have experienced, the signs of God's grace and presence. We also remember our losses, both of people and things, and lament over the way the world is not as God would want it to be.

REFLECTING

This includes reflecting on what we have experienced (the positive and negative), what we have learned through such experiences, and what will we do differently post pandemic.

RECUPERATING

This includes what are we looking forward to (for example reconnecting with family and friends), and what will restore us (for example, travelling to some of our favourite places, serving others, playing sport, returning to workplaces, visiting the hairdressers, enjoying coffee shops and restaurants, attending concerts, motor sport, the theatre).

Key to all this happening is people taking time to process emotions and think through new priorities. The Church can provide spaces and processes to do just that. The Church leader, working with those they lead with, can work out the best way to offer such spaces and processes to their community.

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**LEAD
ON**



Deciding What to Do

Don't try and do too much. One thing done really well is better than many things done poorly or grudgingly. At its very simplest you could distribute [the 'My Pandemic Experience'](#) guides to your church or community.

However, if you think you might try some of the other suggestions, arrange to meet with those you lead with to discuss possibilities. Initially you will probably need around an hour. Then plan follow up meetings depending on what you decide to do.

- Invite them to watch [Simon Barrington's video](#) on the three stages following a crisis ahead of your meeting. For those who want to, they could also watch the talk part of the webinar.
- At the meeting talk through what you are trying to achieve and why. We have provided some [slides](#) to help with this. Share some of the ideas of how you could create spaces and offer processes. Invite them to pray and ponder about possible ways forward in your context. Get a sense of what might be possible and decide your next step.

OTHER THINGS THAT MIGHT NEED TO BE DONE

Here are variety of things you might need to think through, depending on what you decide to do. Simply ignore the ones that aren't relevant.

- Decide how you are going to proceed, detailing the overall approach and timescale. Work out the budget and, where appropriate, invite congregation members to give sacrificially towards it.
- Decide how you are going to pray for this initiative, both in your regular services and meetings, but perhaps also in some special ways.

- Prepare materials for services, buildings, events, and homes. There are a variety of ideas and resources listed and linked on the next page.
- Explore how you are going to promote the spaces and processes you are offering within the communities you serve. Decide who is going to work on this. Suggestions include:

Online Promote through your church website, social media accounts. Create a short video (ideally less than one minute, certainly less than three) explaining why recovery is important and what you are offering to help people recover. Provide congregation members with ideas on how they can promote it through their own social media networks, and in particular the value of 'linking' and 'liking'. Utilise community social media groups.

Email Create an attractive email with appropriate links to send out to your contacts, inviting them to both participate in what you are offering and pass the invitation on to others. Provide some text for friendly schools to send out to parents in their weekly email update.

Printed Create attractive postcards, leaflets and posters ([Canva](#) is a great free website for designing such materials) and distribute them widely. If open, place them in Doctors surgeries, funeral directors, social services, libraries, schools and so on. Put posters throughout the community.

Word of mouth Encourage congregation members to personally invite neighbours (perhaps through their road WhatsApp group), friends, and contacts. Much of what you offer will be accessible online to anyone, so they can spread the invitation far and wide.



Resources and Materials

FOR LEADERS

- **Leading Through the Recovery Phase** A recording of the [webinar](#) explaining how to lead through recovery.
- **PowerPoint** Slides to use with those you lead with to [explain the recovery phase](#).
- **The Three Stages Following a Crisis** [Video](#) by Simon Barrington explaining the three stages following a crisis learnt by disaster relief agencies over many years.
- **Ideas Board** A collection of [ideas and resources](#) for this recovery phase. Please add your thoughts and ideas to resource others as well. You may also find this ideas [board](#) helpful as well.
- **Don't rush the recovery** David Oliver's [blog](#) offers caution to those of us who want to rush ahead into the new future.

SERVICES/EVENTS

- **Service Outline** A suggested [order](#) for a special 'Recovery' service. Use it as a springboard for your own ideas.
- **Recovery Event Outline** A 40 minute [reflective event](#) for Zoom (or equivalent) to help people process their experience. It could be used for congregation or community events.
- **Recovery Space** Suggestions for [using your building](#) or churchyard as a place for people to come and process their experience of the pandemic. It includes creative ideas for a variety of stations: for mourners, health workers, those wanting to see change and so on.

GIVEAWAYS

- **My Pandemic Experience – Church** For [congregation](#) members to use in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.
- **My Pandemic Experience – Community** For people [outside the life of the church](#) to use in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.
- **Our Family Pandemic Experience** For [families](#) to use as a family together in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.

FOLLOW UP RESOURCES

- **The Well Being Course** A new course released January 2021 exploring well-being, a timely theme for the year ahead. There is an [introductory video](#) and a [website](#) with more information. There is also a [youth version](#).
- **Kintsugi Well-Being Groups** A [course and groups](#) to help people with their well-being.
- **Enquirers Courses** Most courses now have online versions which are proving very popular and effective. [Alpha](#), [Christianity Explored](#), [Start](#).
- **Grief** If people have experienced the death of a loved one you may want to recommend this informative online booklet from the Church Army on [Death, Grief and Hope](#), or these resources from [MIND](#) on bereavement.

