Temporary Heating Solutions

When your church's heating system fails, going straight for a like-for-like replacement solves the immediate problem, but misses the opportunity to consider alternatives and improve the way the building is heated. In particular, installing a gas or oil boiler now may lock the church into a fossil fuel heating system for a decade or more. Considering all the options available takes time and a temporary heating solution may be needed to keep churchgoers and other users of the building comfortable.

Heated Cushions

Heated cushions can be used on pews or chairs and can be positioned by people to make themselves comfortable (e.g. by sitting on them or placing them behind their back). They are battery operated and rechargeable, so no permanent wiring is required to use them. They can be kept long term by a church for use as supplementary heating if required, allowing the main system to be run at a lower temperature or for a shorter time.

Portable Electric Heaters

These can be fan heaters or radiators, like you may have at home, or infrared heaters. You can purchase these or you may want to rent them from tool hire shops, if you do not need them long term.

You should be aware of trip hazards from the placement of these, which should not be plugged in to extension leads, and confirm with your insurer if they have any conditions regarding their use. In particular, there may be requirements about using heaters with thermostatic cut-outs, to minimise fire risk. They should also be sited clear of woodwork and other combustible materials.

Gas heaters

LPG heaters are not recommended. They create large amounts of water vapour during use. This can cause significant damage to the building fabric.

For buildings of pre-1919 construction, including listed buildings, it is important to consider the need to maintain a low level constant heat to protect the building fabric. Therefore, in this instance temporary heating options should be considered as part of a whole building approach, and advice should be sought from a conservation accredited professional. See our Historic Places of Worship and Climate Change page for more advice on getting to Net Zero for listed buildings and those in Conservation Areas.