

## Easter Candles in Churches: Turning Holy Light into Safe Sanctuary with Simple Upgrades

The first rays of dawn filter through stained-glass windows, casting colourful patterns across worn stone floors. In a historic church in Nantwich or a modest chapel in Stoke-on-Trent, the air carries the faint scent of beeswax and incense. Congregants gather quietly, palms crossed with fresh fronds from Palm Sunday, as the priest lights the Paschal candle; that tall, symbolic flame marking Christ's resurrection. **Voices rise in hymn, and smaller candles pass from hand to hand, their lights multiplying like stars in the dim nave. It's Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, a day of renewal and reflection for communities across Staffordshire and Cheshire.**

Yet, in this moment of sacred beauty, a subtle peril hides. Those flickering candles, central to Easter vigils and services, bring warmth but also whisper of risk in buildings often centuries old.

I've visited several local churches while working with DMB Services (Staffs) Ltd, and the passion for tradition is palpable. One vicar shared a hushed memory from years past: during a midnight Easter service, a handheld candle tipped, its wax spilling onto a wooden pew. The flame caught on an old hymn book, and though quickly stamped out, it left scorched marks and a lasting lesson. **"We cherish the light,"** he said, **"but we must guard against the shadows it can cast."** Incidents like this aren't isolated; they underscore why Easter's holy fires demand vigilance.

In the UK, candle-related fires have surged, with over 1,000 incidents annually and fatalities more than doubling in recent years. Churches, with their timber frames, tapestries, and crowded gatherings, are particularly vulnerable. Fire services report that religious sites see spikes in risks during festivals like Easter, where open flames mix with flammable decorations and large assemblies. **A study of church disasters highlights dangers from dense crowds, ancient structures, and sometimes absent secondary exits.** Even routine candle use, accounting for just 5% of overall market consumption but pivotal in worship, can ignite if not managed. Molten wax alone causes burns and damage, while improper holders let flames leap to nearby fabrics or foliage.

The Switzerland bar fire tragedy earlier this year amplified these concerns, prompting more places of worship to rethink safety. **At DMB, we've fielded growing requests from local churches for assessments, especially as Easter approaches. Our approach turns potential pitfalls into protected peace.**

Simple upgrades can transform a sanctuary without dimming its spirit. Start with candle choices: opt for high-quality, slow-burning types with beeswax content, fitted into sturdy metal holders

on non-combustible surfaces. Position them away from drafts, decorations, or electrical fixtures, at least a foot clear to prevent tipping or spread.

For services with handheld candles, use purpose-made ones with drip trays that slide on, reducing wax spills. Stewards should monitor closely, especially around children or the elderly, ensuring adequate spacing to avoid clothing or hair catching light. In one Cheshire church we assisted, adding flame-retardant barriers around altar displays contained heat and prevented escalation during a test run.

Electrics play a silent role too. Many old churches have wiring that's seen better days, strained by added lights or sound systems for Easter masses. Check distribution boards for loose connections, a common spark source, and install protective inserts that snuff out fires early. Ventilation is key; enclosed spaces amplify smoke, so ensure alarms and sprinklers are tested pre-season.

Training ties it together. **Brief volunteers on response: never use water on wax fires, have the right extinguishers (wet chemical for oils), and practice calm evacuations.** Compliance with the Fire Safety Order means documenting these steps, often easing insurance worries through our sub-contract ties with assessors.

Easter's light symbolises hope and new life; let's ensure it stays that way. **By weaving these upgrades into traditions, churches become true safe havens, where faith flourishes without fear.**

If your church in Staffordshire or Cheshire seeks a gentle yet thorough assessment before April's services, we're here at DMB Services. We'll walk your space, share tailored advice, and help preserve the sacred while protecting all who gather.

**Here's to an Easter where the only blaze is one of joy.**

**DMB Services, keeping Staffordshire and Cheshire safe and compliant.**