

Information for the congregation July 19th changes at Centenary Methodist Church

Dear Friends

We want to update you on some small changes we are making following the Government announcement on the 12th July related to Covid regulations.

We are adopting a cautious approach given that the infection rate in Gateshead is still very high. We will for the moment be maintaining all of our current covid security measures as they stand. The only exception will be face coverings. We will still be asking you to keep wearing them when entering/leaving or if circulating, in the Church. We feel however we can relax the rules a little and allow people to remove them while seated, if they so desire. You may feel you want to keep your mask on all the time and that's fine we are leaving this option open to personal preference. We will still for the moment maintain socially distanced seating and ask you to respect other people's space.

We appreciate that many of you are keen to start meeting normally for fellowship and worship but as your Church Leadership team we wish to try and protect your safety. We are currently reviewing with meeting leaders how we might manage a return to weekday meetings and will provide more information on this as it becomes available.

We should still stress that if you feel unwell for any reason, then do not attend Church. Also don't think because the Church is open you have to come. If you are unsure of your safety or are shielding or vulnerable we strongly suggest you don't attend for the moment.

Services – they will start at 10.30 am (**please do not arrive before 10.15am**) as usual but will still last only for about 40mins. Singing may be permitted but we would suggest you use a face mask if doing so to protect others,

Attending a service –

You should continue to wear a face mask/covering (preferably reusable) unless seated. Should you not have one a limited supply of disposable masks will be available at Church.

- Entry to the building will be via the front main doors only (only the 2 duty stewards, property steward and organist will enter via the side door).
- The main doors and inner doors to the Church will be fastened open (at 10.15am) so you will not need to touch any doors to enter the building.
- You will still be asked to use hand sanitiser on entering the building (this will be in the porch).
- You will also be required to give details for an attendance log for Track & Trace purposes. [More detail below]
- Please enter the building one at a time,[or family group] whilst waiting to enter you will need to stand at least 2 metres apart (there will be markings). Do not enter the porch until the person in front has finished using the hand sanitiser and has moved on. (There will be a steward at the main door to advise you when you are safe to enter the building).
- There will be a 1 way system through the building, so choose which aisle you wish to enter by and move to an available seat. [The exception to this will be people with mobility issues who can enter via the Vestry door and exit the same way]
- Seats that can be used, will be indicated. Some pews will be taped off to ensure social distancing. If you sit on a pew near the sides of the Church, please sit near the wall. Available seating in the central pews will be clearly marked. Please leave a gap to the aisle and centre divider.

- Once you have a seat – limit movement around the Church to greet other worshippers. There will be no Bibles or hymn books available in pews in order to reduce the amount of cleaning. Should you wish to use a bible or hymn book during the service – please bring your own and take it away with you.
- After the services the steward will open the door to the vestry on the side of Church for downstairs. Upstairs can exit via the main door – you will then be asked to leave the building via the vestry one row at a time
- Please maintain social distancing whilst leaving the Church. There should again be no need to touch any doors on exiting the building. Hand sanitiser will again be available at the exit to the building.
- Please keep any conversations with other members of the congregation for outside the building, after the service, when you can keep further apart. Please don't be offended if stewards remind you of this.

Toilets – please try to avoid needing to use the toilets at Church, should you need to do so, please use the multi-use toilet in the Hall area. [Follow signed route]

In the event of a fire – you should exit the building by the nearest available exit and you do not have to follow the one way system.

Track and Trace – This requirement may change but for the moment we are going to keep a list of who attends services each Sunday should the information be required for track and trace. This information will of course be kept securely to meet GDPR requirements and only held for 21 days. The door Stewards will note your name on entry.

Evening Services - We are not currently planning to restart the 6pm service in Church at this time and we will continue to use the conference call telephone service at 6pm on a Sunday

We appreciate that there is a lot to take in here and there are still a lot of rules but this is the only way that we can protect your safety. Your safety and well-being is of paramount importance to us which is why we will have taken these cautious first steps. Should you have any questions – please do not hesitate to contact one of the stewards or the property team. We will continue to keep the situation under review and advise you of any changes.

Centenary Church Leadership Team