

## Information for the congregation for reopening Centenary Methodist Church for services

Dear Friend

We appreciate that many of you are keen to start meeting for fellowship and worship but as your Stewards/Church Council we must ensure your safety during this pandemic. We have been planning how to make services happen safely and now feel that we are able to welcome you back to a form of worship on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> of August at 10.30am. However, services will not be as we would usually expect and may not be for some time. We are also limited in the number of people who can attend and where they can sit. If you are physically able and can use upstairs please do so [Approx 16]. This will leave downstairs for people less able to manage stairs [24 Approx]

We should 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.

Outlined below are details of how services will look, how we plan to keep you safe and what safety measures the stewards are putting in place. If we all adhere to these rules (strange as they may seem) we should be able to meet for worship safely.

**Services** – they will start at 10.30 am (**please do not arrive before 10.20am**) as usual but will last only for about 30mins. Singing is not permitted, so the service will be made up of Bible readings, prayers and probably a reflection. We may play some music but sorry this is not an invitation to sing.

Services are likely to be led by Stewards, Minister or Local Preachers in the short term.

You may well not be able to sit in your usual seat and unless you live in the same household will not be able to sit next to someone.

**Attending a service** – Please Note that in order to be allowed to open we have to agree to follow certain rules as set out below - this is a strict requirement of the Methodist Church:-

- You should wear a face mask/covering (preferably reusable). Should you not have one a limited supply of disposable masks will be available at Church.
- You may choose to wear gloves. [A limited supply of these 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 can 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 be asked to use hand sanitiser on entering the building (this will be in the porch).
- You will also be required to fill out 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 – do not move around the Church to greet other worshippers, you must remain in your seat.
- 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 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 2m apart. Please don't be offended if stewards remind you of this.

**Offerings** – the offering plate will not be passed around during the service. Offerings will be able to be left on plates, which will be located at the main entry and exit points. Those people who are making monthly payments via direct debit or cheque are asked to please continue to do so as this will help our Treasurer.

**Cleaning the building** – After the service the Church building will be closed by the duty stewards. Before it's next use, door handles etc. will be cleaned The virus should be dead after 72 hours on any surface but by leaving the cleaning for a week we ensure the safety of our cleaners. This is why you are asked not to come to Church before 10.20am to enable this cleaning to take place.

**Notices** – There will be no printed notices, we will mainly continue with email and post but any additional notices or other instructions will be read by a steward prior to the service.

**Refreshments after the service** – there will be no refreshments until further notice.

**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** – we are required 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. [Please bring your own pen if you can]

**Evening Services** - We are not currently planning to restart the 6pm service 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 a lot of rules but this is the only way that we can meet safely and fulfil government and Methodist Church guidance. As restrictions are eased we will issue updated information.

Your safety and well-being is of paramount importance to us which is why we will have all these procedures. Should you have any questions – please do not hesitate to contact one of the stewards or the property team.

**Centenary Church Council**