



Dear Church Family

Our Covenant Leadership Council (CLC) met on Tuesday night to discuss the re-opening of our church building. Although we are now *allowed* to meet together physically to worship, this does not necessarily mean it is the *right* thing for **us** to do. There can be no 'one-size fits all' approach. Each church must make their own decision based on their own circumstances and the needs of their own church family.

After lengthy discussions, the CLC felt that we wanted to take a slower, more phased approach to bringing back our congregation. Over the years we have worked really hard to create a church community where everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, feel that they are part of the family. Unfortunately, under the current guidelines we will struggle to have the relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere that we have worked so hard to build. Indeed, with the 2m guideline for social distancing in place we will only be able to seat 35 people in the church building at any one time!

During lockdown, I have been recording services in my own home and posting them online each Sunday morning. Although this approach has worked well, we acknowledge that there will be some members of our church family who wish to return to worship physically in their church building.

Therefore, we have decided to begin live-streaming services from the church building from **SUNDAY 2ND AUGUST**. This will allow us to facilitate those who want to be physically present in church, while also maintaining a vital online presence for those who wish to stay at home.

From August onwards I will conduct the service in the church building each Sunday morning at 10:30am. You will be able to watch through a **livestream link** which will be made available on our website (www.thechurchonthehill.org.uk) and Facebook Page. Later in the afternoon a recording of the service will be available to watch on Facebook and our YouTube page.

If you are shielding, our advice is that you do not return at this early stage but rather continue join us online. If you are in a 'vulnerable' category you should be very cautious and seek your doctors advice before returning. In order that we protect one another **please do not attend if you, or a member of your household is experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19.**

For those who do wish to be physically present in the building for the livestreamed service, please note the following important guidelines.

BEFORE YOU COME

In order that we adhere to social distancing guidelines, we must know in advance of your intention to come. Please contact Sylvia Ferguson by text or phone (07759455802) by Friday evening at the latest if you wish to attend the following Sunday. We are also required to keep a record of your attendance, along with your contact details. This is to ensure a contact tracing process can take place in the event of someone attending, who later tests positive for C-19.

ARRIVAL IN CHURCH

You are asked to maintain appropriate social distancing both in the carpark and as you enter the building. A member of our welcome team will be on hand to assist you with any information or help you might need. Everyone will be asked to use hand sanitiser on entrance and maintain appropriate social distancing at all times while inside the building.

SEATING

You will notice that seats are laid out very differently from what you are used to. This is to allow for social distancing requirements to be adhered to. If you arrive on your own, you must sit on your own. Households however do not need to social distance and can sit together. You will be shown to a seat by one of the stewards. The church will fill up from the front to the back (unless someone needs to sit near the exit for health reasons). We will also be asking you to exit the building starting from the seat nearest the door and working towards the front. While in the building you are asked to remain in your seat and avoid any unnecessary movement around the church building.

DURING THE SERVICE

You might be glad to hear that the service will be shorter than usual, especially over the summer months! There will be no congregational singing nor will the offering plate be passed around. A basket will be placed at the door in which you can place your envelope. If you would rather set up a standing order please contact Colin Ferguson (07759455802).

FACE COVERINGS

As we will be practicing social distancing while inside our buildings, facemasks are not essential, but you might wish to wear one. You are welcome to worship, with or without a facemask.

CHILDRENS MINISTRY

Currently we are not allowed to offer any form of children's ministry or set out the area at the back of church that would usually host books/colouring etc available for little ones. Therefore, while children are welcome to return, they remain your responsibility and must sit with you at all times. During the month of August we will be providing an **online bible club** each Sunday for primary school children. More details will be emailed to everyone in a couple of weeks time.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

As you will be aware the situation we find ourselves in changes daily and the CLC will be meeting regularly to review our plans going forward. Therefore, it is essential that we are able to communicate any changes with you as quickly as possible. If you have been receiving regular newsletters from myself during lockdown then you do not need to do anything. However, if you have not, then please forward your email address to colinandsylvania@hotmail.co.uk as soon as possible so we can add you to the church email list. If you do not have an email address please let us know so we can make alternative arrangements to communicate with you in the days ahead.

CONCLUSION

We remain steadfast in our belief that 'the church' is more than just the building. Over the past 3 months our mission and ministry has not stopped even though the doors of our buildings were closed. I am so proud of how our wee church has met the challenges of these days.

Not only have we worshiped together virtually, but we have seen people reach out to one another and build relationships over the phone, we have been a part of the COVID-19 response team in the village (co-ordinating emergency food parcels etc), we have delivered homecooked meals and flowers to those who are elderly and the more vulnerable members of our church family, the craft ladies have knit/crocheted over 100 rainbows of hope which have been delivered to the prayer rooms in our hospitals, our children have shared messages of hope with the community by creating artwork to display on the windows of the church and members of our congregation have of course been working on the 'front line'. These are just a few examples of the way 'the church'—the people of God— have been at work, sharing Gods love in practical ways.

As we move forward and slowly begin to re-gather physically, I pray that we will continue to be 'a light on the hill'—reaching out to those around us with the love and compassion of Jesus.

Blessings from my home to yours

Clare

Rev Clare Kakuru // (revclarekakuru@gmail.com / 07811871814)