

Hello church

As we approach our return to in person services in church this coming Sunday, 25th July, we wanted to let you know about the changes we will be making to maximise the safety of everyone attending while still delivering as close as possible our usual experience of services at Dale Street.

While the government have now dropped all legal restrictions on social distancing and limits to attendance and activities that can be undertaken it is important to recognise that the pandemic is not over with numbers of infections rising rapidly and hospital admissions also rising. As part of the changes made at Step 4 of the easing of lockdown this week the Government has emphasised the personal responsibility everyone now takes on with regards to the consideration of those they come into contact with in order to limit the spread of the disease as much as we can.

Some of the steps we are advised to take are:

- Get vaccinated.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Continue to wear masks in crowded indoor spaces.
- If showing any of the three main symptoms of Covid, book a PCR test and isolate until you have the results (and continue to isolate if test positive). The symptoms to watch out for are:
 - a new continuous cough
 - a high temperature
 - a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell.

The last point is of particular importance, if you are exhibiting any symptoms or have any concerns as to the possibility that you may have covid then we ask that you please do not attend church until you have had a negative PCR test for the consideration and safety of the rest of church.

So taking all this into consideration we have made the following changes to how the services will run on a Sunday until further notice.

1. There will be one combined family service and communion service starting at 11.30
2. There will be a one-way system with entry through the usual door and exit through the fire door at the side of the main hall near the musical instruments.
3. On entry and exit there will be contactless hand sanitising stations that we would request everyone uses
4. We ask that everyone over the age of 12, who feels comfortable doing so, wears a face mask when inside the church building except when seated in the main hall. Face masks will be available on the door for anyone who needs one

Dale Street

EVANGELICAL CHURCH

5. Before the service, from 11am onwards, refreshments will be served outside to give everyone a chance to mingle and chat in the fresh air before entering church. If the weather does not allow for this then refreshments will be served to you at your seat in the main hall to prevent crowding in the foyer area.
6. The chairs in the main hall will be arranged with a centre aisle and with shorter rows to either side, as we have often done for the carol service, to avoid different household groups sitting on the same row as much as possible.
7. The service itself will run as normal with singing, bible readings, quizzes etc... followed by a short message. This will then be followed by a short communion service.
8. Communion will be a little different to usual with both the bread and wine served in individual portions, prepared in advance, and brought to you directly with no sharing of the emblems or passing them round as we have traditionally done.
9. After the service, again if the weather permits, we would recommend people go outside into the car park to mix and catch up with each other and where that is not possible we would again ask people (over-12 and where they feel comfortable doing so) to wear masks when moving around church away from their seats in the main hall.

Let us be mindful that we all have a different level of risk that we are comfortable with taking and different circumstances in our lives. Some of us may be happy to hug or shake hands whereas others might prefer a fist bump or a socially distant masked conversation. No one will be under any pressure to have any more contact with others than they are comfortable doing so.

Last Sunday was the final week of our comprehensive online Sunday services. However, it is our intention to record the devotional section of the service in church to post online later in the week so those who do not feel ready to return yet or who must miss the service for other reasons do not completely miss out.

We know that for some this might not be quite the return to church you have been looking forward to and for others this might not go far enough to ease your concerns about returning. Whatever your feelings please contact one of the leadership team with any questions, comments, suggestions or concerns you have about this or any other matter relating to church.

We really look forward to welcoming you back to church on Sunday, while we have been blessed to be able to continue our services online since lockdown began it really has been a long 17 months apart.

Many thanks for your patience and support over this time

Dave, Geoff, James & Paul

Psalm 34:8

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.