

Re-starting Sunday Morning Services **in our building from 12th July 2020**

Introduction

Under new government guidelines we are now permitted to meet together as a church subject to adopting “Covid secure” measures and we plan to meet initially on Sunday mornings. We look forward to your full cooperation and support of these new practises as we meet together again.

We have permission to meet, but it could be asked, why do we want to take this opportunity when there are limitations (e.g limited numbers, social distancing and no singing for the time being). There are some of the reasons:

1. Fellowship: there will be the opportunity to be physically present with our brothers and sisters as we queue, walk in, sit together and can enjoy conversations and then listen to God’s word together in the presence of each other.
2. Engagement: the full experience of seeing each other and the service leaders and preacher rather than the 2-dimensional experience of watching on a screen where there are more opportunities for distraction and loss of concentration.
3. Witness: by being known and seen as giving a priority of meeting, we are testifying to the importance of the gathering of the church in a context where pubs restaurants and cinemas are also being permitted to open.
4. Encouragement: Our meetings provide an anticipation of what we will experience when lockdown restrictions are fully lifted which is an encouragement to those in the meeting and to those who for the time being cannot meet but can at least witness the congregation meeting as they watch the livestream.

We want everyone to feel safe, for no one to feel left out. We also want to witness to the wider community that they feel respected, safe and welcome.

If you are not able to meet with us for health reasons or your own assessment of risk we will greatly miss you being with us but want to assure you that you are still very much part of the church family here. We are still brothers and sisters in unity and the Lord Jesus Christ is present in his church. We will still be sharing fellowship in listening to his word, praying and praising him and encouraging one another. As the Queen said in her Coronavirus broadcast, ‘we will meet again’ - but not just yet. In the meantime, we don’t need to be in our building to meet with our King. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.” (Acts 17v24). We will do our best to maintain the high quality of livestream experience that we have been able to deliver up to now, so that we can all continue to feel included.

Risk Reduction

We cannot eliminate all risks but in order to maximise the safety of the congregation and minimise the risk of COVID19 transmission as much as reasonably possible, Christ Church Haywards Heath has put in place the following changes and procedures.

Overall there are three main pillars for keeping us all safe

1. Minimising the possibility of those with the virus attending our service.
2. Minimising the possibility of anyone with the virus passing it on to anyone else in the service by social distancing.
3. Minimising the possibility of anyone with the virus passing it on to anyone else in the service by strict hygiene and cleaning processes.

You can read the full risk assessment approved by the Trustees of Christ Church Haywards Heath [here](#)

Attending a Sunday morning gathering at Christ Church

This is a description of the whole process from initial information and booking through to the exit from the building

Before the meeting

The building will be cleaned by cleaners prior to the service.

Attendees will need to book online. We will offer places until all the allocated spaces have been taken (approx 60) by using our small groups on a week by week rolling basis.

The booking process will be on the basis that you agree to follow the guidelines and any instructions, in particular:

- Anybody, or anybody in the household of a person, who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is showing any of the following symptoms will be told they cannot enter the church building and must self-isolate for 14 days according to government guidelines and follow [test and trace](#) procedures after the appearance of these symptoms: a new, persistent cough, a high temperature, a change in sense of taste or smell.
- Some people, including those aged 70 and over, those with certain underlying conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable, meaning they may be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. As we continue to ease restrictions, the government advice is that this group should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household.

- Sadly for the present, those with the following health conditions will be unable to attend our meetings in person and will instead be encouraged to watch the service live stream: type II diabetes, ischemic heart disease, severe respiratory diseases, and anyone receiving treatments for cancer or other diseases, that have an immunosuppressant effect.

Attendees will be given a designated time to arrive, in order to ease the queuing process.

Face masks and disposable gloves are not required for attendance, but attendees should feel free to wear them if they wish to.

In order to fulfil our obligations we will need to keep a record of all attendees. These will be kept in accordance with our [privacy policy](#). We will also be showing short burst video images of the congregation at various times during the service as part of our livestream and these will be shown on our website and social media channels.

On arrival

We encourage people to walk to the meeting where possible to reduce the pressure on local parking and to bring their own drinks if necessary as we are unable to provide refreshments at this time.

Attendees will queue on arrival, keeping 2m from other households using markings on the church driveway. A steward will be on the pavement outside and another on the driveway to maintain social distancing.

Initially, for the first few weeks of operation the steward on the drive will ask those attending to confirm that they are not displaying any symptoms of Covid-19 or in a household of anyone who is.

A steward in the hallway will check off the register to record who has entered the building.

Immediately upon entering the building through the main front doors, attendees will clean their hands with antibacterial gel, provided in dispensers, and monitored by the steward on the door. Attendees will not be permitted further into the building without sanitising their hands in this way.

All doors will be wedged open so that they need not be touched. If anybody touches a surface, a steward will spray the surface with disinfectant and wipe with a disposable towel as soon as is reasonably possible. Congregating in multi-household groups will not be permitted.

With the exception of needing the toilet or other emergencies there will be a one way system in operation. Normal Fire and evacuation procedures will apply in the event of an emergency including the use of all available exits

No objects such as books, Bibles, bulletins or other papers will be handed out. Attendees will have been reminded to bring their own Bibles and other necessary items.

Attendees will enter the main hall and be asked to sit, filling the seats up starting at the front row and will sit within their own households and will maintain a distance of at least 2m from all other

households at all times. Chairs will be in rows, with a 2m distance between each row, and attendees not sitting closer than 2m to attendees next to them from another household. (3 chairs gap)

Posters will be on display throughout the building to remind attendees to keep 2m distance between households and to remind them of the specific hygiene practises.

During the service

Speakers will maintain approximately 2m distance from each other. There will be a 3m gap between the speakers and the first row of chairs. Each speaker will use separate audio equipment. There will be no singing from the front or from the congregation. Speakers will avoid shouting. The service, where possible, will be kept to a maximum of 60 minutes.

Attendees with young children in their household will be asked to keep their children under close supervision in order to help them maintain a 2m distance from others outside of their household. If families with small children feel they would like to, facilities will be provided to take them to a quiet room. The Triple Room will serve as three 'pods', with one household allowed within a section of the Triple Room at any given time. As with other parts of the building, any surfaces touched will be sprayed with disinfectant and wiped with a disposable towel by a steward. No toys or other shareable objects will be provided and attendees will not be allowed to share toys or books with other households.

If, during the service, a visitor, volunteer or speaker shows symptoms of COVID-19 they will be immediately asked to leave by a steward or the service leader.

Attendees will be discouraged from using the toilet facilities during the meeting, however if they need to do so, attendees will maintain 2m distance whilst entering the toilet corridor, with only one visitor/household in a cubicle at any time (unless taking a child). After using the facilities, users will wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, drying their hands with a disposable towel and placing this in an open bin. Users will then clean any surfaces touched with disinfectant spray and paper towels, including toilet seats, flush handle, taps, light switches and door handles. These paper towels will be disposed of in open bins upon leaving the toilet corridor. Children under the age of 11 will be accompanied to the toilets by a parent/carer.

After the service

Attendees will remain seated until told to leave by a steward or the service leader. Stewards will ask people to leave one household at a time, through the side exit of the main hall in order to maintain the one-way system. A distance of at least 2m will be kept between different households at all times, with 2m distances marked out on the floor surrounding the exit. attendees will be asked not to gather in groups outside of the church doors, in the car park, the exit passageway or immediately outside on the pavement, and to take care to maintain 2m social distancing at all times. Posters will be displayed throughout the building to remind attendees of this.

Wheelchair users will be assisted to exit the building via the main entrance, which has step free access.

No refreshments will be served at any point, and groups will not be allowed to gather within the building.

The building will be thoroughly cleaned after the service.

Conclusion

As we have recently been learning in 1 Peter we want to “Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor. (1 Peter 2:17)

We realise these restrictions may feel burdensome, legalistic or unnecessary but this is part of our serving one honoring the authorities and loving one another. We do not ultimately fear the virus or trust in our strategies but we fear God and trust him to provide and protect.

Please note that our process is based on the government guidance and the interpretations used by the FIEC, The Church of England and the Baptist Union