



## Trinity Baptist Church – Bexleyheath (Issued 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

### RESTARTING FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

‘Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.’

-Hebrews 10 vs 24-25

“Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.”

-Joshua 3 vs 4

As you are no doubt aware, we have been planning for some time to be able to safely restart face to face meetings, and we are now in a position to share what that will look like. The service will be live-streamed to our YouTube channel in place of the currently pre-recorded Digital Church. That does slightly increase the risk of technical problems, but the plus sides are that we will have a greater sense of meeting together, and the service can more closely reflect what is happening in the church and in the world at the time of broadcast (e.g. in prayers, etc.).

We are hoping to start live-streaming from 6<sup>th</sup> September, with face to face meetings beginning on 13<sup>th</sup> September – subject to the necessary technical details working as we anticipate. It is important to note that this phase of returning to face to face meetings can only be done tentatively. We hope that, in time, it will be possible to further ease restrictions, but it is equally possible that we may have to reverse this decision if the spread of Covid-19 in Bexley significantly rises.

### Rota for attendance

Attendance will be on a rota basis, as we cannot fit the whole congregation in each week at a safe social distance from one another. At the end of this letter is a link to an online response form. For those without email, the form is attached and you should advise Kerry of your answers by phone on: 07801 627031. If you wish to be included in the rota starting in September, responses must be given to Kerry **no later than Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September**. Responses received after this date can be included in the redrafting of the rota in October, but not in the first round of invitations. Once Kerry has all the responses, she will send out invitations advising you when you can first come to church in person. If you need to swap your given date (e.g. because you work shifts), you will need to arrange a swap with a household of the same size as your household, and inform Kerry of the change by the Friday before the Sunday in question.

### When not to come to the church building

In order to keep everyone safe, you **must not** come to the church building **if you have had any of the following symptoms in the last 7 days** (even if you don't have them now), unless you have taken a Covid test and received back a negative result:

- a high temperature or
- a new continuous cough or
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste

Also you **must not** come to the church building **if you have been asked to self-isolate by the Test and Trace scheme within the last 14 days**.

It may seem hard to miss your turn on the rota in these circumstances, but we need to love each other enough to not put others at undue risk.

It may not be sensible to attend church in person if you are considered at high risk for Covid-19.



## Can you help others to enjoy face to face church?

To safely open we need a team of **at least 7 people** each Sunday, who can help with **welcoming and stewarding** (in addition to the band, sound engineer, and Song Pro operatives). All the tasks are simple to perform, and clear instructions will be given. Could you come once or twice extra per month (additional to your slot on the rota) to serve others in this way? Again, please let Kerry know via the response form.

Additionally, some people may need a lift to be able to get to Trinity safely<sup>1</sup>. If you have already arranged this, if you need a lift, or if you can safely help someone get to church in this way, please let Kerry know also.

## What to bring with you

Please bring the following with you to church:

- **A suitable face mask, covering nose and mouth, or proof of exemption (facemasks must be worn inside the building at all times)**<sup>2</sup>. \* Children under 5 should not wear a mask and children between 5 and 11 can choose whether or not to wear one.
- A sealable plastic bag for your mask after the service.
- Tissues and somewhere to safely store used ones.
- A bottle of water if you might want a drink (cups will not be available).
- A Bible (church copies will not be available).
- If you have children, printed copies of the material sent out prior to the service, any pens, pencils, etc. they will need, and something to lean on (we cannot hand out materials).
- For communion weeks, if you wish to take part, your own bread and non-alcoholic wine (or equivalent). We will notify you in advance of communion weeks, which are unlikely to happen in September.

## What to expect when you arrive

Things will be different from normal, but we believe the benefits of meeting together will still outweigh any inconvenience. The following precautions have been put in place for everyone's safety and enjoyment of the service:

- Please arrive no later than 10:20am, so that everyone can be seated in time for the service to start promptly at 10:30am (including live-streamed).
- Outside the church building, please stand 2m apart from other families/bubbles while waiting to go in (you might want to bring an umbrella if it's raining).
- Whilst waiting you will be asked to confirm that you have not had any of the Covid symptoms listed above in the last 7 days, and that you have not been asked by Test and trace to self-isolate within the last 14 days. It is a legal requirement that we check this.
- At the door we will scan your temperature as an extra precaution. Please make sure your face mask is on.
- Please thoroughly sanitise your hands in the lobby on arrival (sanitiser will be provided).

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<sup>1</sup> Please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles> for advice on sharing cars during Covid-19.

<sup>2</sup> Those involved in leading the service are exempt from wearing masks during the times when they are actually leading. Musicians, speakers, etc., must put their masks on whenever they step down from the stage.



- Inside the church, your name will be ticked off on our register. If you are new to Trinity, or if your contact details are not in our directory, please supply a contact telephone number for your family. These details will only be used if we need to give details to Test and Trace of who attended. They will be securely stored for 21 days after the service and then destroyed in the week following.
- After this, you will be directed to your seats. Rows of seats will be positioned at least 1m from each other. Please leave 3 clear seats between you and any other bubble in your row.
- Please do not mingle and chat inside the building.
- We are not permitted to provide crèche facilities during a Sunday service, so please bring with you what you need to entertain your youngest children.
- We cannot provide refreshments after the service, and general conversation should happen outside the church building. If it is wet, you might wish to organise with another family to chat over tea / coffee in one of your homes.
- Please take all your rubbish home with you, including all papers used by your children.

## Toilets

- Toilets are available at the back of the chapel and off the middle hall. Please maintain social distancing while waiting, and re-sanitise your hands before entering the toilet facilities.
- A maximum of one person per toilet room is permitted (parents may assist small children). For the toilets off the middle hall, please wait to be told it is safe to go in; for the toilet at the back of the church this will be obvious because the door will be open if it is vacant.
- Please ensure that you wash your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet. We will be purchasing new hand dryers; if they cannot be installed before we first open, please use paper towels to dry your hands.
- Please leave the toilets in a clean state for the next person.

## One-way system

There will be a one-way system in operation throughout the building. Entry is by the front doors only. If you need to use the middle hall toilets, please exit via the blue side door afterwards, come round the outside of the building and re-enter by the front door.

At the end of the service, we will reverse the one-way system and direct you out of the church, row by row, through the front door. Please remain seated until directed to leave. Then, please move well away from the church entrance before engaging in any conversations, so others can exit safely. Please also maintain safe social distances when conversing with one another. Masks may be removed once outside the building.

## Services

Services will also look different, and may evolve over time. Initially, our plans are as follows:

- Services will be shorter than usual.
- We will have live music led by our band, including as people arrive. Singers and speakers will stand behind Perspex screens so they can remove their masks while singing / speaking. The band will also be divided from each other by Perspex screens. The screens we have purchased will have long term use, as they can be made into a drum screen in the future.
- We are now permitted a small group of singers, but congregational singing is still not permitted. So we encourage people to worship by mouthing along to the words, which will be displayed on the screen.
- There will be readings from the Bible and a shortened sermon, possibly in two parts.
- Activities for children will be sent out in advance. Please print and bring these with you.



- We will have prayers, and possibly a slot for pre-advised testimonies (though this may not feature in the first few weeks).
- No offering will be taken during the service, so please continue to give electronically or by posting a cheque to our treasurer, Yohan Keerthiratna.
- Newsheets will continue to be sent electronically and posted to those without internet connection.

## Children and youth

- We hope to start youth meetings upstairs soon after re-opening (once we are settled in the arrangements for the church as a whole). The government restricts such meetings to a maximum of 15 youth, so these will also need to be on a rota basis. The plan is to choose material that can be equally accessed at home for those not on the rota that week. We are considering if and how we might be able to include those at home in the live sessions.
- We are considering dedicating one service per rota as a service for children and their families. With parents present, we can have more than 15 children, and it would give us space that we might otherwise struggle to find for GodZone groups, alongside YP. We are considering how this service could be more interactive for children. There are down sides to this, but we believe it could be the best solution for the time being, under the current restrictions. However, a children's service will not feature in the first rota for attendance, starting in September. We will consider the viability of such a service based on the response forms we receive.

## Those more vulnerable to Covid-19

If we run a dedicated children's service, it may also permit greater scope for one of the other services per rota to be reserved for those who are clinically more vulnerable to Covid-19. Again we will consider the viability of such a service based on the responses to the attached questions.

## Cleaning

We are in the final stages of making arrangements with K. D. Cleaning Services, Ltd., who are a Safe Contractor Approved cleaning firm. They employ approximately 90 cleaners covering a range of clients from dentist surgeries, to nursing homes, to schools.

We would have a specific cleaner assigned to us, who will clean initially for two hours each Friday afternoon (after Foodbank finishes), and for one hour each Sunday afternoon (after, the church service, in readiness for Foodbank). As the chapel will not be used between Sundays, it should not need cleaning more than once a week, and we believe it is better for this to be done prior to the service, rather than after it. When youth work restarts, the hours quoted may need to increase to allow for cleaning upstairs as well. The cleaning firm will also conduct an initial thorough deep clean of the whole building before re-opening.

We believe that contracting out the cleaning in this way ensures the quality and consistency of the work, which is critical to the safe opening of the church building.



## A family together

All of the above may look like a lot of regulations. In practice, once we begin, much of this will quickly become second nature to us. There are reasons why some in the church may not be able to attend in person, which is why we will be continuing with the Digital Church – just live-streamed instead of pre-recorded. But, for those who can, we want to urge you, gently but seriously, to consider giving of yourself to begin again the important habit of meeting together in person. We need one another in the Christian life to encourage one another and to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Please complete the attached questions by Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September (even if you do not intend to come) to help us create a workable rota for September.

I look forward to being able to see you soon!

Andy, on behalf of the deacons.

Now fill in the response form; just click here:  
<https://forms.gle/4Wuxkkg14tKX7DUd7>