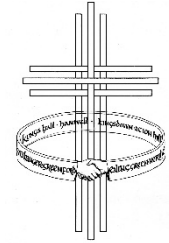


THE METHODIST CHURCH

Ealing Trinity Circuit



14th July 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope you are well. Given the government announcements regarding the opening of churches, the Circuit Leadership Team feel it would be an idea to describe what worship is likely to be like under the present regulations. We are hoping that churches will be ready to open from September onwards. In the meantime we are recommending that you meet in small groups for fellowship and worship as government guidance allows. We aim to continue to produce video worship and print service sheets and to increase and improve our online presence given the positive comments regarding them and also recognising that many of us will not be able to return to churches when they open.

So what will it be like to come to worship when our churches open?

Our services may take place on **different days and at different times** across our churches. This will mean you can choose to go at a time that works well for you. It also takes into account the reduced number of ministers, local preachers and worship leaders who may be available. We will keep these under review to try to find times that are helpful for existing members and encourage new people to join us.

Will I need to book?

Space will be limited so churches will need to decide whether to 'ticket' or be prepared to turn people away at the door

What will happen when I arrive?

You will be asked not to arrive more than 5 mins before the service begins.

At the door you will be asked to sanitise your hands, (depending on current guidance you may also be asked to wear a mask.)

Your name and address will be registered in case it's needed for test and trace.

In most of our churches you will be asked to take the next available seat from the front.

As you move to your seat, and at all times, you will be asked to stay at an appropriate distance (2m) from everyone else.

Seats will be marked to ensure a 2m distance between each person/household. (In some places this means that only every 3rd pew will be used).

What will the service be like?

The person responsible for leading worship (& maybe 1 reader or steward) will sit at an appropriate distance from each other from before the service begins.

We will pray, hear readings from the Bible, have a sermon.

We will find creative ways to use music as we cannot have congregational hymns

The service should last no more than 30 mins (people should only be in the building for 40-45mins total)

At the end of the service you will be asked to leave promptly and in order

There will be no refreshments or socialising after the service.

What about Holy Communion?

Possibly bread only

Elements remain covered throughout the prayers until they are distributed

Taken to your seats or laid out at your seat before you arrive

Other essentials:**Toilets:**

You will be asked to wipe down anything you touch before and after you touch it.

What about talking outside the church before I come in or after I leave?

Obviously you are welcome to talk to each other on the street. However, part of our Christian discipleship is to show God's love to all. At the moment one important way to do that is to model good infection control by maintaining appropriate physical distance. So while enjoying a chat please stay 2m from each other and allow others to go by safely and at a healthy distance. Show God's love and care to all our neighbours through your carefulness in reducing infection risk.

I understand this all may feel quite different. It does to me as well. However, it gives us a valuable chance to think about what is important to us and to find new ways of doing things just as the last few months have done. Think back for a moment to January and imagine what your response might have been to worship on video, church meetings by phone, email or zoom, and church pastoral contacts by phone with no chance of a visit. We have achieved so much in the last few months. You have strengthened pastoral support and fellowship through your phone calls to each other. We now have a large group of us trained in using Zoom and Skype when we'd not heard of it before March! People have commented to me about worship and spiritual life that has deepened.

As we move forward we will also have to think about and commemorate our losses: those we have loved who have died; goodbyes that haven't felt fully expressed; the ends of school years and school moves, missing seeing grandchildren grow and the months without hugs or physical contact and so much more. We can and will do all this in the strength and love of God.

May you continue to know God's blessing with you, God's love embracing you, God's power strengthening you and God's peace filling you, for I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

You remain in my prayers as I hope I remain in yours.

Love and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".

Rev Rachel Bending
Superintendent Minister