

Christchurch Guidelines for Worship from 25th July

Church Council met on Tuesday 20th and discussed the Methodist and Circuit guidance and what other local churches are doing about the relaxation of restrictions around COVID.

Council felt it was very important to move cautiously as infection rates continue to rise. It is our responsibility to the community to help reduce the spread of this infection.

Council agreed the following:

We will continue to ventilate the space. We will continue to encourage the use of sanitiser on entry. We will be continuing to ask people to only use personal books that they bring to church with them. The Track and Trace tick-sheet will continue until the Government reviews this on August 16th. We will be asking people to remain at home if they are feeling unwell.

The chairs will be returned to the worship area so that the parlour can be brought back into use. We will continue to encourage social distancing by leaving at least two chairs between bubbles. Stewards will continue to clean chairs and touch points following the service for the safety of other users.

As a church we appreciate that people will have different feelings about the recent changes in restrictions. To help everyone continue to be able to feel safe in church we are recommending the following:

Use of masks: We are aware that these are no longer mandatory, however, wearing of masks continues to be our preferred choice.

For those who do not wish to wear them we will be requesting that they sit to the right as we enter the worship area, to respect the safety of the organist and the preacher.

Singing: We recognise just how important this is to our congregation, however, we do feel we must move cautiously with so little data available and number of infections rising.

We recommend that we all sing quietly and not yet as lustily as is our tradition. With masks on if worn.

Congregating after the service:

We are not thinking of offering coffee after the services as yet but will review this. We will trial opening the garden to extend the outside space for us to meet, until the end of August.

Please do contact any members of Church Council if you have questions – we know that it is not as free as we would like but we are moving cautiously to support everyone and to make people feel comfortable in a testing time.

We love meeting as a church and thank you for your support so far – we will review these recommendations as government and Methodist guidance changes.